

Tuesday, May 22, 1866.

A MODEST COUNCIL.

There is something in cool audacity and daring impudence that wins from us a kind of reluctant admiration. We are not generally admirers of our Legislative Council—we believe, indeed, of all the extraordinary institutions which the Home Government occasionally manufactures for retarding the progress of the colonies, our Upper House is the most intolerable; but that does not prevent our awarding credit where credit is really due—giving our tribute of admiration for the matchless impudence displayed in the Council's proceedings of Monday last. A stranger to the colony, on reading the report of the discussion on the Sanitary Commission Bill, would naturally infer that the members of the Upper House were the warmest possible champions of the City Council and municipal corporations generally—that they worshipped the principle of self-government and went into ecstasies over a Mayor. When they denounced the idea of ignoring the City Council in the attempt on the part of the Assembly to appoint a sanitary commission, and asserted that the Corporation was still a legal body, one would have naturally concluded that the two Houses had changed places, and that it was the Lower House and not the Upper House that was endeavoring to take away popular rights. But when we look a little narrowly into the subject, we shall find the Council not only as true to its obstructive instincts as ever, but laboring hard to throw dust in the people's eyes.

Every one knows the disgraceful history of the Victoria Incorporation Act, 1862, of the numerous attempts to rectify its errors, and of the innumerable failures. Every one knows the blunder about incorporating the land instead of the people, and the illegality of the collection of taxes; and everyone knows that the City Council has been for the last two or three years but the skeleton of a Council, dragging out a weary, helpless existence. In order to place the Municipal authorities as soon as possible in an unexceptionable position, and give them the necessary powers, a short bill was introduced the present session. The bill passed, and was sent to the Upper House on the 6th of April, nearly six weeks ago, and as summer was approaching and the want of proper sanitary regulations forcing itself on the attention of every one, it was naturally thought that the Legislative Council would hurry the bill through. But what is the fact? Why, from the moment it first came up in the Council till the present time, not a single word has been said about it; and from present appearances nothing will be said about it. This scandalous neglect of public health forced the House into the adoption of the Sanitary Commission bill, in order to have the city which was and is in a most filthy condition immediately cleansed. Several of the members declaimed bitterly against the Upper House for making such a Commission a necessity, and a motion was proposed to ascertain what the Legislative Council had done with the Incorporation bill. When the Commission bill goes up, instead of the official champions of municipal institutions accepting the circumstance as a rebuke for their culpable negligence, and bringing forward the amended Incorporation bill, they go coolly to work and abuse the Lower House for sending up the measure. The worst feature in the case is that the Upper House has been all along and is conscious of the want of power in the Corporation. In fact the Attorney General brought forward a bill last session, which met with the Council's sanction, to incorporate the "people" and remove the legal doubts thrown on the levying and collection of taxes. And yet we find the Colonial Secretary and others now coming forward, when they are caught in the trap of their own creating, and asserting that the Council has all the necessary powers.

So much for impudence No. 1. But what shall we say of impudence No. 2? What shall we say of a man or class of men refusing to entertain the two great measures of the session—the Homestead bill and the abolition of imprisonment for debt; putting them off from day to day, while ridiculous measures like the Volunteer bill are hurried through with lightning rapidity—what shall we say of the Colonial Secretary, after these measures have been lying on the Council's table for a period of five months; rising up in great apparent anxiety and declaring that one of them will be taken into immediate consideration? Talk of Rip Van Winkle—Washington Irving never conceived such momentary stolidity as we have got in these "heads" of departments. There is, however, something more objectionable than even the stolidity: there is the disposition to work mischief—to throw the country still further back, to drive every man of spirit, and intelligence from the colony. This is the grand aim. If the population could only be wedded of those disagreeable persons who will grumble at incompetent rulers and extortionate taxation, and reduced to the quiet and uncomplaining spirits, or rather "dumb beasts," then the official millennium would be at hand. There is such a thing, however, as even Government officials going to extremes,

and there is such a thing as want of dignity and want of prudence even in a Colonial Secretary. When we find one of the chief officials of the colony popping out of the Government Buildings like a "Jack-in-the-Box" and waylaying the members of the Assembly as they go and come from the House, in order to get the most pliable to carry out his little schemes for the "public" benefit, we are of opinion that the gentleman is presuming a little too much, and that the interests of the colony would be much better served if he attended to the duties for which he is so handsomely paid.

FROM BIG BEND MINES.

Mr. James Reardon, a Cariboo miner, arrived yesterday by the steamer California, having left French Creek, Big Bend, where he had been sojourning for two months, on the 30th of April. He was detained two days at Seymour waiting for a boat, and two days at Yale.

