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### WEEKLY BRITISH COLONIST

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### The Speech of His Excellency

The Governor at the opening of the Legislative Council appears to-day. The document is not remarkable for ability or vigor, but while as a State paper there is very little to be commended, we do not hesitate to say that it possesses fewer objectionable features than any speech or message we have known to emanate from his Excellency since the proclamation of Union. The messages of his Excellency have heretofore been indefinite, undecided and exceedingly diplomatic. There pervades throughout the document before us a spirit of candor which had it been developed at an earlier day must have produced a better state of public feeling, and have added greatly to the popularity of the Government. The financial state of the country occupies the first position in the speech. His Excellency is not without hope that the revenue of the country will soon be found adequate to meet all legitimate demands made upon it, and he points with an evident glow of satisfaction to the "signs of considerable elasticity" which have been developed within the past few months. The Home Government appears indisposed to accede to the proposition to guarantee a loan to assist the Colony in its financial straits, and his Excellency thinks that we should observe the utmost economy until we shall have relieved ourselves of local debts on which a crushing rate of interest is charged—an observation which will, we know, be received with a hearty "amen" by our Island readers. But the promised economy should be real, not simulated. The burthen should not be flung from one shoulder to find a resting-place on the other. The Supreme Court imbroglio—if we may so term it—is to end with the passage of a bill, "approved by the Law Officers of the Crown," to define the "power and jurisdiction of the Courts, and to establish the position of the two judges, who will severally, perhaps occasionally jointly, preside in each." While we rejoice that all doubts as to the status of the Courts are to be removed, we are still of opinion that, for the sake of economy, the two Courts should be rolled into one and that a position elsewhere should be found for Mr. Begbie—who, although the older appointee, is Mr. Needham's junior at the Bar, and before and since Union occupied a position inferior to that held by the last named gentleman. The proposed bill, however, should it prevent in the future a repetition of the vexations and doubts of the past, will be as useful and satisfactory, and may prove a long stride in the desired direction. Confederation is touched upon in a manner which shows the proposition find little sympathy with His Excellency. The only obstacle to the accomplishment of Confederation, we are given to understand, is the intervening territory, which must first be incorporated in the Dominion. The Dominional Parliament voted last session that the present session the object will be consummated. Let the friends of the movement take courage. The "obstacle" is already demolished. Our speedy admission is certain.

### The remark that Confederation is

seized upon by a disheartened community longing for a change of any kind is absurd. If such be his Excellency's real conviction, we can inform him he was never more "at sea" in his life. The people of British Columbia would not welcome Confederation as they would welcome "any" change. There are many changes they would not accept if they could obtain them; but there is one they will have, and that is a restoration of their political rights and the control of their public affairs. Mr. Seymour and his Government may as well know this to-day as to learn it in a different form a few months hence. The "change" is coming—coming as surely as the glorious sunshine succeeds the gloom of night—and the sooner the Government "accepts the situation" and prepares for the "change," the better will it be for its own happiness and the prosperity and tranquility of the country. We come next to the "Capital Question." What can we say on this topic more than that the Home Government has accepted the "Victoria" view of the subject, and that one of the privileges of which Union robbed us is expected to be restored by a vote of the Council immediately after the Reply to the Speech has been passed? To-morrow the vote will probably be taken. His Excellency has striven long for New Westminster, but is at length compelled to succumb to the superior claims and influence of Victoria; and we must say that he yields gracefully. Every friend of Victoria should be in his place to-morrow. Let no prior engagement interfere. No excuse can be accepted. One vote may determine the location of the Seat of Government forever. Who would falter at a time when such weighty interests are at issue? The seat of a true friend of Victoria should be vacant when the eyes and noses are called. The favorable prospects of the miners and farmers, the Grouse creek war and the paucity of population are briefly touched upon. The Speech concludes with the following paragraph, which is really the best in the document:—"I trust that all differences are now merged, and that the Union—though as yet barren of good results—will cause a community of interests leading to a feeling of forbearance and Christian charity pleasing to Him, whose support I humbly invoke on this solemn occasion." The people in this section are now and ever have been actuated by a feeling of forbearance and Christian charity towards their Government; they have labored long and waited patiently for the first sign of sympathy or evidence of a desire on the part of the Executive to cultivate amicable and intimate relations, and that such sentiments did not exist long since has been through no fault of theirs.

