

The Magisterial Stipendiaries.

In the course of the debate upon the Estimates, one of the numerous faults of the existing system of Government was made forcibly to appear, and it required all the persuasive eloquence of the Colonial Secretary and the Surveyor General to plaster it over. So wedded is the Government to that class of officers known as Stipendiary Magistrates that in several districts these gentlemen have outlived the peculiar circumstances which gave rise to their appointment, and they are still maintained at great expense to the taxpayers, although the people protest that the public interests would be equally safe in the hands of Honorary Justices of the Peace. Whenever the expense of government is complained of the Executive answer is that the extent and general conditions of the colony are such as to render a cheaper government impracticable; yet this answer, plausible as it may at first sight appear, scarcely harmonizes with the fact that, in some instances, expensive officers are retained where they are not needed. We admit that the colony is necessarily an expensive one to govern; but that forms no reason why it should be over-governed—why officers should be crowded in where they are not really necessary. The truth of the matter would appear to be that the Executive is engaged in solving the problem of what disposition it shall make of the numerous staff of officials it finds upon its hands. But to the point. Under the present condition the Stipendiary Magistrates are required to attend the sittings of the Legislative Council, and in order to do this it becomes necessary for those stationed in the interior of the Mainland to be absent from their Districts during four or five months in the year. Owing to the refusal of Government to adopt the system of investing respectable residents with Magisterial functions, these Districts suffer very much inconvenience during such absence. Indeed, several instances of great hardship and injustice were pointed out. Two things appear obvious: in respect of those Districts still requiring the presence of the particular class of officers alluded to, the system of withdrawing such officers from the post of duty during so large a portion of the year is not a desirable one for which they are in some instances but moderately qualified, is injurious to the public interest; the period has arrived when the presence of this class of officers can be dispensed with in some of the more settled Districts without any detriment to the public interest, and with beneficial results. It is not very agreeable to have to single out one class of officials as presenting a more fitting mark for the pruning-knife of retrenchment than another; but, however greatly we may respect the gentlemen constituting that class, we must not permit mere personal considerations to stand in the way of public duty.

The Road Toll Questions.

It will be seen that the changes recommended by the Select Committee on the subject of Road Tolls involve important consequences. The removal of the Toll Gate from Clinton to Soda Creek would cause the inequality complained of by those living on this side of the former place to disappear. But it would do a great deal more. It would catch all the fat and other productions liable to toll now escaping on account of being produced east of Clinton, while it would relieve the entire population between Clinton and Soda Creek of tolls upon the articles of consumption coming from the lower country. Furthermore, it would confine the collection of Tolls to upward freight alone, giving free passage to cattle, horses, sheep, hogs, waggons, &c., while it would permit downward freight to pass free. These changes are more important than some might suppose; and we are disposed to think that the Select Committee has probably recommended the best course that it is possible to apply to the evils complained of. That the recommendation of the Committee will be adopted by the House and carried into effect by the Executive there is little reason to doubt. That the arrangement will not receive the approbation of all parties is tolerably certain; but that it is, under all the circumstances, the fairest that could be arrived at, we greatly think. Under it all the settlers from Yale to Soda Creek will be placed upon a fair footing, in so far as legislative imports are concerned. Their taxable products will all alike be met by a common road toll, which those nearest to the market now escape. All such tolls, placed the gate where you will, are unpopular; but if the time has not arrived for absolute abolition, let us aim at equalization. The change recom-

mended by the Committee will not, we are disposed to think, result in any detriment to the revenue. What is lost on animals, vehicles and imported articles, will be fully met by tolls on flour, &c, now escaping altogether. As production and consumption increase in the interior so will the revenue derived from the Toll Gate at Soda Creek; and we trust the time is not distant when the Government will see its way clear to drop the toll altogether or at least to half a cent. One cent a pound on the results of agricultural operations is, indeed, a heavy tax.

Legislative Council.

