The Observer.

SAINT JOHN, MARCH 20, 1849.

CORPORATION REVENUE.—The undermentioned curcies of Corporation Revenue were leased this day, by Geo. A. Lockhart, Esq., Auctioneer, for one year, from the 1st of April next. We subjoin the amounts for which the several sources of Revenue were bid off on the present occasion, (the Breakwater excepted) as well as last year, from which it will be seen that there is a gain in the aggregate this year of £72, independent of the Breakwater, not sold.

	1848.	1849.
Wharfage and Slippage at the Market Wharves each Slip,	£110 0	£150 0
Slippage at Union-street Slip,	3 0	10 0
Ditto North Slip,	12 0	15 0
Ditto Lower Cove Slip,	26 0	35 0
Ditto Carleton,	1 0	1 10
Weighing Machine at Union-street,	105 0	105 0
Ditto North Slip,	71 0	53 0
Ditto Sidney Ward,	1 0	3 10
Ditto Carleton,	— —	1 0
Wharfage at the Breakwater,	265 0	— —
Anchorage,	430 0	420 0
Wharfage and Slippage at Rodney Wharf, Carleton,	57 0	65 0
Total	£1122 0	1194 0

HALIFAX AND QUEBEC RAILWAY.—In the Nova Scotia Legislature, on Thursday last, several Resolutions on the subject of the Railroad to Quebec, were moved by Attorney General Uniacke, upon which a Bill is to be founded, guaranteeing a right of way for the road through that Province, whether through granted or ungranted lands, and in case of objection by the owners, to take forcible possession of the same, by making compensation therefor; all ungranted lands for five miles on each side of the road to be vested in the Queen's Majesty, for the use of the road and keeping up the same; and guaranteeing and securing the payment, annually, of £20,000, for the interest on capital borrowed and expended in the accomplishment of such undertaking.—The first four of the resolutions had passed by large majorities. The last of the series, for guaranteeing £20 000, is still under debate; but it is believed it will also pass by a large majority.

We yesterday received a neatly-printed pamphlet of 28 pages, from the press of Messrs. J. & A. McMillan, bearing the following explicit title—"A statement of facts, as they occurred at the late Annual Meeting of the Diocesan Church Society: with a reply to some mis-statements and expositions in the Rev. F. Coster's Defence of the 'Companion to the Prayer Book;' by ROBERT BAYARD, M.D., &c."—The subject of which the pamphlet treats having caused considerable excitement, it will likely be extensively read. Copies are advertised for sale at the book store of the Messrs. McMillan.

SUSPENSION BRIDGE ACROSS THE FALLS.—We learn that Mr. Reynolds, owner of the Mills at Lepreaux, purposes to erect a wire suspension Bridge across the Falls near this city, of construction similar to the one recently erected near the Falls of Niagara. An Act of Assembly having been obtained for the purpose, it is understood that the work will soon be commenced.

BAY OF FUNDY SURVEY.—It is stated on the authority of a private letter from England, received by the last mail, that the Survey of the Bay of Fundy, &c., will probably be resumed next summer, in a steamer, under command of Capt. Shortland, and that the depot of the Survey will be at Halifax.

☞ We refer the public to the advertisement of Mr. Edmund Ward, in another column, by which it will be seen that copies of Macaulay's great work, the "History of England," as also the British Reviews, and Blackwood's Magazine, may be obtained from him on very moderate terms.

THE NEXT EXPRESS.—We learn from the New-Brunswicker, that Mr. Craig, the gentleman employed by the Associated Press in the United States to run the express from Halifax to this City, with the news by the Royal Mail Steamers, arrived here on Friday evening, and left for Halifax on Saturday morning, to perfect his arrangements for expressing on the news by the *Canada*, which steamer will probably be at Halifax to day or to-morrow.—The steamer "*Commodore*" left last night for Granville Point, where she will remain until the express arrives.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.—Last evening a series of Astronomical and Dissolving Views were exhibited. To the industry and talent of Mr. Foulis, who prepared the Gas and superintended the Lanterns, the Members of the Institute were chiefly indebted for this entertainment.

Next Monday evening, Mr. Duval will deliver a lecture on *Marine Zoology*.

It is expected that in less than two years there will be a population of 200,000 in California, who will, for a time, require supplies of most of the necessaries of life from the Atlantic ports, employing hundreds of vessels in their transportation, and in the trade between California and the ports of the Pacific. Very few of the vessels which have left, or may leave the Atlantic ports of the Union for San Francisco, will ever return. Those which arrive safe there will find employment in those seas.

ANOTHER DESTRUCTIVE FIRE.

We have again to record another devastating fire in this City, which has laid bare the greater part of the densely populated district, known as "York Point." The flames were discovered about three o'clock on Wednesday morning, from the dwelling of Capt. Thomas M. Smith, in George's Street, making rapid progress on a barn in rear of his dwelling, but whether the fire had its origin in that building or in a back dwelling-house belonging to the estate of the late George Thompson, has not, we believe, been satisfactorily ascertained. It had gained such headway, however, in the middle of a compact block of buildings, that by the time many of the residents in the adjoining buildings were made aware of their danger, they had barely time to save their lives, leaving their clothing and effects to the ravages of the flames.