### Opening of the Legislative Council

The morning of the 21st of March, 1868, fixed for the opening of the Council, promised to be unpropitious; but by mid-day the storm passed away and the Queen's weather prevailed. The ceremonies were quiet but complete. The Volunteer Rifle Corps, under the command of P. J. Pritchard, were out in full force as an escort to His Excellency, and looked remarkably neat and soldierlike, while the Sparrowhawk lay at anchor off Government House, decked out in holiday attire. At half-past one o'clock the Governor entered the Chamber, accompanied by the private Secretary. The House rising, received him after a few minutes' delay the oath was administered to the new members, and the Governor then proceeded to read the speech, which occupied barely twenty minutes. There were only fourteen members present, viz: the Acting Colonial Secretary, Attorney-General, Collector of Customs, Chief Commissioner of Lands & Works, Judges O'Reilly and Cox, and Messrs. DeCosmos, Barbard, Walkom, Robson, Smith, Elwyn and Kerr. Leaving as will be seen, only four popular members present. The Acting Colonial Secretary presided. On the Governor retiring the Colonial Secretary presided, when Mr. DeCosmos moved and Mr. O'Reilly responded, that the address received and printed. Carried unanimously. The President appointed Hon. DeCosmos, Robson, Hamley, Ball and Barnard on the committee to prepare the reply, when Mr. DeCosmos desired the withdrawal of his name, as it would not affect the nature of the reply. After some discussion the name of Mr. O'Reilly was substituted. Mr. DeCosmos gave notice that on Wednesday next he would ask the Collector of Customs "Whether the revenue laws of the Colony provide for granting drawbacks on merchandise imported on which duties have been paid? If not, whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce a measure to grant drawbacks on such exported merchandise?" This led to a slight debate on the infringement of the usual practice of not proceeding to business on the first day of the session, but the notice was accepted. Mr. Robson then gave notice that he should, on the next sitting of the Council, move an honorable address asking that a comparative statement may be laid before the House, showing the Civil List of the Colony of British Columbia for 1863 and that of the United Colony in 1868. Accepted. The Attorney-General gave notice that on Wednesday he should ask leave to introduce the Limitations of Action Ordinance; Supreme Court Ordinance, and Testate Estates Ordinance. Accepted. The House then adjourned till Monday, at 2 o'clock. The notice of the Attorney-General called forth a cheer and congratulation from Mr. DeCosmos that the Government had really become progressive; which the Attorney-General looked upon, I suppose, as ironical; for he replied quickly that the hon. gentleman from Victoria had been a long time in discovering that fact. From the time of those who participated in the proceedings, I think I saw a spirit that promised hereafter to enlighten the dullness of ordinary debates. We shall see. The Governor looked in excellent health. He reads well, but was generally inaudible. THE WRECKS.—Accounts received from the wrecks yesterday state that both vessels are lying on their beams ends towards the Straits side, the sea making a clean break over them. The rigging of both ships is still standing. The crews are encamped on Discovery Island, awaiting the subsidence of the blow to wreck the vessels. It is not known yet whether either of the ships are insured. Both will prove a total loss. POSTAL.—The following appears in the last Government Gazette:—"For the present, letters and papers can be prepaid in Colonial Stamps for the United Kingdom only. Mail matter for or from other countries will be subject to the old rates of Colonial and United States postage, both when mailed or delivered." The previous notices in the Gazette dated 17th January and 6th February, are withdrawn. ON DUTY.—That the editor of the *Columbian* is about to resign the "gray goosequill" and betake himself to an avocation more fitted to his talents (talents), viz, stump eradicating. We wish our late contemporary success in his congenial employment. THE FIDELITY.—The *Fideliety* left last evening with five stock and army stores for Sitka. We understand she will remain at the North in U. S. Government employ during the summer months.

