

THE WEEKLY BRITISH COLONIST.

VOL. 7.

VICTORIA, VANCOUVER ISLAND, TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 1866.

NO. 12.

THE BRITISH COLONIST

PUBLISHED
EVERY MORNING,
(Sundays Excepted,
AT VICTORIA, V. I.

TERMS:
One Year, (in advance).....\$10 00
Six Months, do.....6 00
Three Months, do.....3 50
Single Copies.....10 cents.
Subscribers in Victoria will be supplied by the carriers for 25 cents a week.

THE WEEKLY COLONIST.

Published every Tuesday morning.
One Year, (in advance).....\$6 50
Six Months, do.....4 00
Three Months, do.....2 50
Single Copies.....10 cents.

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PUBLIC MEETING.

RETRENCHMENT AND UNION UPHELD.

The House Sustained.

The Public meeting convened by His Worship the Mayor, on the requisition signed by a number of the citizens to consider the action of the House of Assembly on the Estimates, and the question of Union of the Colonies, was held on Saturday evening in the Lyceum Hall. At the appointed hour the hall was crowded with a dense concourse of the inhabitants, a large majority of whom were rate-payers, embracing clergy, merchants, officials, clerks, tradesmen, mechanics, laborers, and in fact every class of the community.

On the platform were Mayor Franklin, Messrs. Harris, Esq., Ex-Mayor, and members of the Municipal Council, with Mr. James

... said it was not his intention to intrude his views on the meeting; but he would make a few general remarks. The object of the meeting was to consider the proceedings of the House in regard to the Estimates and the question of Union of the Colonies. There was no doubt that if ever there was a time to exercise economy it had now arrived [hear], and if the House of Assembly in its wisdom had thought it right to cut off the Estimates and reduce the expenditure to a smaller scale they deserved the thanks of the whole community [applause]. At the same time it was possible to go too far, and care should be taken not to injure the working of the Government in carrying out the extreme of the case and adopting a system of false economy by reducing too many offices and underpaying those in offices of trust. On the whole he thought that a better state of things was now dawning upon the country. The prospects in British Columbia were much brighter. His Worship then touched on the Union question and commented on the folly of the two colonies with only 15,000 inhabitants between them having separate governments and a separate staff of officials. He alluded to the union sentiment in the sister colony and the feeling of opposition and ill-feeling towards this colony indulged in by a small section of the people, remarking that it was a pity in this remote part of the world that these people could not act in harmony with their fellow colonists and try to build up a British feeling instead of destroying it. He was glad the Union question was now to be considered, and he would like to see more union in our own towns among public men, he would like to see them sink private feelings and work together for the common good. The City Council (if the meeting would excuse him for alluding to the shop) was a striking instance of economy, for since he had presided over them they had not spent a cent [applause], and the reason, which was a very good one, was simply that they had not got it to spend [laughter]. He concluded by asking the meeting to support the Chair, to listen to both sides patiently and not to indulge in personalities.

Mr. James Fell came forward, and after commenting on the importance of the resolution he was about to offer, and expressing the usual regret that it had not fallen into able hands moved:

Resolved—That this meeting fully endorses the action of the majority of the Legislative Assembly in their general scheme of retrenchment, and maintains, with the Assembly, the right on the part of the people's representatives to originate and increase, as well as reduce items of public expenditure.