Thursday, Feb 24, 1870.
LABOR EXCHANGE.
Mr Holbrook moved a resolution asking the government to establish a Labor Exchange with an office at Victoria and New Westminster.
The hon mover read an article from the San Francisco Bulletin showing how great had been the business of such an institution in California, and at considerable length showed most satisfactorily how such an institution would benefit this colony and asked the co-operation of the hon members of the Council in support of the measure.
Mr Holbrook seconded the resolution and said it was the duty of the government to establish such an office at once, and he showed how the institute could be carried on without any extra expense to the colony by connecting it with one of the departments.
Mr Humphreys said he congratulated the hon mover of the resolution and was pleased to see that in a House so peculiarly British they were willing to take lessons from the useful and progressive institutions of that splendid Republic to the south of us, and he hoped this would not be the only occasion upon which hon gentlemen would avail themselves of the valuable assistance which may be derived from that great people.
Mr Alston was in favor of the resolution, but he would assure the hon members that it could not be done without extra expense to the colony.
Messrs Drake, Bernard, Ring, DeCosmos and Carrall supported the resolution and thought a labor exchange office could be conducted without extra expense by connecting it with one of the departments in the colony, either the post office or customhouse.
Hon Attorney General said he favored the measure; but he thought it was not good as a Government scheme. In San Francisco the Labor Exchange was a private enterprise and it was connected with the government.
Mr Pemberton said some years ago he suggested such a measure to Sir James Douglas in regard to Indians. He would now, if asked, keep a book in his office for that purpose without extra expense to the government.
Hon Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works would not oppose the resolution, but there was something more required than a book simply to register names; the person keeping such an office must have an interest by way of fees. He thought it more properly a matter for private enterprise. The hon Stipendiary Magistrate would doubtless do all in his power to assist and further the object, but he very much feared that with an arrangement of that kind, great good would be done, but not the best.
He thought that before another year such a system would be in operation in the Lands and Works office as would be every day a necessary purpose, and where the information obtained by those applying for land or labor would be more reliable than could be obtained from any other source.
The motion was carried.

COMMISSIONERS AND STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES.

Mr Dewdney moved that the salary of the Gold Commissioners for Kootenay be increased to \$2400.
Mr Holbrook supported the motion.
Mr Humphreys asked if any gentleman had been receiving \$3000 as Commissioner for Kootenay, and if so, how had he been employed?
Hon Colonial Secretary said Mr O'Reilly had been receiving a salary of \$3000 for that office but that he had not been there the last year, another man was sent in his place, Mr Bell.
Mr DeCosmos asked how the law was administered in Kootenay when there was no Magistrate there.
Hon Surveyor General thought there should be a resident Magistrate at Kootenay; he did not know whether the salaries were fixed in reference to the district or not; though the true way was to fix salaries of officials without regard to locality and then allow expenses for living, &c, according to locality of station.
Mr Bernard said it was a great injury not to have a resident Magistrate, justice was often defeated in consequence.
Mr Humphreys said the absence of the Magistrate from Lillooet worked injuriously, and cited two cases where justice was defeated in consequence of his absence, and he would move that a resident Magistrate be kept at Kootenay.
Mr O'Reilly supported the motion. He thought there was no district in the colony which required a resident Magistrate so much as Kootenay.
Motion lost.
COMMISSIONERS AT CARIBOO.
Mr DeCosmos asked if such a number of constables were required at Cariboo and what was their occupation.
Dr Carrall said that one of them was acting as Recorder in the absence of the incumbent of that office who had gone to England on leave, and that the other Clerk had been sent to Peace River with plenary powers.
Hon Surveyor General said the Clerk had gone from Cariboo to Peace River to issue mining licenses.
POSTMASTER AT CARIBOO.
Dr Carrall moved that \$1200 be placed on the Estimates for a Postmaster at Barkerville as he thought the removal of that office to Rietfield, as was proposed by the government, would be very inconvenient and a great injustice to the people of Barkerville, as they would be obliged to walk 12 miles to get their letters.
Mr Bernard supported the motion and thought the removal of the post office from Barkerville to Rietfield would be a great inconvenience to the people.
Hon Surveyor General thought the Magistrate could make arrangements to send all parties and save the amount to the revenue.
Mr Robson opposed the motion and said he thought one of the constables there could perform the duty of postmaster.
Hon Colonial Secretary said the Governor had written to the Magistrate at Cariboo to make the best arrangement he could with the present staff, and he would see to it that the Motion respecting the salary of the Magistrate should be carried.
Mr Humphreys moved that his Excellency be requested to appoint two Honorary Magistrates in the Lillooet, Clinton and Soda Creek Districts.
Hon Surveyor General said the Stipendiary Magistrate at Lillooet was required to remain constantly at that place.
Hon Surveyor General said such a motion changed the Constitution of the government, and the Magistrates were required to attend the Council.
Dr Helmecken said the Constitution would not be changed and the Magistrates would not be wanted at the Council.
Motion lost.
MAGISTRATE AT NALIMO.
Mr Bigg moved that the salary of the Stipendiary Magistrate at Nalimo be increased \$250.
Hon Surveyor General said the Magistrate had house rent free and other privileges