The fire spread in every direction—demolishing all the buildings on the West side of George's street, between Union and North streets, except Mrs. Fisher's, on the corner of the latter street—a vacant lot in rear of Mrs. F.'s favouring its arrest at this point. On the East side of George's street, the only buildings within range of the fire, (the residence of the Hon. R. L. Hazen,) were destroyed; as well as all the buildings on the North side of Union street, between the corner of George's street and Smyth street—both sides of Mill street, from Union to North street, (except two large houses and a small one, on the East side, to the Southward of North street—the latter owed by the estate of John Mahony, and the others by John Ansley, T. Hatheway, and others)—and both sides of Drury Lane, from Union to North street, except the house owned by D. Coll, fronting the latter street—and all on the East side of Smyth street, between Union and North streets.

It was some time before the firemen were on the ground in sufficient numbers to get efficiently to work, but, aided by a plentiful supply of water from the Company's plugs, they did their duty manfully. On the East side of Mill street, the fire was almost miraculously arrested by the labours of the Portland Engine Company, under the direction of John Polk, Esq., and the Union City Engine, aided by some intrepid axemen and volunteers. The Military were, as usual, early on the ground, and one of their engines, stationed in George's street, was mainly instrumental in preventing the spread of the flames to the Northward. In Union street it was only by great exertions the houses on the South side were preserved—all of them on that side of the street, with the exception of a small building occupied as an engine house, escaped destruction, although some, particularly those occupied by the Messrs. Lawton, opposite George's street, are much scorched.

We are happy to learn that no lives were lost, and but few serious accidents occurred.

On the Property destroyed, there were insurance to the amount of about £4000. Many of the house-owners will be very severe sufferers—having lost their all,—the ground being principally leased.—The people rendered houseless by this distressing calamity has been estimated at about two thousand. By far the greater number of these are labourers and their families—a class of persons who have been suffering all winter for want of employment—and those of them who could not find other means of shelter, have been taken care of by the Magistrates and members of the Common Council, and located for the present in some of the public buildings. We are pleased to find subscriptions on foot for affording present relief to the most necessitous, to which some very liberal donations have been made.

We have endeavoured to make up a list of the front buildings destroyed—numbering some seventy or eighty—but those acquainted with the district now made desolate, are aware that almost the entire ground between the streets named was covered with small buildings occupied as dwellings, with but little if any yard room; and to this circumstance, and the narrowness of the streets, are, in a great measure, to be attributed the destruction of so many buildings—for wherever the engines could gain any advantage, by the lowness of the adjoining buildings or an open space of ground, they succeeded in arresting the progress of the flames.

BUILDINGS DESTROYED.

George's-street (West side).—Two-story house owned by Thos. Trafton, occupied by P. Sinclair; two-story House owned by Widow Connor, occupied by John Brydon; large Barn owned by Thomas Gilbert, Esq., of Gagetown, (filled with hay); three-story house owned and occupied by T. M. Smith, Esq.; large three-story House and a two-story House, belonging to the estate of the late Geo. Thompson, former occupied by Dr. Travers and J. Cummins, latter by Mrs. Thompson's family; three-story House owned by Thos. Trafton, occupied by Thos. Brydon, P. Sinclair, Jr., —— Rives, and another family.

Union-street [North side].—Large House (east corner of George's street) owned and occupied by Hon. R. L. Hazen, with range of buildings on George's street; three-story double House (west corner of George's street,) owned by William Hall, stevedore, and Daniel Sullivan, grocer, occupied by them, Tries. Rankine, son, and others; two-story House owned by —— McGrade; four small buildings owned by the Stanton estate, occupied by Knox, chairmaker, Cotill, tinsmith, Fenton, gunsmith, and Widow McBride.

Union-street [South side].—Small building owned by G. T. Ray, occupied as an Engine House.

Mill-street [East side].—Range of buildings (corner of Union street) owned by the Stanton estate, shops occupied by Widow Campbell, Jonas Lewis, and Widow Floyd—other tenants up stairs; large three story House and Bakery owned by Thomas Rankine, Jr., and occupied by himself, Dr. Hurley and Miss Glasgow, milliner; small House owned by Widow Lawrence, occupied by herself and John Lawrence; four-story House owned by Thos. Finch, shop occupied by J. Connell and dwelling upper rooms by a number of families; four-story Building owned and occupied by D. Spillane as a grocery and liquor store and dwellings; four-story House owned by the estate of —— Mahony, with a range of buildings in the rear, occupied by some twenty families.