He would like to ask the meeting one question; what had brought them there? [A voice—To hear you speak.] Mr. Fell—Step forward, and I will make way for you. It was to take into consideration what has been done by those you sent into the House of Assembly. To take in review the Estimates that have been passed. This was only a small community, and combined with the neighboring colony would not make a second rate English town, yet we had two most

combersome pieces of machinery in the shape of Government, and were likely to have for some time. A crisis had, however, arrived, the members seeing that the people could no longer carry on the present burdensome system had taken steps for relieving them. Exception may be taken to some of their acts, but taken as a whole he believed the vast majority of those before him would endorse everything they had done [loud applause]. He did not advocate poorly paid labor, but a fair day's wage for a fair day's work [hear]; and if the gentlemen filling Government offices have sufficient employment he would say retain them by all means, but if not, and some offices can be joined with others, then abolish them, and the country would not suffer through it [applause]. There were some men who said the Assembly was not wanted, they were always getting up. Such men would like to govern the country themselves. He maintained, however, that he and all who paid their taxes had a perfect right to know how the money is spent [hear]. There were as shrewd and intelligent men in this community as he had found on any spot on earth [hear]. The people had the power and the right to a voice in the Government of the country, and he called upon them to exercise it. Most of those present came out here to better their condition in life and push their way in the world, and it was their duty to sustain their representatives who were striving to promote their welfare so long as they represented their views. There was another question to which he must refer, and that was the necessity of being careful how matters were carried home, everything should be properly placed before the English people, who did not know the whole of our wants, the whole of our grievances. Mr. Cardwell, he knew him well, [loud laughter] was a slippery fish and wanted watching, or he would make the best bargain he could with the Crown Lands. They should therefore look after their own interests and see that the real facts were laid before the authorities.

Mr. Councillor Gowen said he appeared on the platform not as a speaker but as the "right bower" to His Worship the Mayor. The gentleman who was to second the resolution was not present, and he would do so in his place. The action of the House as a taxpayer he fully endorsed [hear], also the powers vested in them of raising and lowering the estimates. In 1864 the Chief Engineer of the Fire Department made a report of the whole amount required to keep the department in good working order, which was estimated at \$4,000 and odd. When the Estimates came down the amount was lowered and the House voted \$3,000. Well, the department thought they could get along with that if paid quarterly, but they were kept in the dark, no money came in, they got some. During the whole year they only received \$2,000 and had to assess themselves to make up the deficiency [hear]. Thus they would see the necessity of the House having power to raise the Estimates. The \$1,500 asked for would not pay rents and steward's fee. He individually expended \$100 a year on the department [hear]. The Board of Delegates were called together and passed strong resolutions. The city members attended and saw the necessity of giving better support, otherwise the companies must be disbanded. A resolution had since passed thanking the members for the vote of \$3,000, though they thought it only their due [hear]. He concluded by again giving his sanction to the course pursued by the House, and particularly with reference to lowering and raising the estimates [applause].

On the Mayor asking if any other person wished to speak to the resolution.

Mr. H. Gillard mounted the rostrum amid much laughter, dissent, and a diversity of goodnatured chaff. At length quiet having been restored, the valuable orator proceeded to say that before coming to the meeting he had read over the whole of the estimates that he might be better prepared with what he had to say [laughter]. The foolish part of it was that the House was too niggardly, too mean. There was common sense in all things; but here were men turned out with wives and families, and it was going a step too far to discharge many of the officials who might be wanted [loud hisses and cries of dissent]. During the grinning the speaker went on to say that he had not been asked to come there and speak, he expressed his own views [laughter and cries of let a taxpayer speak]. The Chairman having asked for a quiet hearing, Mr. Gillard proceeded to indulge in the figurative. In '62 the House had a stable and a good horse. They had been obliged to discharge the keepers, and would soon have to sell the stable [laughter]. If in '62 the members had foreseen what he foresaw—[This statement was followed by shouts of derisive laughter which lasted for some time.] Men were then flocking into the country. They should have taxed the people and given work to the unemployed (more laughter). There was the Governor's secretary, he considered that almost unpardonable [loud hisses and groans]. They gave the Governor £3000 a year and yet would not give him a secretary. [A voice—Quite right, too.] Could not the Governor get the same salary in England? [Cries of no!] Then there was the Assessor, that was an office created by the Home Government and they could not strike it out. Next was the Chief Justice who had come out with his wife and family for £1200 a year. There were hundreds and thousands in his own line of business who could make that [laughter], and yet they would not give him a private secretary. It was niggardly [laughter]. The Attorney General's amount was too low without fees. The Stipendiary Magistrate had been cut down to \$1500, who disposed of 2000 cases annually. They had struck out the clerkship at Nanaimo and also the magistrate's pay. Who was going to pay for the clerk? Gentlemen, continued the speaker, I have only got one or two more ideas.