About 800 men had gone into the mines, and about 300 more were met on their way thither. Mr. Reardon says that nearly all the ground was staked off on French and other known creeks before he left. He has a claim on French Creek which is represented during his visit to California. He speaks in very hopeful terms of the prospects of the country, and thinks the mines will turn out to be a big thing. Lafour & Co. and nearly all the other claim holders were setting actively to work, but no gold had as yet been taken out. Our informant thinks that with the large number of miners going into the country considerable prospecting will be done, and fresh creeks will be found on which to locate. The Discovery claim on Clements (McCulloch's) Creek, where the deep sinking has been made, is on the flat, the ground being shallower higher up the creek. They were down 35 feet when he left.

LETTER FROM BIG BEND.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

FRENCH CREEK, April 23rd, 1866. We arrived here two or three days ago, after a slow trip over a horrible trail, from Seymour. The trail used lately is not the Columbia river, (which comes out on the Columbia at Kirbyville), but one travelled by packers to shorten the distance, and which strikes the Columbia near Wilson's landing, twenty miles higher up, thus avoiding the Death rapids; but it can be followed no longer, as it simply tracked up one stream over the snow and ice till it crossed the Divide, and followed another stream down to the Columbia, the ice having disappeared there is no trail, and the Government route must come into use again. I am told it is a much better route than the one used, as it crosses the Divide at a less elevation, and is consequently not so steep going either way; the present route being in some places as straight up and down as men can climb. At Wilson's landing are situated the nearest stores at present to the mines (except Carnes creek, which there being none at present on Clements or French creek, although we expect merchants in every day. Wilson's landing is about five miles from Clements, and twelve from French creek. We have heard nothing here from the outer world since arriving, and are anxiously looking for Barnard's celebrated express to make its appearance. The prices of goods at Wilson's landing are as follows:—Picks and shovels, \$9 each; nails, \$1.25 per lb.; bacon, \$1.75 per lb.; flour, 80 cts.; tea, \$3; beans, \$1.25; dried apples, \$1.50; corned beef, 80 cts.; other things in proportion. On French Creek there is a few vegetables for sale, belonging to one of the mining companies here last year—potatoes, 60 cts per lb.; onions and beets, 30 cts. Five boats loaded with goods arrived yesterday up the Columbia from Colville, and report many more on the way. Everybody seems to be convinced that Oregon produce can be brought up the Columbia, considerably cheaper than by way of New Westminster; and they also assert that the steamer on the Columbia will prove a success, and can and will be running to Wilson's within three or four weeks. There is hardly anything yet here in the shape of clothing or boots. Several buildings are going up on French creek, one for a hotel, Romano's sawmill, and others for rent or sale. On Clements (McCulloch's) creek the miners (about one hundred) are at work prospecting, one company having got down thirty feet, but had not reached the bed-rock or got any prospect. On French creek about fifty men are at work, some having got down ten or fifteen feet, but with the same result as on Clements'. In fact, as for shallow diggings, so far, they are a myth, as is also pay in gravel, although there is no doubt that in some of the claims opened last year pay was so found. What is to be found on the bed-rock remains to be seen, and it will take some time to find it out. I hear to-day that two companies on this creek have got prospects, but cannot vouch for it. In another month something positive with regard to the extent of the diggings will probably be known. Considerable snow still remains on the ground, and work progresses slowly. Clements creek is a small one, a man being able to jump across where the trail strikes it, and it is very steep. McCulloch has a notice posted, stating that he claims the Discovery claim (which you will recollect was jumped); considerable other jumping has been going on already, and the Gold Commissioner will be kept busy. French creek is a large stream; I have been up it about four miles, and at that distance it appeared to be as large as near its mouth. Parties are out prospecting, and have gone up with the intention of reaching its head. The new discoveries reported in Victoria as having taken place in this section this winter, are not known here, but that a large amount of gold was taken out in a short time last fall there is no doubt.

I will write you again shortly. W. E. O.

CLEANING THE STREETS.—The chaining gang commenced the good work yesterday of cleansing the streets and gutters.

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

The steamer California, Capt. Thorne, arrived yesterday forenoon from New Westminster, bringing a few passengers, among whom were Messrs. C. W. Wallace, J. P. Couch, J. Nagle, and Lawson and Bentley, messengers of the Banks of British North America and British Columbia with bank treasure amounting to \$150,500, of which the former had \$94,500 and the latter \$56,000, \$16,000 having been left at New Westminster.

