

Wednesday March 2, 1870.

Isolation.

Circumstances transpiring at the present moment are but too well calculated to impress one with the practical disadvantages under which we labor as an isolated and weak appendage of the British Crown—enjoying the full benefit of the Imperial policy which insists upon every colony being self-supporting, yet deprived of the right to manage our own affairs. For nearly eight years has the population of this colony been diminishing rather than increasing, and while others have entered the emigration markets with large sums and great inducements, our efforts in that direction have been confined to an appropriation of some three thousand dollars to assist a few families in bringing servant girls from England. The recent discovery of undoubtedly rich and presumably extensive gold mines in the country drained by Peace River presented the ready means of attracting immigration to our shores, and the only country from which we can hope to obtain population for some time to come is prepared to send us a few thousands of its settled tens of thousands. But a formidable difficulty presents itself. We have, indeed, a magnificent highway connecting us with California; but we are devoid of the means of conveyance and our government is higgling with the only party who possess such means. The Government may not be altogether wrong. It is asserted, the proprietor is unreasonable and his boats inaccurate and unsafe, the Executive can hardly be blamed for hesitating or for turning a deaf ear. The new California, it is promised, will be ready for sea in a fortnight or three weeks; and if one may venture to place any reliance upon the representations which are made concerning her the change will be evidently to our advantage. But, whatever may be the final issue, there is in this matter a lesson which both Government and people would do well to read with carelessness and humility. It will, indeed, be a great misfortune, a crying shame, if, after having waited so long for population, the present opportunity should be thrown away. That it will be partly lost, there does not remain a doubt. At best we shall have very inadequate means of communication, and we shall be wholly destitute of any of those agencies and appliances in California so essential to the accomplishment of the object in view. It is not very easy to understand the conduct of the Government with reference to immigration. One would almost be led to think that population was regarded in the light of a doubtful good, so remarkably indifferent does the Government appear to be upon the whole subject. It cannot be denied that the decimated and impoverished handful now in the colony are totally inadequate to the work of exploration and development. The infusion of fresh blood, fresh muscle is essential to prosperity. Population is the one thing useful. Natural resources of every kind, and in marvelous profusion we have; but there are none to put forth the hand and take from Nature's storehouses. Possibly in this as in other matters the Executive's reply will be that we are in the shade of Confederation. We are prepared to admit that Confederation here and on just terms, is as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; yet it is not precisely that sort of shadow which should superintend a condition of Rest and thankfulness. The deplorable picture of utter helplessness presented by the colony does, indeed, constitute a powerful argument in favor of Confederation; but the assumption that we shall be confederated this year, and have a first class line of steamers plying regularly to San Francisco next year can furnish no justification for present inaction. The greater change, under the shadow of which we should rather seek to be inspired with fresh activity, will doubtless drive home to our people, out of the old rut, and compel them, in spite of themselves to make a fresh start and strike out a better path; but present need and present duty should not be lost sight of in the contemplation of approaching change. After all, the present is in the past, and lies beyond our power of recall, the future, beyond our ken. While inquiring in natural and very proper forecast, and making fitting provision for impending change, let us never overlook present duty, but, looking to the future, let us not lose sight of the past.

The Road-Tolls.—It is earnestly to be desired that the Select Committee on roads will, in the question of Road Tolls as applied to the Colonial produce, may arrive at some practical issue, and that the Executive will not be disposed to obstruct any feasible attempt to remove an obvious grievance through a morbid desire to "protect the revenue." The member for