[This announcement caused another roar of laughter, which, however, in no way discouraged the speaker.] He wished to ask them whether they thought it fair to strike out the item of \$250 for a medical officer? Was it fair to make the policeman, as a member had said, pay for medical attendance out of \$2 a day [Cries of Yes and No]. The Governor had sent down \$5000 for provisions for the prison, and they had passed only \$3000. The idea of the members no doubt was by starving the prisoners to keep many out [laughter]. Often a man's act forced him in there [loud laughter], and he didn't see why he should be starved. Then there was the tower bell at Race Rocks struck out, was that not mean? He repeated that the House had acted in a niggardly manner, more particularly in striking out the assistance for Governor and Judge.

... nothing was put down in the estimates for private secretary. [Hear, hear.] With regard to making the stipendiary magistrate subject to the Corporation he believed it was the right course. He believed the city would make the Mayor the chief magistrate and abolish the office of stipendiary magistrate altogether. [Hear, hear and loud applause]. In Canada, with a population of between two and three millions, nearly all the police court work was done by mayors or heads of municipalities. In Montreal with a population of 120,000 there was but one stipendiary magistrate. In Toronto, with 60,000, there was but one. In London, with 18,000, Kingston with 18,000, and even in Quebec, there were no stipendiary magistrates, the mayor in each instance performing all the duties. There were no paid magistrates in Canada, they were all honorary, and he thought it ridiculous that so small a community as ours should inaugurate the cumbersome and expensive system of stipendiary magistrates. [Hear, hear and applause]. The speaker then went through the various items that had been voted, and remarked upon the amalgamation of the Registrar of Deeds with the Registrar of the Supreme Court, that the former gentleman was not employed an hour a day. The union of the Assessor's office with that of Acting Surveyor or General was made on almost similar grounds. One of the most capable men for the office of Assessor in the colony, had told him he would be very glad to get \$400 for performing the duties. The fact was the officials had too little to do and it was thought better to get rid of some of them to make the rest work. [Applause]. The Government of the country was altogether too cumbersome, and one of the most iniquitous things about it was paying men to fill public offices, and then having them sitting in a Legislative Council wasting the public time. [Hear, hear.] He would not, however, trespass any longer upon their attention. Other gentlemen had to speak, and as he saw Mr. McClure, who was one of the Assembly's big guns, in the room; he would like to see that gentleman mount the platform.

The speaker then sat down amid much applause and amid loud and continuous shouts of "McClure."

Mr. McClure after some little time came forward and ascended the platform. He said he was out of place in standing before them on such an occasion as the present. As he understood it, the meeting was called to give the public an opportunity of condemning or endorsing the action of the Assembly, and he thought it out of place for any member of the Legislature to take any part in the proceedings. As he was called upon, however, he would endeavor to give the meeting in a few words as possible his ideas of the