which were more than equal to the increase proposed.
Mr Ring withdrew his motion.
The Committee rose and reported progress.
FRIDAY, Feb 25.
Council met at 1:30 p.m. Present—Hon President and Hon Messrs Ormsby, Frutch, O'Reilly, Sashy, Alston, Ball, Saunders, Hamley, Wood, Carrall, Helmecken, Drake, Dewdney, Holbrook, Ring, Robson, Pemberton, Bernard, DeCosmos, Humphreys.
Minutes read and confirmed.
Mr Holbrook moved to-morrow an address to His Excellency asking that newspapers be permitted to pass free within the colony.
ORDERS OF THE DAY.
The second reading of the Regulation of Titles Bill was postponed, also the second reading of the Crown Grants Bill.
The resolution of Mr Drake relating to subsidizing steamers, the resolution of Mr Bernard respecting road to Okanagan, and the resolution of Dr Carrall respecting a wagon road to Dog Creek, were postponed to come up in committee of supply.
The consideration of the Drawbacks Disputes was postponed.
The following supplies were voted:—
Penitentiary, \$3031 25. Revenue Service \$1000. Administration of Justice \$5000. Charitable allowances \$10,500. Education \$10,000—with a recommendation of the Council to increase the sum \$5000. Police and Gaols \$12,000. Rent \$1000. Transport \$4560.
Council adjourned till 1 o'clock Monday.

REPORT ON ROAD TOLLS.

The report of the Select Committee appointed pursuant to the resolution of the member for New Westminster, for the purpose of investigating the Clinton Road Toll grievance, is your Committee report, that there appears to be in certain respects an unequal pressure on farmers residing in the neighborhood, south of the Toll Gate as it is now situated at Clinton, toll being exacted on cattle and produce taken from the farms below the gate and levied again on the flour received back. To remedy this your Committee propose that the gate placed now at Clinton should be removed to a point about a mile south of Soda Creek, by which means toll will be paid equally by all the farmers south of Soda Creek on flour, &c, forwarded to Cariboo. Your Committee would recommend, moreover, the repeal or alteration of the Lys on and Alexandria Road Toll Act, 1862, in order that the toll levied on that part of the road may be in all respects assimilated to the toll levied at Yale, Hope and Douglas, under the Road Toll Act, 1860, by which arrangement cattle and waggons will go free, and no toll will be collected on goods of any description brought through the gate at Soda Creek in a southerly direction.
GOLD AND SILVER.—A singular feature of the new goldfields of Omineca is that nuggets of gold and lumps of pure native silver exist together in the same lead, and are found in about equal proportion in the sluice boxes. All our readers are acquainted with the fact that lead-gold appears to have been since since, when the highest mountains were apparently seething volcanoes, subjected to a heat so strong and fierce that it melted and in cooling assumed the queer, fantastic shapes in which it is now found. Omineca silver presents the same characteristics. The specimens shown here are worth \$20,000 to the ton. Some 40 ounces of the silver was assayed at the Government office late last fall and found to be nearly pure. Omineca gold has the same rich orange color that distinguishes the Leech River gold from that obtained in other localities, but in size the nuggets are generally larger.
POLICE COURT.—Yesterday the bad ones stood two deep in the dock. The Diet and Maniac boys were remanded for one day. The Copland boy was referred to his security to be of good behavior and not take anything but his own property.
JAMES RAYMOND, who acted as Jack Keitch when the Barclay South Indians were executed, is in custody for beating an Indian.
WIM SELTCH, an intelligent-looking man, was brought up charged with stealing a blanket, property of James Orr. His case lies over one day.
Two Indians were brought upon a charge of stabbing a fellow redskin. One was sent up for trial, the other was discharged. Kitty, a gay deceiver, was fined 5s for being drunk and disorderly.