Mill-street [West side].—House (corner of Union street) owned by Lackey Collins, occupied by Mrs. Hurley, J. Sullivan and others; three-story House owned by Lackey Collins, and occupied by P. W. Crum, as a grocery; small House owned by Mrs. Stevens, and occupied by James Dever as a grocery; House owned by Miss Simonds and occupied by —— McLaughlan and four or five other families; a double three-story House owned by Mrs. O'Connor, shops occupied by Widow Collins, and D. Sullivan, grocer, and dwellings by D. O'Neill and other families; three-story House owned by Mrs. M'Avity, and occupied by Edward Hayes, baker, and another family; three-story House owned by John McArthur, occupied by —— M'Carty as a grocery and provision store, and by several families; House owned by John Pryor, the lower part occupied as shops; double House owned by P. Sinclair, lower part occupied as a grocery, &c., by Hallidays, and dwelling apartments by several families.

Drury Lane [West side].—Large three-story House (extending from Union street) owned by James White, shoemaker, occupied by him and others; Blacksmithshop owned by Widow Lawrence, occupied by E. Balkam; two-story double House, owned by John McCarroy, occupied as shops and dwellings; two-story House owned by William Loonys, occupied by four or five families; three-story House owned by James White, shoemaker, occupied by five families; three-story house owned by Edward Mullin, milkman, occupied by three families; three-story House owned by John McCarty, occupied by eight or nine families; three-story House owned by Patrick Cain, occupied by four or five families; two two-story Houses owned by John Lyons, the first occupied by four or five, the second by three families; three-story double House and Blacksmithshop owned by the estate of John Sinclair, (house occupied by eight or nine families); House and Blacksmithshop (corner of North street) owned by Peter McLaren, the latter occupied by P. & J. Campbell, blacksmiths, house occupied by a number of families.

Drury Lane [East side].—Three-story building extending from and shop fronting on Union street, owned by L. Collins, and occupied by some ten or eleven families; one story House owned and occupied by James Sheen; two story House owned by John Ansonough, occupied by five families; two-story House owned by W. Irvine, gunsmith, occupied by the owner and another family; three-story House owned by Bernard Kain, occupied by twelve or thirteen families; three-story House owned by Thomas McAvity, and occupied by six families; three-story House owned by John McCarron, the lower part occupied by —— Graham as a baking house and shop, upper flats by some four or five families; three-story house owned by John Morgan, occupied by Irish and fifteen families; three-story House owned by John Grady, milkman, and occupied by two families.

Smyth-street [East side].—Large four-story House (extending from Union street) owned by John McSweeny, occupied as a grocery and liquor store, upper part by some twelve or fourteen families; four-story House owned by James Burns, watchmaker, occupied as shops and dwellings by a number of families; four-story House owned by David S. Marshall, occupied as the last named; three-story house owned by the Widow Gayner, occupied as a shop and dwelling by several families; two-story House owned and occupied by Andrew Moore, tinsmith; three-story House owned by J. B. Gaynor, occupied by James McCoach, turner, and others; three-story House owned by Andrew Moore, tinsmith, and occupied by a number of families; three-story House owned by Wm. McAvity, occupied as a liquor shop, &c., by D. Sullivan; three-story House owned by the estate of James Ballentine, and occupied as a shop and dwelling by several families; two story House (corner of North street) owned by J. Collins, and occupied by himself and —— Holland, as taverns, &c.

The flames extended across Smyth street, and did much injury to the upper stories of several houses—two belonging to P. McCourt, one to P. M'Devitt, and another to the estate of R. Nowlan. Here, however, their further progress was arrested, and the destruction of much valuable property, with vessels at the wharves, which appeared to be in great danger, was fortunately prevented.—*Courier*.

PUBLIC MEETING IN BEHALF OF THE SUFFERERS.

A meeting of the Magistrates, Members of the Common Council, and inhabitants of St. John, was held at the City Hall yesterday, when the following proceedings were adopted.

Present—Justices Needham, Lockhart, Vanhorne, Ansley, Wetmore, Tisdale, Vernon, Payne, DeVeber, Gallagher, Chubb, Keltie, Crookshank, Charles Ward, Harding, Thomas Allan, Jacob Allan, and Kirk. Assistant Aldermen Keans, Fairweather, M'Avity, and Hagarty, and W. O. Smith, Esq.

In the absence of his Worship the Mayor, and his Honor the Recorder, WILLIAM H. NEEDHAM, Esquire, Alderman for King's Ward, took the Chair, and J. William Boyd, Esq., the Clerk of the Peace, was requested to act as Secretary:

Thereupon, on motion of Mr. Justice DeVeber, seconded by Mr. Justice Ansley, it was unanimously

Resolved, That Committees be appointed to solicit subscriptions towards the immediate relief of the urgent necessities of the many poor families rendered almost destitute by the calamitous fire of this morning, at York Point, and that Alderman Needham and Justice Ansley be the Committee for King's Ward, Alderman Lockhart and Assist. Alderman Keans for Queen's Ward, Mr. Justice Keltie and Assistant Alderman Hagarty for Duke's Ward, Alderman Vanhorne and Assistant Alderman M'Avity for Sydney Ward, and the Aldermen and Assistant Aldermen of the Western side of the harbour for Guy's and Brook's Wards.