Lambton and the member for Yale succeeded in making out a case both clear and strong, while the Magistrate for the former place, with a frankness scarcely expects from that side of the House, pleaded "guilty" on behalf of the Government. The proposition enunciated by the member for New Westminister, in the course of debate, viz., that to protect the revenue and neglect the interests of the producers was to save as the epitome and last the "bung-hole run," is one which possesses more force of truth than elegance of expression. Unquestionably the most healthy and efficient protection to the revenue is to be found in fostering and encouraging reproductive labor and development; and when it was argued on the part of the Government that a toll of one cent, pound was as fair and just upon flour, sugar, or hay as upon tea, one could not well avoid a vague apprehension that there still existed want of appreciation of the real values, interests and relations of agriculture. There can be no answer to much of what the Chief Commissioner said in defense of Road Tolls, viewing them in the light of abstract principle. But surely a mind so well-informed should have discovered now the fallacy of attempting to administer the affairs of a new country like his in strict conformity with mere abstract theories. Much was gained by the frank admission of the existence of a real grievance; and it is to be expected that the Committee will report a practicable cure in time to have it applied during the present session.

The farmers east of the Cascade Range have largely contributed towards the subsistence of living in the mines. They have had very much to do with drying up that golden stream—not dry, which has been flowing into the pockets of the foreign producer; and with all their pitiful money-making it must not be forgotten that these farmers have for some time been made really the participants of the market caused by paucity of consumers. With the new gold-fields bursting into activity, will come largely increased demands upon agricultural development and we shall be brought to realize more than ever the value of the farmers East of the Cascade Range.

Wednesday Feb 28th.

Legislative Council.

MONDAY, Feb. 21st, 1870.

ARMIES TO SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Mr DeCosmos asked if the Government were going to pay the arrears of salary due to school teachers.

The hon. Colonial Secretary said there was nothing placed upon the Estimates for that purpose, and he did not think the Government intended to pay any arrears unless there was a sum voted by the Council; he was not in a position to say positively.

Mr Drake said that the Council last year voted that the arrears should be paid and he didn't know why their vote had been disregarded. The teachers had kept the schools in an efficient state after they had been notified that they would not get paid by the Government. They had done their work well and deserved the thanks of the country and ought to be remunerated.

THE CROWN MEDICAL BILL.

Mr Barnard, in moving his resolution asking for the removal of one of the rocks called sisters, said it was well known that these two rocks in the river a short distance below Yale were very dangerous, and that application had been made respectively to have one or both removed. Both life and property are constantly at great risk; and so great is the danger and annoyance that the captains of the steamers running from New Westminster to Yale say if there is no attempt to remove the obstruction they will discontinue carrying freight to Yale and land it below the rocks.

Mr Holbrook supported the motion of Mr Barnard, confirming his remarks respecting the danger to life and property, and related the circumstances of a very narrow escape which occurred at the time of the Governor's trip to Yale in the steamer.

At the suggestion of the hon. Commissioner of Lands and Works, Mr Barnard permitted his resolution to be postponed until the Estimates were discussed.

COLONIAL CONSTITUTION.

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CHARGE OF FALSE PRETENCES.

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ROAD TOLLS.

Mr Humphreys moved that the road tolls on colonial flour be abolished. He said that this resolution was similar to one he had introduced at the last session.

The hon. Gentleman, at some length, stated his grievances complained of by the constituents, showing how unfairly it operated upon the farmers in the vicinity of Lillooet; those on one side of the toll gate having to pay one cent per lb. tax on flour, of which the other portion were free. He descended strongly from the system which laid a heavy load upon those who received no benefit as an equivalent.

The hon. Attorney-General said the resolution assumed that the Council had power to change its constitution, which was not the case.

The resolution was postponed for one day.

A CERTAIN TELL.—A gentleman resident in British furnished the information with the following information concerning the steamer secured by a vessel of 600 tons, on her way to Portland and back over the Columbia River Bar. Passage over the Columbia River Bar, 14 feet at \$1 per foot, \$154. Passage to Portland, \$100. Passage to Astoria, \$200. Passage back to Victoria, \$100. Total \$354. To which must be added the pilothouse over the Bar as the steamer goes to sea. What a fine location is possessed by the North Pacific Railroad Company for their terminus.