CONFIDING EXPEDITION.

The American Shooting Star sailed yesterday morning for the confiding banks of the Okotok Sea. She took on board at this port 30 tons of Liverpool salt to be used in curing the fish, and the owners think she will be able to make two trips to the banks during the present year. The Shooting Star is owned at Port Townsend, Washington Territory. Three of the owners—Capt Fowler and Williams and Mr J J Hamilton have been in town several days.
AMATEUR CONCERT.—The committee who are arranging for the Amateur Concert to be given on Tuesday evening next for the benefit of St Paul's Church, Equanall, have secured the Theatre in which to hold the entertainment. A large number of amateur performers have volunteered. The program is most attractive and no pains will be spared to make the concert agreeable to all.
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From the South—A MAIL.—Dr Powell returned yesterday afternoon in a plunger, having left Olympia on Thursday morning. Before the stiff east-gale of yesterday the plunger ran from Port Townsend in four hours. The Doctor brought the mail bag left behind by the Eliza Anderson on her last trip. It contained a few Canadian and English papers and letters.
The steamship California sailed at 6 yesterday morning for Portland. While leaving the wharf the wad from the departing gun smashed Brodrick & Co's gas lamp and a number of windows, tore away two weather boards from the store house and lodged in the cavity thus created. Fortunate circumstance that the gun was not loaded with ball.
INSURED PROPERTY.—From the yearly returns of the fire insurance agents in this city, just made to the Municipal authorities, we learn that the value of property real and personal insured within the city limits is \$1,518,000.
The Southerners who went to Brazil after the rebellion have petitioned the U S Government to send a ship to bring them home. It is said the colonists are in a very destitute condition.
It was rumored in Portland on Saturday last that the Union Pacific Railroad Company have bought out all the interest of the Oregon Steam Navigation Company.
FOR THE FLYING SQUADRON.—Letters were received yesterday at the Post office from England directed to officers attached to the Flying Squadron.
The ship Golden Empire arrived yesterday morning from Valparaiso. She will load lumber for a foreign port.
The Tiger.—Should the weather prove fine this afternoon the steam Tiger will come out for practice.

Celestial Phenomena.

During the past year, the accounts of one phenomenon after another have succeeded each other with a rapidity which is startling. Earthquakes have been common occurrences; volcanic eruptions have come to be expected as items of daily news; an eclipse, such as is but rarely to be seen, has taken place; and several interesting meteors have been observed. These come now the description of a strange discovery which has been recently made, and which has been manifested since the apparitions in the heavens which were seen previous to, and appeared to foretell the fall of Jerusalem. In the Southern skies, Australian astronomers have long watched with interest a singular object. Of a class with the remarkable nebula which surrounds the constellation of Orion in our own hemisphere, the nebula in Argo exceeds it in brilliancy almost in the same degree as the sun does the moon. The Orion nebula can be seen only on the darkest nights, but that of Argo shines as gloriously as a star of the third magnitude, and is scarcely obliterated by the effulgence of the full moon.
This splendid object has been of course, previously noticed, but nearly a year ago a report came, taken from the observations of a small telescope of five inches aperture, that the wonderful mass was changing entirely in character. Sir John Herschel averred that this information was of a most important character; and proceeding were immediately taken for hastening the completion of the great Melbourne telescope, which is a reflector of four feet in diameter, and this is now at work. The news coming from it more than confirmed the previous intelligence.
It seems the nebula has not only changed in form, but has actually drifted and shifted about the heavens, while the stars connected with it have retained their positions; apparently showing that the nebula and stellar systems are unconnected, and at different distances from the earth.
But on closer inspection a far more wonderful phenomenon than the shifting, strange though it is, of the beautiful nebula was discovered. The star Eta Argus, which is said to be the most wonderful object in the whole heavenly expanse, has undergone an apparently miraculous metamorphosis in brilliancy. This star was marked in Halley's catalogue as a fourth rate; in Lacaille's, two centuries later as of the second magnitude; in 1843 it surpassed every star in the heavens except the Dog Star. At present it cannot be seen at all with the naked eye.
Without going deeply into the causes of these extraordinary manifestations, it appears probable that the singular electric combinations which are at present going on in the ethereal sphere of the sun are not unlikely to have exercised material influences on the bright bodies of the stars. It is well known that there is at present a large current or column of electric light shooting out to an enormous distance from the verge of the sun's atmosphere, and it may be that the reflection which certain of the nearer stars must naturally take from this pillar of light may have the effect, not only of bringing themselves into extra brilliancy, but of dimming and casting into the shade stars of greater distance from our earth.