Resolved, That Aldermen Needham and Lockhart, Justice Gallagher, and Assistant Aldermen Keans and M'Avity, be a Committee to notify all persons requiring shelter, that places of refuge are in readiness for their accommodation, and that they point out the same to all applicants.

Resolved, That application be immediately made to the Legislature for a grant towards the relief of the numerous families rendered almost destitute by the calamitous fire of this morning; and that the Chairman transmit this Resolution, as the application, forthwith to the Members for the City and County of St. John, to the Hon. Hugh Johnston, the Hon. the Solicitor General, Hon. John Robertson, and Hon. R. L. Hazen.

W. H. NEEDHAM, *Chairman*.

J. W. BOYD, *Secretary*.

The recent conflagration will afford an opportunity for widening Mill-street and improving York Point generally, which, we hope, will be taken advantage of. That street being a principal thoroughfare to and from the City, requires extension much beyond its present limits, and it can now be effected at much less expence than formerly. Other improvements are also loudly called for in that district of the City. For the preservation of health and cleanliness, it would be well, perhaps, if Drury Lane were shut up altogether, and Mill and Smyth streets widened. This arrangement would afford yard room and other conveniences that have not latterly been enjoyed by the inhabitants in that locality, and the want of which is known by the prevalence of disease in the close and crowded dwellings, produced or prolonged by the heaps of filth always to be found in the streets and alleys, if not in the houses themselves. The subject is of importance to the City generally, and no time should be lost in taking action upon it.—*Ib.*

The last English Mail brought instructions from the Home Government to the Commissariat Department to pay over to the Treasurer the sum of £7063 9s. 5d., being the balance, *in full* of the Provincial claim, to reimburse the Emigrant expenses of 1847, which, in addition to the sum previously paid, (£7330.) makes the whole amount £14,393 9s. 5d. The claim made by the Emigrant Bill, passed last session, was £13,511 11s. 11d., so that the Province gets 1866 17s. 9d. more than was at first asked. This, we understand, arose in this way: In making up the account, last year, the Emigrant expenses in prospective, up to the first of May following, were estimated at £3500; but the authorities in England having required additional explanation and information, particularly with regard to the high expenditure in Fredericton, an inland town, a complete and perspicuous statement was accordingly made up, in which full particulars of the items and places of expenditure, with much other information as bore materially on the question, were given. This was accompanied by a strong letter to the Governor, referring to the state of St. John in 1847; and the result is, that Earl Grey has sustained the account to a penny.

We believe there are but few persons who will be disposed to withhold a well deserved meed of praise to the Hon. John R. Partelow, for his exertions, from first to last, in this matter. It will be remembered by our citizens generally, that that gentleman took his initiative, by moving two sets of resolutions in the Common Council, when Mayor of this City, which were forwarded to Her Majesty's Government, who promised, in reply, a *portion* only of the expenditure. He, however, contended for the whole, and has succeeded in getting it.—It must, we think, be peculiarly gratifying to Mr. Partelow to find his views of public justice sustained by the high authorities in the Mother Country, and he may look back with pride at this bold and comprehensive measure, as one of the many acts of his public life, deserving not only the plaudits of the citizens of St. John, but of the Province at large.—*Courier*.

PORTLAND POLICE OFFICE.—A young man named Edward Collins, a baker by trade, was arrested on Portland Bridge, by one of the Portland Police, on Sunday evening last, between 7 and 8 o'clock, for making use of violent language, and also for an attempt to commit an assault on the said Policeman. He was brought up for trial yesterday, before the Stipendiary Magistrate, Jacob Allan, Esq., and after a lengthy investigation, he was fined £20—in default of payment of which, he was committed to the Penitentiary for ten months.—*New Items*.

COMMON COUNCIL.—The Fredericton correspondent of the *Albion* says:—"The amendments of the Charter are in the hands of the City and County members, who are endeavouring to agree on the subject, and whatever they agree to, will no doubt be passed by the House. The alterations, I think, will be in the election of the Mayor from the Common Council, the appointment of a stipendiary Magistrate and a Clerk—the extension of the Police Law of Portland to the City—seperating the office of Clerk of the Peace from that of Common Clerk, and thus making two offices instead of one; and I am of opinion that freemen will be confined to voting in *one* ward, as at present, the suggested alteration being unprecedented."

[BY TELEGRAPH.]

CALAIS, March 17.—*Another destructive Fire!*—About ten o'clock last night a fire broke out in the block of buildings (six in number) on Union Wharf, which were totally consumed.—They were occupied as flour and provision-stores and warehouses. The fire having made considerable headway before it was discovered a large amount of goods were destroyed; a quantity of lumber in the rear was also consumed. Loss not estimated as yet.