... House with regard to the estimates. So far as the retrenchment scheme was concerned he was only sorry that the amount could not have been reduced even one-half its present figure. [Hear, hear.] There was, however, great difficulty in making a sweeping retrenchment at once, it had to be done gradually. Besides in voting the estimates the present year, there was an unusually large sum, embracing hospitals, fire department, schools, steam communication, interest on loans, &c., amounting in all to \$97,000, which the House could not possibly reduce without impairing the public interest or affecting the credit of the country. Taking all things therefore into consideration the Assembly, he thought, had done the best under the circumstances, in its system of retrenchment. [Applause.] So far as regards the sympathy expressed by the gentlemen who preceded him for the officials whose salaries had been reduced or abolished, (Mr. McClure confessed to being more calculating. When he thought of the numbers of poor men having families depending upon the money they could get nothing to do—and when he considered that numbers of others were driven away from the colony by the heavy burdens they had to bear, he was not disposed to launch his sympathy on any class of officials. [Applause]. He was as anxious as anybody to see a man paid a proper price for his services, but the circumstances of the colony demanded the reductions which the Assembly had made. The great evil of the colony was, however, in the system of Government. There were too many officers even yet. He maintained that by establishing municipal systems throughout the colony the cost of the general Government should not exceed \$20,000 a year. [Hear, hear.] There was too much tinsel work about the Government. It was altogether unsuited to a small and struggling population. There was, however, with some men and especially with Englishmen, a kind of superstitious reverence for Government that led them to look with dismay on anything that interfered with its grandeur. He was happy to say he had no such veneration. [A few hisses which were drowned in loud and continued applause.] He repeated it he had no veneration for a Government. He looked upon it as he looked upon Mr. Hardy Gillard. If the latter gentleman would sell him an article as good as he could get elsewhere, and at a cheaper rate, he would patronize Mr. Gillard. If a Government could be carried on suitable to the inhabitants at a cheaper rate than the present he was of opinion the people should have that Government—[applause.] They must, in fact, adhere to the rigid rules of political economy, and obtain it as they would any other necessity of life, at the cheapest possible cost [hear, hear]. A Government was merely a machine—as much a machine as a fire engine, and its officials nothing more nor less than public servants. Vancouver Island had too much of the gawgaws and gold lace. Government, from the Governor down, should be composed of men not afraid to take off their coat, but always ready to be working in the trust sense of the word [applause]. The people had a difficult task before them to open up and settle the country. This it

... was needless to say could not be done, if the present expensive system were to be carried out. The House of Assembly in making reductions in the expense wets, however, not inclined to stop there. They desired that the country should be prepared for the reception of immigrants, and they had worked hard to pass measures that would tend to this great object; as things at present stood, however, the work could be destroyed by the Upper House—as it had been last year—and men paid out of the public treasury could effectually thwart public measures. He did not know what the Legislative Council would do with the bills of the Assembly this year, but if they imitated their conduct of last session two year's legislation would be lost to the country. And this brought him to the possibility of a collision between the Assembly and the House of Representatives.

... very all of the resolution passed by the Assembly asserting its right to originate money votes; he saw that this question was embraced in the resolution before the meeting, and he would direct their attention to this subject particularly, for it was really the gravest question that could come before a free people. If the public did not maintain the action of the House on this matter the whole retrenchment scheme would fall to the ground; for it was found necessary while reducing a number of items to raise others. It was not only this, however—it was even more important than retrenchment—it was whether a gentleman sent from England to this colony should have it in his power to say what were the wants of the country and how much the people should pay towards supplying them [hear, hear]. Now he considered, and it was a constitutional right, that the people's representatives were the authorities to say how much aid for what purposes the people should be taxed [applause]. This was the point at issue, and this was the point that was likely to bring them into collision with the Executive, unless the latter body showed a disposition to abide by constitutional precedent. He called upon the meeting, therefore, if they valued their rights as British subjects, to pass the resolution that was before them, [loud applause].

The Chairman then put the resolution, which was carried unanimously amid enthusiastic demonstrations.

Mr. Lewis then came forward and proposed in a few pithy remarks suggesting the desirability of appointing delegates from both colonies to lay down the terms of union, the following resolution:

Resolved—That the following petition be presented to the Legislative Assembly:—We, the undersigned, citizens of Victoria, believing that the two expensive and irresponsible Governments for Vancouver Island and British Columbia are ruinous to both colonies, would respectfully request both the

... the Mayor of your honorable body be deemed expedient to bring about the immediate union of Vancouver Island and British Columbia under one Government.