The value of imports for 1869, of which \$1,775,622 27; and the amount of duties collected thereon \$342,136 45. During 1868 the imports amounted to \$383,051 98; and the duties thereon \$362,976 61. While, therefore, there has been a falling off in imports \$607,499 69, there has only been a falling off in the revenue derived therefrom of \$20,840 16. Passing to these particular items which may be accepted as an index to local development, we find some little improvement. Last year we imported \$13,974 88 worth of iron and hams; the year before \$2,685 59. Last year we imported \$5,591 87 worth of barley; the year before \$12,119 21. (How is the last year we imported \$2,519 42 worth of beans; the year before \$2,917. Last year we imported \$119,911 89 worth of hras and shorts; the year before \$11,723 65. Last year we imported \$31,538 09 worth of butter; the year before \$19,002 44. Last year we imported \$7,625 63 worth of cheese the year before \$10,270 23. Last year we imported \$749 97 worth of eggs the year before \$1,890 51. Last year we imported \$78,507 07 worth of flour the year before \$119,911 89. Last year we imported \$6,408 55 worth of fresh fruit; the year before \$9,049. Last year we imported \$5,159 05 worth of hay; the year before \$4,634 02. Last year we imported \$3,301 53 worth of hops; the year before \$5,135 53. Last year we imported \$7,398 23 worth of lard; the year before \$11,044 05. Last year we imported \$282,816 65 worth of live stock; the year before \$291,638. Last year we imported \$2549 02 worth of oats; the year before \$7648. Last year we imported \$3098 53 worth of wheat; the year before \$3,165. But whatever crumbs of comfort be extracted from the gradual diminution perceptible in most of these articles, almost lost in the aggregate, that the sum of \$477,876 88 worth of the colony last year in payment of the above-mentioned articles, all which might so well be raised here, appears strange, indeed, that in spite of a large protective duty, the people still consume foreign productions to the extent of half a million dollars a year. Real prosperity is out of the question so long as we rely so largely upon neighbors for articles of food. We should be raised from our own soil. How is it that the farmers continue to permit such a report to be annually exhibited? Has the protective law proved a failure? It cannot be that the soil and climate of British Columbia are less favorable to the production of these articles than are those of the countries whence we are supplied. Unless the farmers make more successful effort to supply the markets of the colony, we fear the advocates of protection will soon be sadly in the minority.

The Probable End.

We have received Canadian news of the 2d inst. The most interesting feature of the news is the arrest of the leader of the Red River party. There appears to be little doubt, the truth of this. He was arrested miles from Fort Garry by two men, acting under the authority of Hudson Bay Company. They were sent him to surrender quietly. He at first refused to do so, drawing a revolver and threatening to use it. The detection of similar persuaders by two officers, however, arrested him and he walked to the fort with captors. The sudden collapse of the authority is attributed to his pronounced in favor of annexation to the United States, a proposition unpopular with settlers and Indians. The authority of the Hudson Bay party had been reestablished, a miserable fate which has afflicted certain class of politicians at Western a fresh opportunity of stirring up the passions of the Indians in the River Settlements. The resolution of Commissioners to Ottawa for the purpose of seeking an amicable meeting of matters, it was made that the Imperial Government was making the necessary preparations for the submission; but the necessity of a step has now happily been obviated and it is most gratifying to think that through the whole of the River War, which applied no sensational headings to American papers, not a drop of human blood has been shed. Beyond a few adventures which may form the subject of jokes, the affair will really come from the memory of man. How the affair has proved, it is not over, altogether without its lessons. Let Governments learn from it those who make a country, not how low their social position, and certain natural rights which we