The R. M. S. *Europa*, arrived this morning at 1 A. M., 58 hours from New York, and after remaining a couple of hours proceeded on for England. The *Europa* has a fare of 82 passengers.—*Halifax Courier, Saturday*.

Newfoundland has an area of 36,000 square miles, and a population of 100,000.

Model of a Dry Dock.—A neat model of this great desideratum, for Halifax Harbour, now lies at Keefler's Reading Rooms. It has been designed by C. W. Fairbanks, Esq. Civil Engineer; and we have no hesitation in stating, that the project is as practicable as it is simple; there are a dozen good and substantial reasons, why such a work should be proceeded with *at once*. And although we have not space just now to urge any one of them, they cannot fail to recommend themselves to every person interested in the shipping, trade, and character of the port.—*Halifax Courier*.

Distress in the Province.—We are grieved to learn from our contemporaries and correspondents, as well as from personal observation, that very great destitution of the common necessaries of life, bordering in some instances on actual starvation, at present exists in the city where we dwell, as well as in the coloured settlements at Hammond Plains and Preston, in the neighbourhood, and in many places in more remote parts of the country. The prospect for the next two or three months, until the coming harvest, is sufficiently gloomy and appalling.—*Halifax Guardian*.

Mr. W. Lyon Mackenzie, formerly Speaker of the House of Assembly, and mayor of Toronto, Upper Canada, and whose subsequent rebellious history is well known, has availed himself of the general amnesty, and arrived in Montreal on Saturday last. Mr. Bidwell, who was formerly Speaker of the Upper Canada House of Assembly, and is now in excellent practice at the New York Bar, will not, it is said, return to Canada.—*Quebec Gaz.*

Commercial matters look very gloomy here, and it becomes more and more evident that if activity and prosperity are to be restored, it must be by the help of some new branches of business.—*Montreal Witness*.

His Grace the Archbishop of Quebec has received the Papal Bulls appointing the Very Reverend Father Larkin Bishop of Toronto, in succession to the late Bishop Power. Bishop Larkin is about 45 years of age.

A statement of the exports of bread-stuffs from six of the principal American ports, during the last four months of 1848 to Great Britain and Ireland, gives the quantity of flour at 659,000 barrels, corn 5,900,000 bushels, and wheat nearly 1,000,000 bushels.

Mr. Potter delivered a lecture, recently, at the Hope Chapel Lecture room in Broadway, New York, on a book that he is about to publish, entitled the Rise, Progress, and Present Condition of the Public Institutions in New York and the British Provinces.

FANNY KEMPLE BUTLER.—This eminent lady having completed her course of readings in Boston, is now delighting the New Yorkers with her histrionic powers. Never at any previous time has a reader been so entirely—so thoroughly successful, as has been this gifted daughter of Thespis. In New York no room could be found large enough to hold the multitudes who flocked to hear her, and at a reading of *Macbeth*, the other evening, a large sum had to be returned to those who were not able to obtain entrance.

STOOLS FOR CALIFORNIA.—The *Worcester Ægis* says, "a load of three hundred stools, manufactured in Sterling in Worcester County, passed through our streets last week, boxed up for California. They are designed for seats for diggers. They are worth fifty cents, but may be considered as good for ten to twenty-five dollars each, in El Dorado.

H. M. S. *Constance*, 50, has been in at San Francisco, California, but by using proper precaution, she only lost two men by desertion, during the time of her stay in that tempting locality.

Col. Bliss is private Secretary to President Taylor. Col. B. was the General's aid-de-camp during the Mexican war, and is his son-in-law.

The 30th Congress of the United States terminated its existence at 7 o'clock in the morning of Sunday the 4th of March, after a fist fight between two honorables on the floor of the Senate, and a similar exhibition in the House of Representatives.

The packet ship Constellation, lately launched at New York, is said to be the largest packet ship in the United States. Her dimensions are as follows; length of main deck, 215; extreme breadth, 33 feet; depth of hold, 28½ feet; register tonnage, 1602; carpenter's measurement, 2000 tons. She is to trade between New-York and Liverpool.

CHANGE OF THE BRITISH NAVIGATION LAWS.—It has been stated, briefly, in many of our papers that Mr. Labouchere has again advanced in Parliament the project of the British Ministry for a modification of the Navigation Laws, and that Mr. Bancroft had "given assurances" that he should be willing to join, on the part of this country, in a change founded upon the proposed "reciprocity." It would seem that the reciprocity, so far as this country is concerned, would be simply the opening to British vessels to that part of the lake commerce now confined to our own bottoms. Mr. Bancroft was also willing to sign a convention changing the whole nature of our coasting trade. The proposed changes may or may not be advantageous to this country, but the assumption of Mr. Bancroft, just upon the era of the departure from power of the administration which appointed him, is at least a curious one. Mr. Webster has proposed an inquiry into the subject. The New York Courier thus reviews this matter:—

We can hardly believe our senses, when we see that Mr. Bancroft—whose further term of service in London, however, it may be hoped, cannot be long—has ventured thus to commit his government to a course of measures, overthrowing the whole long established Navigation Laws of these United States, without any sanction or shadow of sanction from the Congress of the nation.

