

The Weekly British Colonist.

Tuesday, January 2, 1866.

THE ESTIMATES.

The enormous demands made in the estimates for 1866 threw the colony very naturally into a feeling of consternation. It was all very well to say we wanted this thing and required that, but every one felt that the country could not afford the numerous luxuries as well as the expensive necessities which the Executive called upon it to provide.

The estimates for 1866 are not of the immense magnitude of those for 1865, but they are nevertheless far beyond the country's capacity—more especially when it is intimated that the amounts sent down to the House on Friday last do not complete the Executive's demands. The question which arises after an analysis of the financial statement is not merely how can the country conveniently pay the total amount, but are the services offered worth the sums placed opposite their names.

We can well understand that the colony will reap the benefit of the \$14,500 to be expended on education; but what shall we say of \$56,453 for police, gaols and the administration of justice? In looking over our criminal calendar one must be struck at the almost total absence of serious crimes, and the very small number of minor offences.

Glancing at the estimates, however, would give us the idea that we had a murder every week and burglaries every day. The assertion cannot be put forward that the absence of crime is due to the expensive character of the police, for we have had experience to the contrary. There is indeed not a man who knows anything about the habits and customs of our population but feels convinced that the public safety could be equally as well looked after for half the amount.

We said the estimates for 1866 were smaller than the estimates for 1865; but we must confess it is only in the public works that the decrease is seen. The departments to which we have just alluded—the police, gaols, and administration of justice—show an excess of expenditures of \$8602 over that voted for 1865. In 1864 we had at least twenty per cent. more people than we have at present; during that year the expense of salaried establishments was \$57,647; now, however, we are called upon to pay the enormous sum of \$93,375.

On what ground does the Executive make so unprecedented an increase? It cannot be the additional amount of work; for we find that the sum expended on roads, streets, bridges, works, and buildings, in 1864, was \$140,000, while that proposed to be expended in 1866 is \$8,000! The amount voted last year for public works, independent of the Governor's house, was \$53,000. It is not, however, merely under the head of salaried establishments that the exorbitance of the demand, as well as the preposterous character of the estimates, is shown. Deducing the public works, education, charities, rents, transport, mail conveyance, miscellaneous services, interest, drawbacks, immigration, Indian expenses and pensions, which come to \$70,000, we find that the real expense of the Government offices comes to \$113,000—or about three-fifths of the entire expenditure. Surely no part of the civilized world can produce such a condition of affairs as this?

We have said that the only efforts at retrenchment have been made in public works—in those things, that if the country is to progress at all we must have. Fancy a merchant under a reverse of fortune commencing a reduction in his expenses by laying up his vessels, but retaining the captains and the crews; by closing up his stores, but continuing to pay his clerks and employees generally. Would we not think him deranged? And yet this is just what the Vancouver Island Government is doing.

indeed "a mockery, a delusion, and a snare," and none the less when we consider that, with other necessary demands, we have twenty or thirty thousand dollars not included in the financial statement to be expended on steam communication with San Francisco.

THE LEECH RIVER DITCH.—A Leech River correspondent writing under date Dec. 18th informs us that the men engaged on the Leech River ditch had held a meeting to take into consideration the rate of wages, and the manner of paying those employed on that work, and judged it advisable to make the result of their proceedings public, in order that the shareholders, and the people of Victoria might be fully aware of the reasons which have led to their present course of action. The following were the resolutions framed by those empowered to draw up the same and sent to us for publication: First, that the sum of one dollar per day in cash is too small a proportion of money to the amount of scarp, as it is almost impossible for a man to eat and clothe himself at the rate of six dollars a week, especially in this severe weather; and we think it cannot be done for less than one dollar and a-half each.

Secondly—As we find it very difficult to get any cash whatever, most of us having hitherto not seen a cent since the ditch commenced, and we have therefore to be content with flour or beans straight, or whatever our paymaster has in his store, and to do without venison, beef, or anything which he may not have, inasmuch as we possess no money to buy any, and the hunters will not at present take scarp at any figure, we should prefer the money portion of our wages to be placed in the hands of our foreman, Mr. Fisher Joyce, to be paid by him in cash every week. Thirdly—That until an answer to these propositions be returned by the shareholders no more work shall be done on the ditch. A report of these proceedings having been read to the Leech River treasurer of the Ditch Co. (Mr. Mara), and he having informed us that it was not in his power to do anything for us, and that he had no money at present, the matter is to be left to the consideration of the shareholders; and we trust the COLONIST will kindly assist us in bringing it to their notice.