A SURPRISING COVER.—The Minister of Justice of Canada, Sir John McDonald, will present at the forthcoming session of the Federal Parliament to be held at Ottawa, a bill for the formation of a Supreme Court which will be a Court of Appeal having jurisdiction over cases originating in any of the Provinces of the Dominion, at a reasonable notice.

Mr Barber supported the resolution and at some length showed most clearly that the tax as collected at the Lillooet toll-gate was very unequal and unjust.

Mr Irish said the "road toll" was not a tax for the purpose of raising a revenue, it was just what it was called, a road toll, for the purpose solely of keeping the road in repair and paying off the cost of its construction; and he could not see why a pound of flour should not pay a toll of one cent as well as a pound of tea. He was aware that road-tolls were as a rule very objectionable, and the government would most

gladly abolish this toll if it were possible to do so.

Dr Carrall said so far as the toll was concerned generally, he did not think it hard or unfair. The farmers were as able to pay the road toll as any other class—but as he had been shown that there was no inequality, he would like to see it obviated by the removal of the toll-gate, provided it did not add any more expense, otherwise he would support the motion.

Mr Saunders said there was an inequality in the tax and he thought those living on one side of the toll-gate should obtain relief.

The Attorney General said he was opposed to his resolution and the removal of tolls, as it was an Ordinance made and established before the settlement of farms or the construction of mills in the Lillooet district.

Mr Trutch said he was aware there was an inequality, and thought the evil might be remedied by removing the gate to another locality.

Mr Alston suggested that a committee be appointed to enquire into the matter.

Mr DeCosmos said there was an evil proved and admitted by all the members of the Government except the Attorney General, and thought the resolution should be passed.

Mr Drake supported the resolution and referred to an Ordinance of 1866 relating to passing goods for the use of the telegraph company free of toll.

Mr Robson moved as an amendment that a committee of five be appointed to take into consideration the whole matter of tolls on flour, bread and shorts, and said the best way to protect the revenue of the country was to protect the interests of the farmers and producers of the colony. He thought the arrangement of the Commissioner of Lands and Works that a pound of flour should pay as much tax as a pound of tea, was unconstitutional.

The amendment was carried and the committee appointed.

TAX OVER-THE-ROUND MAIL.

The captain of the "Erica" left an English mail-bag behind at Olympia. This one bag, before nightfall, by common rumor, was magnified into thirteen bags. Capt. Finch alleged as a reason for leaving the bag he had ever done all he could to oblige the Government, and that the Government had never done anything to oblige him. He thought that excessive port-charges and diligieage drove the Olympia off the route. These charges amounted to something like \$100 per trip. He proposed, in case Government should remit these charges, to carry the mails and run the Olympia again, arriving here on Monday afternoon and remaining till Wednesday morning. The accommodation that enabled an arrangement would prove to the business and traveling public, would be immense and might more than counterbalance in the increased amount of foreign trade we should receive, the loss or reverse by the remission of the whole or part of the port charges.

LAND REGISTRY ORDINANCE, 1870.

Mr DeCosmos said the Island has one system of registration and the Mainland another. The object of the present Bill is to establish a uniform system for the entire Colony. It provides that, one month from the passage thereof, there shall be established at Victoria an office for the record of instruments and the registration of titles affecting real estate to be styled the "Land Registry Office," and empowers the Governor to appoint a Registrar-General over the same, at a salary of \$2,425 each appointed to be a Barrister or a Solicitor. It also empowers His Excellency to establish Districts throughout the Colony, and appoint Deputy Registrars therein. Section V. repeals existing Ordinances, and protects and preserves existing rights.

NOTICES OF MOTION.

Mr Robson—To move to-morrow an address to His Excellency to make provision for carrying the mails between Victoria and Olympia.

Mr. Drake—To move for a committee on the subject of subsidizing a line of British steamers on the coast.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

The hon. Attorney General introduced the Crown Grants Ordinance, which was read a first time.

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The hon. Attorney General moved the second reading of the Medical Amendment Bill.

After some discussion the bill was read and ordered to be committed on Monday next.

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