### The Enterprise arrived from the River

about one o'clock yesterday afternoon, bringing a number of gentlemen who were present at the opening of the Council. Snow fell at New Westminster on Saturday. The U. S. Lincoln sailed at half-past 8 o'clock on Saturday evening for San Francisco, carrying a mail and express. Mr. Hepburn went with her as bearer of despatches from the Admiral. INCORRECT.—One of the New Westminster papers states that Mr. Harnett has been lately installed as Editor of the *Colonist*. This statement is incorrect. There has been no change, nor will there be, present any change in the editorial conduct of the *COLONIST*. A NUN Afloat.—One of the U. S. officers, belonging to San Juan Island, will go to New Westminster on a visit to His Excellency in the steamer Diana. IN THE TRIAL OF THE CAUSE OF REGINA VS. GAGALOTTE, WALSH AND MOSES, for assault upon a little girl at "Big Bend," a jury at New Westminster rendered a verdict of "not guilty." An American is reported to have been murdered on Waldron Island, near San Juan. The position of telegraph operator, vacant by the death of Mr. Jasper, has been filled. OPENING OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH. Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council: It is with much pleasure that I find myself enabled to call you together to-day, and thus relieve myself of the serious responsibility which the deprivation of your assistance would entail on me. I need scarcely add that an honest Government must be always glad to find constitutional means of making public its views and to render to a competent authority an account of its proceedings. It is a common error to suppose that the year 1867 was the first in which British Columbia was thrown on its own resources. Heretofore it has been in England, and overtaxed to support the local banks, largely contributed to the support of the Government and to the formation of roads from which the country may derive a pride somewhat tinged by a melancholy consideration of the vast indebtedness now weighing on us. The spending large sums of borrowed money gave employment to labor and an impetus to all branches of trade; now, we have simply to rely on the proceeds of local taxation, largely reduced by remittances to England on account of interest and sinking fund on our debt. The financial position last year was greatly aggravated by circumstances to which it is somewhat painful and not necessary to now allude. Time will cure the evil, and I have to state that the revenue has begun to show, within the last few months, signs of considerable elasticity. The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure will shortly be laid on your table. I should bring them at once before you, were I not indulging in the hope that the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been attracted to the financial position of this Colony. This hope is the cause of the delay which has occurred in my calling you together. Assisted or unassisted, however, I think that we should observe the utmost economy until we shall have relieved ourselves of local debts on which a crushing rate of interest is charged. I propose to address you by message during the course of the Session respecting the past and present financial position of the Colony. You are aware that on the Union of the Colonies being completed, doubts were raised as to the position of the two Courts of Supreme Jurisdiction, found in full power, "going" with some of the ancient questions, questioning the existence of one of the Courts, and defying the power, the jurisdiction of the Courts, which I regret to say will for the present have to remain separate, and to establish the position of the two Judges, who will severally, perhaps occasionally jointly, preside in each. The Bill has been approved by the Law Officers of the Crown. I have, however, again ventured to repeat to Her Majesty's Government the expression of my opinion that a fusion of the Courts under one Chief Justice would be the more satisfactory arrangement. I shall also lay before you a Bill for the more effectual protection of Her Majesty's Naval Stores. One amending the Ordinance relating to Weights and Measures, and another amending that respecting the limitation of certain causes of Action and Suits. Perhaps I may, during the course of the session, bring under your notice other Bills, but it is my intention not to overburden your table with papers at this late season of the year. In the present transitional state of the Colony it appears to me that we should rather watch events than attempt to guide them by legislation necessarily tentative and tentative. The external Postal arrangements are complicated and inconvenient. I shall bring papers connected with the subject under your consideration. During the last session your Honorable Council unanimously passed a Resolution in favor of negotiations being entered into for the Union of this Colony with the Confederation which has been formed among the Eastern British Provinces on this continent.