THE RUSSIAN TELEGRAPH ENTERPRISE.—From the Telegrapher, a neat little paper, got up by an association of operators and published in New York, we clip the following about the Russian Overland Telegraph enterprise. The fleet of four vessels, under the command of Col. Chas. S. Bulkeley, lately arrived in our harbor, have completed their summer's work as far as vessels are concerned: "Minister Clay has transmitted to the State Department an official copy of the conditions stipulated between the Russian Telegraph Department and Hiram Sibley for the establishment of telegraphic communication between Russia and America, by which the exclusive right is granted to the latter Plenipotentiary of the American Western Union Telegraph Company for thirty-three years from the day the line shall be opened, the Russian government to grant a further term as it may judge convenient. In order to encourage the undertaking the Government grants to the Company an allowance of forty per cent on the net proceeds of the telegrams transmitted by it over the line to and from America; and in order to contribute as much as possible to the success of the undertaking the Minister of Public Utility will adopt the measures necessary for securing the Company's telegraph from being maliciously injured by the local population, but at the same time the Government refuses to take upon itself any responsibility for such injuries, of any nature whatsoever. The Company is allowed to import materials free of duty. In the southwest corner of the building in which the American Institute is holding its Fair in this city, may be seen a sample of the instruments that are to be used by the Collins Russian Telegraph Line, seventy-five sets of which have been manufactured in this city by the Messrs. Chester. The instruments are fixed in a box, which is quickly converted into a table by screwing on the legs at the corners. For transportation two of the boxes are fastened together in one package; and when these reach the station the operator has merely to screw on the legs and connect the proper wires with the air and ground lines, when he is ready to receive and transmit messages. The manufacturers expect orders for an additional supply of these instruments, as two or three hundred will be required for the whole line."—S. F. Alta.

A FUNERAL OFFERING.—An English paper states that at the funeral of Lord Palmerston in Westminster Abbey, London, when the officiating Dean pronounced the words "dust to dust, ashes to ashes," over the grave, the chief mourner, as a last precious offering to the dead, threw into the grave several diamonds and gold rings. The vault was so constructed that it would not permit of the throwing in of any earth at the most solemn portion of the funeral service. To some it appeared that the traditional solemnity of the grave suffered when the dead words "ashes to ashes, and dust to dust," were not accompanied by the usual symbolic sprinkling of earth on the coffin, and the chief mourner responded by casting the rings into the grave.

THE POPULATION OF THE WORLD.—At the present time the population of the world is estimated to amount to 1,000,000,000 of persons, speaking 3,064 languages, and professing 1100 forms of religion. The average duration of human life is estimated at 33 years and six months. A quarter of the children born die before their seventh year, and one-half before their seventeenth. Out of the 1,000,000,000 living, 33,000,000 die each year, 91,000 each day, 3,780 each hour, 60 each minute, and consequently one every second. These 33,000,000 deaths are counterbalanced by 41,500,000 births—the excess being the annual increase of the human race. It has been remarked that births and deaths are more frequent in the night than during the day. Calculating one marriage for every 120 persons of both sexes and of all ages, 82,000,000 are celebrated annually.

AN IMPOLITICAL JOUBURNAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BRITISH COLONIST, Sir.—I beg leave to draw the attention of those whom it may concern to a kind of policy which has proved most mischievous, and in the long run calculated to retard, if not ruin altogether, the prospects of the colonists: I mean the tax of 2s which is imposed on every head of cattle imported into this colony. Were this impost levied on beef cattle alone it would be all well enough, but bona fide settlers who import live stock for the purpose of breeding should be by all means exempt.