If Mr. Polk and Mr. Buchanan have given instructions to Mr. Bancroft, warranting this declaration of his, the responsibility would be shifted from the Minister to the Administration; but none the less manifest would be the presumption of the Executive in thus pledging the country to a vital change of measures—old as the Republic itself—and which Congress having enacted, Congress alone can rightfully convert, or stipulate to modify or repeal.

Our readers, moreover, should mark the contrast between the caution of the British Minister to consult and to defer to the opinion of Parliament, before he could venture to propose the change in the Navigation Laws, and the utter recklessness exhibited by Mr. Bancroft, and his contempt of Congress, in the pledge he seems to have given to the British Cabinet.

Let the annexed concluding paragraph from Mr. Labouchere's speech, be well meditated. A member having asked if any assurance had been received from the American Government, as to the reception they would give to the proposed change, Mr. L. thus replied:

I think I can answer the question of the hon. member. In an interview which I had a short time ago with the American minister, Mr. Bancroft, he spoke of his desire that such a convention should be signed. He said that he should be willing the next day to decide upon any convention which should include the coasting trade (hear, hear.) I replied, that on a question of this kind, I did not think I ought to anticipate the decision of the House; that it was a question upon which Parliament should decide. But, judging from Mr. Bancroft's manner, I have no doubt that he would be prepared tomorrow to give his assent to throwing open the coasting trade in the modified manner I have explained to the House. These, sir, are the outlines of the scheme I have to propose to the adoption of the House.

Here is Mr. Bancroft, before the Congress of the United States have even been consulted on the subject, professing his readiness to sign a Commercial Convention, which should annihilate all the protection thrown by our Navigation Laws around the shipping of the United States, and should admit British vessels to an entire equality with our own, not only in all foreign trade, but in our coasting trade. This hot zeal of the American Minister is put aside by the British Minister from a sense of duty, because he was acting under the sense of his constitutional responsibility to Parliament—felt that he ought not to anticipate the decision of the House—that it was a question upon which Parliament should decide. What a contrast between the constitutional scruples of the Minister of a Monarchy, and the Minister of a Republic of written laws and constitution, and accurately limited power.—*Boston Daily Advertiser*.

HENRY CLAY ON EMANCIPATION IN KENTUCKY.—Mr. Clay has addressed a letter to Mr. Plaisdell of Kentucky, in which he gives his views of the subject of slavery in Kentucky, and his plan for emancipation in that State, for the consideration of the State Convention, which is soon to be called together, for the revision of the constitution. Mr. Clay assumes that the majority of the people feel and believe that the institution of slavery is one that should be done away with. He does not think it necessary to argue with those who believe it a blessing, or favorable to public liberty. He proposes a system of general emancipation and colonization, to commence in 1855 or 1860, which provides that all slaves at or beyond a fixed time,—leaving open between the dates above mentioned the specific arrangement of that time—shall become free, on arriving at the age of 25 years. He proposes, however, as an essential and necessary condition, that all persons, so freed, shall be sent out of the State, and indicates the Colony at Liberia as the proper place to which they should go. He adds to this another condition, that the expense of this indispensable transportation, with that of the support of the freed-man for six months after his arrival at the colony, should be acquired from a fund raised from the labor of the slave before he is made free.—*Ib.*

WASHINGTON.—We understand that it has been found necessary by the President of the United States to require that all applications for office shall be made to the Chiefs of the several Departments, by whom they will be submitted at the proper time. No direct application can be entertained by the President for any office whatever.

The course of business in relation to appointments is to be this. The vacancies are first to be filled, and appointments are to be made immediately for offices of limited terms, which are about to expire. After the adjournment of the Senate, it will then be considered how far the administration shall go in removals of persons whose terms are not soon to expire. Those who have but a year, perhaps, and who are otherwise unexceptionable, may be permitted to run out their time. But those who have two, three, and nearly four years to run, may expect to be required to make room for others.

There are many applicants for Consulships. There are but four or five that are worth going after, viz: Liverpool, London, Paris, Havre, Glasgow, Havana and Rio. Gov. Armstrong wishes to come home from Liverpool. When he does, that place will be given to some one of the applicants. Several names have been mentioned for it.

It is understood that Mr. Hannegan, appointed Minister to Berlin, by Mr. Polk, on the 4th of March, at 6 o'clock in the morning, and confirmed by the Senate, will not be deprived of his appointment by Gen. Taylor. The old hero is magnanimous.—*New-York paper*.

FROM CALIFORNIA.—We are indebted to a friend for the Star and Californian, published at San Francisco, Dec. 23. It contains some interesting reports of meetings of the people of California for the establishment of a Provisional Government, by a convention of delegates regularly constituted. It furnishes evidence also of the actual existence of a civil government for the preservation of society and the punishment of crimes recognized by every society.