... Mr. Thomas Harris rose amid applause to second the resolution. He thought there was as little difference of opinion about union as there was about retrenchment. If they were to have a cheap Government the colonies should be united [hear, hear]. With regard to the remarks which had fallen from Mr. Gillard, he was disposed to think very badly of that gentleman. Mr. Gillard said he foresaw in 1862 what was to take place in the subsequent years. Now why did Mr. Gillard not impart that knowledge to the Government at the time, and thus have saved disasters to the colony [loud laughter.] Why did the gentleman, even when Governor Kennedy arrived in 1864, not give His Excellency or the Assembly the benefit of his foresight [laughter]. A man who could foresee—sit down and see wretchedness in the future—who could see numbers of people driven from the colony by disasters for which they were totally unprepared, but with which he was perfectly well acquainted—a man who could keep all that knowledge to himself at such a time was in his opinion an improper and dishonest citizen [uproarious laughter]. To come back to the resolution, however, he hoped the meeting would carry it unanimously. He saw before him many of the principal citizens of the town who had great interests at stake, and he knew they were as anxious as he was to see the colonies united. On the subject of retrenchment, he believed in the sentiment enunciated by Mr. McClure, that they must deal with Governments as they deal with everything else [hear, hear]. If the merchant's business falls off, some of his clerks have to be discharged and his expenses reduced; and so it was with Government. There were better times looming ahead, but just now they must retrench. Union, however, was the great retrenchment—for of all the ridiculous and extravagant things it was to see two small colonies like Vancouver Island and British Columbia with two cumbersome Governments [loud applause].

Mr. Leigh, in a few earnest words, supported the action of the Assembly and the resolution before the meeting.

Mr. Hardy Gillard again came forward amid a storm of groans and hisses to oppose the resolution. He said the people were not prepared for union [hisses]; they must first develop the resources of the Island; they must develop its *inlets and its harbors* [laughter and hisses]. They must get immigrants [groans]. They must bring colonists from England [roars of laughter]. He would give them all his ideas in a lecture one of these days, and he was shortly going to England to give the same lecture over the length and breadth of the country [laughter and hisses].

Loud and repeated calls for Rev. Mr. Garrett were then made, when that gentleman ascended the platform and said that it was not his place to come before them on such an occasion as the present, but he thought it would have been uncourteous to refuse the request of the meeting. He endorsed much that had been said about retrenchment and

Concluded on Last Page.

MEMORANDA.

VE—Left Portland on Tuesday detained 24 hours in towing the bar on Thursday at 9 a.m., Victoria at 9 a.m.

MINING, from San Francisco—First two days out under close

MEMORANDA.

ACTIVE, from Portland—Miss

MEMORANDA.

MEMORANDA.

MEMORANDA.

MEMORANDA.

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MEMORANDA.

NEW ZEALAND.
Triests, 62 days from Auckland of New Zealand papers
New Zealand Parliament was prorogued on 10th of October by Sir George...
The acts of the session was...
of Mr. Weld and his colleagues...
the ministerial benches and...
of "new men."
was hung October 24th for...
his wife.
elections—the first that...
passed off quietly.
against the rebels was being...
The Te Papa correspondent...
and Herald, under date of...
of a most important nature...
received from Matata. The...
stated in my last, had evacuated...
at Matata, were pursued...
energetic manner by Mr. ...
was under him, a distance...
in the interior, and came...
at a place called Te Toko...
a stand, which place being...
was promptly surrounded...
against by sap. Mr. Mair...
experience in this mode of...
in the Waikato campaign, and...
giving the greatest confidence...
in the fact of not under...
restraints, when he was under...
the Smith, contributed not a...
little.
The rebels succumbed, about...
23 of whom are recognized as...
se names are included in the...
apprehension; they were all...
54 others. Te Hura, the...
in the district, and the...
sotai-marie prophet Horomo...
at them. (These two men...
ordered the murder of Mr. ...
let.)

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