Political as well as domestic economy requires that the rulers of a country should do all in their power to encourage by all possible means everything which tends in any way to increase the commonwealth. I am of opinion that nothing is better calculated to further this end than the raising and increasing of good stock. Instead of throwing in the way piousish foolish restrictions, we ought rather to award premiums, as they do in better administered countries, to parties engaged in the laudable task of stock raising. Were we to adopt such a wise policy and remove at once all the impediments which are now obstructing the way, the lapse of many years our farmers would be enabled to supply our markets with fresh meats at cheaper rates than those we have to pay now, and the large sums of money which go annually to enrich a foreign country for beef cattle, could be made available to develop our internal resources.

I am told by a farmer of Spanish that he is deterred from importing a herd of cattle on to his ranch owing to this heavy tax and other governmental restrictions. One of the obvious restrictions to which some of our farmers are at present subjected—those, for instance, who live at Comox or other rural districts with which there is no land communication, is the necessitating every vessel loaded with live stock to touch at Victoria. This entails useless expenditure on the parties who ship cattle at Olympia, Steilacoom, &c., for the island settlements. I am well aware that our finances are in such a dilapidated condition that it would not be a wise policy to do away, all at once, with the burdensome taxes under which our colonists are groaning. But there are some political measures gnawing at the vitals of the country which ought to be removed without delay, and there is none I conceive of more momentous importance than the one I speak of.

Another party I am informed, who owns a ranch at Comox and has mined unsuccessfully in Cariboo three or four years, worked all last season in the service of the Telegraph Co., and managed to save \$300; he would like to invest his little capital in cows but is deterred from doing so for the cause above stated, and speaks of selling out and leaving for more favorable shores. Owing to this unwise policy we lose another great source of revenue. The most part of our farmers, after having thrashed their oats and barley, throw away the straw, having no cattle to feed on it. At this moment the settlers in the Saanich districts are in the habit of putting up a water power grist mill, and I am told, or I am sure, if the mill is followed, ere long we shall see the mill owners and their neighbors engaged in the same unprofitable and unproductive undertaking. It is an undertaking which will not pay, and which will not do anything to develop our agricultural resources and stock raising. B. D.

Our correspondent could not have read the cattle tax act very attentively, otherwise he would have been aware that young cattle for breeding purposes are admitted on the nominal payment of fifty cents. The \$4 a head on older cattle, although levied for the purpose of revenue, affords rather an inducement than otherwise to the raising of Island stock—just as the permits on potatoes and vegetables generally has caused the production on the Island of much larger quantities of produce than formerly.—Ed. Col.]

ENGLISH CAPITAL IN THE STATES.—It is reported that Sir Morton Peto and friends, while in this country, took a perpetual lease of the Morris and Essex Railroad in New Jersey, with the purpose in view of completing direct chain of railroads from this and the West, thus reducing the distance to St. Louis about 140 miles. The Morris road, when completed, will extend entirely across New Jersey, from Hoboken to the Delaware. —Cor. S. F. Paper.

A RACE AT SEA.—The new steamship Santiago, of the P.M.S. Company's line, and the opposition steamer Baltic, left New York simultaneously, and for five days kept side by side, creating considerable excitement on board of both vessels.

FROZEN.—In consequence of the quantity of ice either in the Willamette or Columbia rivers, or in both, navigation was temporarily impeded, and the last mail from Portland failed to reach Olympia before the Anderson left.

THE MEXICAN QUESTION.

DECLARED PURPOSE OF EMPEROR NAPOLEON. In relation to the position of the French in Mexico, we extract the following from the Missouri Democrat, of November 21st: "WASHINGTON, November 19th.—As much importance is attached to the statement of the Independence Belge that the evacuation of Mexico by the French troops may be looked upon as a thing decided on in principle, it will not be uninteresting to recur to the fact that about two years ago M. Drouyn de L'Huys said to Minister Dayton that the dangers of the government of Maximilian would come principally from the United States, and the sooner we showed ourselves satisfied and manifested a willingness to enter into peaceful relations with that Government, the sooner would France be ready to leave Mexico; and the new Government to take care of themselves, which France would in any event do as soon as it with propriety could, but it would not leave or tempt the Arohduke into difficulty and then desert him before his Government was settled. He added that France could not do that, and that she would not do so."