On the 10th of December a trial took place in the village of San Jose, before Judge Kimball H. Dimmick, Alcalde of the District, and a jury empanneled for the case, of three men, named Davis, Campbell, and Freer, for murder. The jury pronounced a verdict of guilty, and they were sentenced to be hanged. The sentence was carried into execution on the 18th, in presence of a large concourse of citizens. The convicts confessed their guilt, and embraced the Catholic faith. Three other men were subsequently tried for participation in the same crime, viz., Cotton, Woolard, and Lee, and the two latter on the additional charge of perjury. They also were found guilty, and were sentenced for the first offence to receive, Cotton 15 and the two others 18 lashes, and the latter on the additional charge, 40 lashes each, and one month's confinement in the stocks. C. E. Picket, tried at Fort Sacramento, on a charge of the murder of Mr. Alderman, was acquitted.

A public meeting, of which Dr. John Townsend was president, and James C. Ward and William S. Clark, Vice-Presidents, was held at San Francisco on the evening of the 21st, and by adjournment on the 23d, for considering the necessity of establishing a Provisional Government. They adopted a very well drawn up preamble and resolutions, stating the necessities of the case, and the steps resolved on for accomplishing the object. The preamble alludes to the cession of the territory by Mexico—the cessation of the military government—the great influx of emigrants—and the intelligence which afforded little prospect of an immediate extension over them of the laws of the United States.

They recommend to the inhabitants of California to hold meetings and elect delegates to represent them in a convention to be held at San Jose on the 4th of March, 1849, for the purpose of drafting and preparing a form of Provisional government, to be submitted to the people for ratification or rejection by a vote by ballot.

They maintain that the right of any description of taxation exists only in the necessity of incurring and defraying the expenses of the government of the people so taxed, and that as the United States have not established any government over California since its cession, the duties which have been collected since the disbandment of the extraordinary military forces, justly belong to the people of the territory, and should be claimed for their benefit by the government which they may succeed in establishing.

Emigrants had been pouring into the diggings from all nations. The cold weather had for a time checked the emigration to the mines; but almost every one not engaged in gold digging was preparing to go to the mines in Spring. The present is the coldest winter known in California for fifty years.

While in San Francisco, real estate had advanced five hundred per cent. within twelve months; in the Sandwich Islands it had fallen forty per cent.—*Boston Daily Advertiser*.

DOMINICA.—A severe shock of an earthquake was felt at Dominica on the 23d of January, which shook the prison so severely that it was deemed expedient to discharge 16 persons therefrom.

The latest accounts from the West Indies state that the crop of sugar throughout the British West India Islands, and also in the vicinity of Demerara, was good.

ENGLISH POST OFFICE.—In 1848 the number of chargeable letters delivered in the United Kingdom amounted to 329 millions, an increase in nine years of 253 millions.

The London papers announce the death on the 26th ult. of Robert Cadell of Edinburgh, an eminent bookseller and publisher, who deserves to be respectfully remembered, for the connection he has had with the works of Sir Walter Scott, and his agency in encouraging the production of some of those works, as well as in aiding the publication of the whole.

ENORMOUS CHEESE.—The London papers mention the arrival there of an enormous cheese. The milk of seven hundred cows was used in making it, and it weighs, 1,474 pounds. It is thirteen feet in circumference, four feet and a quarter in diameter, and eighteen inches in thickness. It was made by Messrs. Austin & Stone, farmers of Austinburgh, Ohio, United States of America, and was offered for and obtained a prize in New York.

GAS EXPLOSION AT EDINBURGH.—An explosion startled the inhabitants of Edinburgh on Thursday. An intense vibration of the earth shook the houses near the Canongate; the inmates were, in some cases, thrown down, and windows were broken. The cause was soon ascertained; and the attention of the crowds who now thronged to the spot was drawn to a sheet of bright flame arising from the gas-holder of the Edingburgh Gas Company, which told too truly that the immense quantity of gas which it contained had, by some unknown means, caugh fire. In another moment, the whole was one sheet of flame; the crowds which lined the Calton-hill, Regent-road, and the adjoining points, whence a view of the burning mass could be obtained, forming as it were an immense amphitheatre in the distance. The fire continued to blaze with great fury until, gradually, as the gas was consumed, the gas-holder immerged in the tank amongst the water beneath, and the conflagration was ultimately extinguished by means of wet blankets and coarse sacking being spread over the shattered remains of the gas-holder. The mysterious part of the matter is, by what means the gas in the holder became ignited. The gasometer was completely isolated, surrounded by a wall, and, as it is asserted, no fire or combustible substance allowed inside. There were in the gas-holder, at the time, nearly 300,000 cubic feet of gas, the greater portion of which would, of course, be consumed. The total damage was estimated at about £2,000.—*Glasgow Courier*.