From these gentlemen who left Williams Creek on the 8th, we learn that business was reviving, and the miners busily engaged in preparing for the season's operations which promised well. They confirm the report of the strikes made at Grouse Creek. Snow lay from three to six feet deep to Van Winkle, rendering travel for animals out of the question; the treasure had to be packed by Chinamen. The road to Cottonwood was in good order.

The discovery of good diggings at Cañon Creek above Quesnelmouth was occasioning some excitement. Our informant saw some of the gold which is of fine quality.

Mr. F. V. Lee, who recently broke his leg was at Felker's. He had not been attended by any medical man but was doing well under the care of Messrs. Henderson, Robertson and the proprietor of the place.

The first season number of the Cariboo Sentinel under the new management, dated the 7th instant, has come to hand. The mining summary it furnishes is comprehensive and interesting. To all appearances there will be a larger number of claims on Williams Creek paying good wages this season than have ever been known before, while the various other creeks and gulches are all expected to contribute their quota of gold. The discovery of rich deposits on the hill sides of neighboring creeks will give a marked impetus to the development of the mines of Cariboo and are likely to prove a more permanent source of wealth than anything yet brought to light. The ground above and below the Discovery claim on Grouse Creek, in which hill tunnel the late strike was made, has been staked off for a distance of a mile and a half, and some of the Flume Company's ground is said to have been jumped. The gold taken out is coarse.

ENGLISH MAGAZINES.—Whatever Great Britain may lack in the race of progress there is one thing in which she is far ahead of her competitors, and that is in periodical literature. In vain may we look throughout Europe or America for productions that will bear comparison with Blackwood's Magazine, or the Westminster, Edinburgh, London Quarterly, and North British Reviews. It is in these periodicals that the master minds of England find vent—it is in these magazines that we have almost every topic that is worth serious attention discussed, and in a manner at once readable and profound. The brightest intellects, the most deeply learned, the men who have made their names immortal in English literature, have been and are the magazine contributors. When we look over the range of subjects that are treated—science and art, politics and poetry, fiction and theology—we can come to no other conclusion than that the periodicals are necessary adjuncts of every cultivated society, and the low price at which Scott's American editions are advertised brings them within reach of all.

BIG BEND ITEMS.—On French Creek claims are located for a distance of 2½ miles above the Discovery claim, by upwards of 200 companies. A full interest in the Discovery claim had changed hands at \$2,500. A town is springing up on a flat about six feet above the bed of the creek, on the south side. Six houses were erected, and others were in progress. On McCulloch Creek claims were located up to its source, a distance of three or four miles. A \$17 nugget was taken out of Gallagher's claim. On Camp Creek there were a good many prospecting. Twelve soldiers had arrived from Colville, but not with their arms, as reported. Every one is well pleased with the country, and high hopes are indulged as to the future. Quartz can be seen all over the country cropping out of the ground. Freight around the lakes was two and a half cents per pound. It is supposed that after the steamer is running, it will be reduced to a half cent per pound. The population of the Big Bend mines is variously estimated at from 3000 to 5000 persons.—Columbian.

THE "RUSH."—The nearest approach to a "rush" which we have seen this season was produced by the arrival of the steamer California on Saturday, when she landed about 250 passengers. In less than an hour after their arrival the eager crowd were en route to Yale on the steamers Lillooet and Reliance, their number having been augmented by about fifty who had come up the previous evening by the Enterprise. Had these passengers not been subjected to a thirty-six hours' detention at Victoria, they would have enjoyed an opportunity of illustrating in how short a time Seymour can be reached.—Columbian.

THE WEATHER IN CARIBOO.—The weather for the past eight days has been unusually fine for this season of the year, and were it not for the presence of the snowbanks to be met with at every turn, it might be imagined that summer had actually set in. The days have been an uninterrupted series of bright and warm sunshine and the nights moderately temperate, and so powerfully has the sun's rays acted on the snow that the water of the creek has increased to such an extent that no one need now complain of its want for mining purposes.—Sentinel.

THE NEXT TRIP.—The steamer Forty-Nine was to leave Little Dalles, W. T., on her second trip, April 30th.

RATHER RICH.—The Walla Walla Statesman gravely asserts that when the Forty-Nine made her first ascent of the Columbia River to the Death Rapids only two men had crossed over from Fraser River, and they were badly frost-bitten. Considering that several hundred men were in the diggings at the time, the majority of whom had crossed over so soon as the unusually late ice barrier on the lakes had disappeared, and were then considerably ahead of those who came by the "Forty-Nine," our contemporary must have been sadly hoaxed by some designing person.

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