Mr. Sewell's reply to this narration of Mr. Dayton, instructed him to inform the French Government that in the opinion of the United States the permanent establishment of a foreign and Monarchical Government in Mexico would be found neither easy nor desirable. The United States, consistently with their principles, can do no otherwise than leave the destinies of Mexico to the keeping of her own people, and recognize their sovereignty and independence in whatever form they themselves shall choose. That this sovereignty and independence shall be manifested.

It was previously declared by M. Drouyn de L'Huys that as to Mexico the purpose of the French Government was to give order to the condition of things there; to repay themselves for debts and expenses, etc., and then leave the country.

The contract of the Convention concluded between France and Mexico regulates the conditions of the stay of the French troops in Mexico, for the purpose of establishing order, and consolidating the new empire, done in the Castle of Miramor, the tenth of April, 1864, provides that the French troops at present in Mexico shall be reduced as soon as possible to a corps of twenty-five thousand men, including the foreign legion. This corps, in order to safely guard the interests which led to the intervention, shall remain temporarily in Mexico on conditions—among them that the French troops shall evacuate Mexico in proportion as the Emperor of Mexico shall be able to organize the troops necessary to replace them. The foreign legion in the service of France, composed of 8000 men, shall nevertheless remain in Mexico six years after all the other French troops shall have been recalled. From that moment the legion shall pass into the service and pay of the Mexican Government, which reserves to itself the right of abridging the detention and employment of the foreign legion in Mexico.

It was further stipulated that the expenses of the French expedition to Mexico was to be paid by the Mexican Government, at the sum of \$270,000,000, for the whole duration of the expedition down to the 1st of July, 1864, the sum to bear interest at the rate of three per cent. per annum from the 1st of July. All the expenses of the Mexican army shall be at the charge of Mexico.

The above is given merely to show what was the originally declared purpose of Napoleon in establishing a monarchy in Mexico, and the conditions in fact, upon which he furnished material and assistance.

JOINT STOCK COMPANIES.

Where the Limited Liabilities Act Requires Amendment.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BRITISH COLONIST, Sir.—It must be apparent to the most casual observer how injurious is the working of the Joint Stock Companies Act in this colony in preventing the formation of companies to prosecute any discovery or to carry out any enterprise.

Under the present system registration fees are charged on the principle of a sliding scale, instead of being fixed and uniform, merely sufficient to pay for the trouble of registration. It often happens that not a tithe of the nominal stock required to be called in carrying out an undertaking, and it certainly seems to me that the system as it exists at present, has an undoubted tendency to prevent capital from being employed in developing the resources of the colony. Suppose a good coal seam were discovered by a poor man (and such mines have been discovered lately on the north coast) and it is necessary to form a joint stock company to work it, and provided the nominal capital was placed at \$100,000—although it may not take a quarter of that amount to open it, yet before this company with its nominal capital can be organized the poor man has to fork over to the Attorney General the sum of \$800 as a registration fee. Can there be any thing in the colony more calculated to suppress the circulation of capital in public enterprises than the exaction of so large a sum for registration? no revenue should in my opinion be derived from such a source. A uniform fee sufficient to cover the trouble and time of registration, say \$10 is all that should be required by the company big or little, for by doing anything else the colony will kill the goose that may lay the golden egg.

LIFE OF LINCOLN.—We are glad to learn that the Rev. Mr. Bellknap has met with great success in canvassing for subscribers to the biography of the late President of the United States. The author, Hon. H. J. Raymond, who has edited the New York Times for upwards of fifteen years, and who was characterized by Lincoln as his "Lieutenant General" in politics, enjoyed unusual opportunities of collecting authentic data for such a work. It will be a valuable contribution to contemporary history, and will doubtless be perused with great interest by all classes of readers.

FROM SOUTH AMERICA.

The steamer Sacramento brought no later news from Chile than that Peru.

The new Government is now organized so far as the more important members of the administration are concerned, such as Ministers, Prefects of the Departments, and the higher judiciary officials. The Cabinet now consists of Francisco J. Mariategui, Premier and Interior; J. M. La Puenta, Foreign Relations; Colonel J. Balta, War; T. Vivanco, Treasury; J. L. Quiñones, Justice.