CHINESE HEMP.—French agriculture has recently been enriched by a very important new production. This precious article is the Chinese hemp, the *Lo-ma corchorus*, the seeds of which were imported into France by M. Stier, a member of the French embassy in China, and has been cultivated and naturalized at Marseilles by M. Garnier Savator. This hemp, the reproduction of which is now secured by the seeds which have ripened in the best possible manner, grows to a height of twenty four or twenty five feet, the stalk is from five to six inches in circumference, each plant produces from two to three kilograms of seed, and furnishes thread enough to make a yard of superb lawn, superior in beauty and quality to any obtained from French materials. The cultivation of this plant in the south of France will be the more precious to the country as a climate of the temperature of that region is necessary for its fructification, and its seeds will find a ready sale in other countries where the filament may be produced. The South will have double advantage. Some specimens of this plant were exhibited at the Agricultural Show at Montpelier. The height of it was from twenty to twenty-two feet.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

On the 8th instant His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor came down to the Council Chamber and gave his assent to seventeen Bills, among which were—An Act to extend the limits of the Burnt District in this City; an Act to authorize the Mayor, Aldermen and Commonalty of the City of Saint John to purchase or lease a lot of land for the purpose of enlarging the Country Market fronting on Charlotte street; an Act to authorize an assessment upon the Parish of Portland, in the City and County of Saint John, for lighting a part of the said Parish with Gas; an Act to amend an Act, intituled "An Act for establishing and maintaining a Police Force in the Parish of Portland, in the City and County of Saint John; an Act to amend an Act for the establishment and regulation of Boards of Health in the several Counties of this Province; an Act to facilitate the sale and improvement of Crown Lands in certain cases; and an Act relating to the Trade between the British North American Possessions. The last Act allows the importation, duty free, of all articles the growth and production of the North American Provinces (excepting Spirituous Liquors,) into this Colony, which the same shall be admitted on like terms into the other Provinces from New-Brunswick.

The following Resolutions on the subject of the late extraordinary Report of Mr. Watson, the Post Office Surveyor in Nova Scotia, on the state of the Roads in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, relative to the conveyance of the English Mails, were passed unanimously by the House of Assembly on the 6th inst.:—

On motion of Mr. End,

Whereas this House has learned, with surprise and deep regret, from the Message this day communicated by command of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, that it is the intention of the Imperial Government to discontinue the transmission of the British and Canadian Mails through Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and in future to forward them via Boston, through the United States of America: And whereas this measure is fraught with evil to these Provinces, and this House cannot escape the conviction, that the Imperial Government must have proceeded in this matter on *information palpably erroneous*, the fallacy of which, the vast sums already from time to time expended on the Great Roads, and the least practical knowledge of these Colonies, will instantly expose: And whereas, were proof required, the House need but refer to the Documents accompanying His Excellency's Message, and especially to the Report of *Mr. Watson*, the Post Office Inspector, which gives a most exaggerated description of the state of the Roads, and the overcharged character of which is evident from the fact of the hitherto uninterrupted rapidity and regularity of the Mail transmission, as well as from the proposal of the Messieurs King to transmit the whole Mails through Nova Scotia, the Letter portion at ten, and the Newspaper at eight miles per hour, for a consideration of Forty-two pounds each trip, (being an increased speed and a much less sum than is now paid,) a tangible fact wholly irreconcilable with Mr. Watson's allegation "that it is an undeniable fact that very many portions of this Road are in such a state that a rate of speed cannot be obtained beyond three miles an hour;" therefore

Resolved, unanimously, That an humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, praying that His Excellency may be pleased to bring this subject under the immediate notice of Her Majesty's Government, as involving considerations of the greatest importance to this Province in a Political as well as in an Agricultural and Commercial point of view; and that His Excellency may be pleased earnestly to press these considerations upon the notice of Her Majesty's Government, and the paramount claims which the Loyal People of these Colonies feel themselves to have upon the Mother Country, and which they confidently believe, if properly understood, will not be overlooked.

On the 7th, on motion of Hon. L. A. Wilmot, the House went into committee of the whole, on a bill to consolidate and amend the several Acts of Assembly relating to the Criminal Laws of this Province, so far as relates to the definition of indictable offences and the punishment thereof, and after some debate progress was reported.

On Thursday the House was principally occupied in discussing the Hon. Mr. Fisher's Bill to vacate the seats of Members in certain cases. The hon. mover presented three propositions, one to vacate the seats of certain high officers of the crown, therein mentioned, another to extend the rule to all those concerned with the receipt or expenditure of the Revenue, and the third to extend to all those accepting any office, however small, to which emolument is attached. The same arguments for and against this bill were used as when the measure was formerly under discussion, and the third proposition was carried after a very lengthened debate, which vacates the seat of any member accepting any office of emolument.

On the 9th, Mr. Ritchie, by leave, presented a Petition from James Kirk and James Robertson, of the city of St. John, Merchants, Chairman and Secretary to a Public Meeting of the Freeholders, Merchants, Citizens and inhabitants, holden in the said City, praying that an Act may pass authorizing the construction of a Railway between that place and Shediac, as a public work.

Ordered that the said petition be