### Although I could not be blind to difficulties

which made me consider the Resolution principally as the expression of a disheartened community longing for change of any kind, yet the possibility alone of something arising out of it to promote an overland communication with Canada, was enough to induce me to support your Resolution. I learn in reply to my communications on the subject, that the consideration of it is not, at all events, a wait the time when the intervening Territory now under the control of the Hudson's Bay Company shall have been incorporated with the Confederation. A year's residence in the United Colony has convinced me that there are few questions in which the people of the Lower Country feel a deeper interest than that as to the selection of a Capital. Had the Colony been prosperous no such earnestness of feeling would exist, but under present circumstances I think it right that I should explain at greater length the steps to be taken in regard to its settlement than would be convenient on this occasion. As soon, therefore, as I am honored by a reply to this address, I shall forward a statement of the case as it stands to you by message. I do not now to say that Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that in my message of the 27th March, 1867, I took an extreme view as to extent to which public faith and honor are pledged to the purchasers of land in New Westminster. Further, that I should consider the public convenience from time to time as the main guide in the selection of the Seat of Government. I am commanded to come to a decision without further delay, and I desire to avail myself—although the matter is one of Executive prerogative—of your assistance in so doing. My message will contain every information, and I shall be glad if you will come to a decision on the subject. Every argument is exhausted. I have now but to act. A Governor must allow himself no personal feelings in a matter of this importance. I congratulate you on the great improvement which I observed last year in the farms of the Upper Country, and on the favorable prospects which seem opening to our Gold miners, as well as on the tranquillity of the Colony and the absence of serious crime. A dispute between two mining companies on a distant creek, during the summer, threatened at one time to assume serious proportions, and it is creditable to the Colony to note the cessation, which the prospect of a breach of the peace produced throughout its vast extent. But the good sense and love of order, so general among our miners, allowed of settlement of the question without a resort to force, and the law speedily resumed its way. I wish that among my subjects in general I could inculcate that of an improvement in the material condition of the Colony and something like a return of the tide of immigration which gave birth to British Columbia. It seems strange that a country which possesses every advantage of climate and soil which the English race could desire, where land in the upper country can be had virtually for nothing, where mines of all the precious metals hold out their attractions, where hired labor is extraordinarily remunerated, that such a country should not even have the power of retaining all of those who have sought their fortunes on its distant shores. I am of opinion that both sections of the present Colony have suffered much from their former antagonism. I trust that all differences are now merged, and that the Union—though as yet barren of good results—will cause a community of interests leading to a feeling of forbearance and Christian charity pleasing to Him, whose support I humbly invoke on this solemn occasion. PREHISTORIC MAN IN GREAT BRITAIN. An interesting communication to a scientific congress in France quite recently, the author shows that man lived in Great Britain in association with the fossil hyena, cave bear, lion, tiger, Irish elk, reindeer, bison, hippopotamus, horse, rhinoceros, mammoth, and other animals. The evidence of this consists in finding bones of these animals in caves and river deposits, associated with human bones and implements, under circumstances equally precluding the possibility of subsequent interposition of the latter; the animal remains in many instances charred and split, evidently by the agency of man, and bearing frequent traces of his rude tools. Of the various species enumerated, the mammoth, the horse and the bison were most abundant; the rapacious animals comparatively rare, and man himself not numerous. At that time Great Britain was united to the continent of Europe, and the Thames flowed northward and united with the Rhine and the Elbe in forming an estuary. The climate was very severe, glaciers abounding in the mountains, and reindeer and musk oxen feeding on the plains. Next the land became depressed, the lowlands were submerged beneath the waters; and the climate of all Europe became warmer. The reindeer and the musk oxen (called elk in Europe) moved northward, and the musk ox became known only as a living species in Arctic America. Health and Strength Restored! "I am satisfied that Bristol's Sarsaparilla and Pills are the best medicines of their kind in the market. I have tried many others, without relief; my trouble being general bad health, with great debility. These remedies have entirely restored my health and strength." D. W. CRAPANZAN, Folsom, Cal. Let the sick and suffering put their trust in these two great remedies; they will not be disappointed. Health and comfort will be the result. 689

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