It seems that the temporary President Canseco, has made up his mind to change the personnel of the late administration. From private sources the Panama Star learns that the Spanish Minister had requested General Canseco to state his intentions in regard to the treaties lately concluded between Peru and Spain; that Canseco had stated his intention not to ratify them; that in consequence thereof the Spanish Minister had embarked on board the iron clad Numancia; and that this vessel had steam up when the Peruvian left. The Lima and Callao papers, with dates to the 20th, say not a word about this, and by good authority we are informed that the above statement is not correct. A ratification of the treaty could not be demanded from Canseco, as it had been ratified already; and no communication on the subject had been made by the new President. The Spanish Minister, Mr. Arbizu, furthermore, had been on board the Numancia for some time previous, ever since the discovery of a conspiracy of some Chileans to assassinate him in Lima.

The real touchstone of Sr. Canseco's personal character and political ability is the Spanish question. Not only will the popularity of his cause suffer immensely, if he does not assist Chile in her struggle with Spain, but his coldness may even cause Gamio, who is independent master of Aroquipa, to rebel against Canseco, for the cause of Chile, of which he is a most ardent champion. But what is of still more importance to judge the new Government by, and to calculate their chances of remaining in power, is the position they will take in regard to the treaties between Peru and Spain. Canseco, it is said on good authority, is willing to recognise as valid all negotiations concluded before the month of May. But if such is the case his war-cry at raising the banner of rebellion was a lie, and his accusation of Pezet a calumny. If, on the other hand, he overthrows the solemn treaties and agreements between Peru and Spain, the latter will have the most just cause in the world for waging war once more.

BOLIVIA.

The fighting between Melgarejo and Arguedas is still continuing with varying results. At last accounts Arguedas' star was slightly in the ascendant. He had sent down from La Paz some troops to occupy the province of Atacama. These took Cobija by storm on the 7th, killing the commander of the place. The friends of Arguedas were in hopes that from Atacama they might send reinforcements of men, arms and ammunition to the other forces of Arguedas in the South, where Melgarejo with 1500 men, was occupying Potosi.

NEW GRENADA.

Attempts to overthrow the governments of several of the interior States have been quelled, or are in a fair way to be suppressed. A disease, similar in type to the much dreaded cholera, has made its appearance at Baassterre, and over twenty-five deaths within three or four days have taken place from the disease.

Amongst the arrivals from England by the Tyne we notice the name of Col. St. John Neal, recently appointed Charge d'Affaires of Her Britannic Majesty at Quito vice Geo. Fagan, Esq.

THE LEECH RIVER DITCH.

We have been desired by Mr. Fisher Joyce, Foreman of the Ditch Company's working party; to correct a misapprehension which may have arisen through the statement forwarded to us for publication by a Leech River correspondent. The miners have not struck, but were still continuing with the work, and have already completed 1,500 feet of the ditch. About 2,000 feet have been graded. We have not hitherto noticed the able report upon this undertaking presented to the promoters by Mr. Robert Homfray, C. E., and a synopsis of that gentleman's views in regard to it may not prove uninteresting to many of our readers. After describing the route of the ditch, as adapted to engineering purposes, he thus sums up the indications of wealth in the locality: "The distance from the dam to the cabin is under two miles, and it was supposed by the miners to be impossible to get the water so high without going five miles up the river. Having made an extensive examination joined to reliable information from the miners in this district, and having been personally engaged in placer diggings five or six years, I am fully satisfied of the extent and probable richness of the gravel ranges; especially when occurring in a slate range, being similar in appearance to those in California which proved so rich, and the only reason that they have not been fully tested is there is no water to enable them to do so. One company has put down several shafts from forty to fifty feet deep, without being able to reach the channel. They are now about running a tunnel into the bench, having got several prospects of coarse lump gold below in the river, and should they strike rich pay dirt it will also be found in all the benches on both sides the river. Along the top of these benches are several large quartz veins with gold in them. And not only on Leech River, but also on Sooke River and Wolfe Creek, these gravel ranges occur sufficient in extent to give employment to a large number of miners, as soon as the fact of their richness shall have been established."

CONTRACT.—Messrs. Hutchinson & Co have obtained the contract for supplying the Light-houses and the Colonial Government with beef, vegetables, &c. The contract prices for the latter are ten and four cents per pound.

Advertisement for Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People, including text about various ailments and a list of agents.

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