

grovelling race of Indians as they were. They had a few superstitions among them. There were among them several most zealous Roman Catholic missionaries, who were incessant in their endeavours to implant Christianity. The savage was very ready to take any impression, but his mind was incapable of retaining any fixed idea, and the missionaries had consequently been unable to make any permanent progress. There were three languages in the island; the prevailing one was the Cowitchen. The languages again were subdivided into various dialects, so that the different tribes speaking them could, with some difficulty, understand each other. There was not the slightest trace of a common patriarchal government. Each tribe had a patriarchal government, because each tribe formed a family something like our clans in Scotland.

MR. KENNETH SUTHERLAND, F.R.G.S., remarked that our Government had sent an expedition to Nootka Sound towards the end of the last century.

COLONEL GRANT said the object of Vancouver's expedition was to discover the North-West Passage, and in trying to discover it he saw a large inlet, which he immediately proceeded into, thinking it would conduct him to the opposite coast of America, and that he had found the long sought North-West Passage. He followed the channel and learned that he was sailing round an island, and he was much disappointed in finding himself in the Pacific again. In going round the island he met two Spanish vessels coming from Nootka, and they first told him that he was sailing round an island. He then went round to Nootka and gave the Spaniards notice to quit.

MR. MONCKTON MILNES, F.R.G.S., asked whether Colonel Grant had ever turned his attention to the practicability of rendering the island a convict settlement?

COLONEL GRANT was afraid that it would not make a good convict settlement, on account of its contiguity to America. Access to the continent across the channel was easy, and to prevent the convicts escaping, a large military guard would be required.

THE REV. BRYMER BELCHER, F.R.G.S., believed what had been said about the missionaries in Vancouver Island was quite correct. At present there were no missionaries in the island, except some Roman Catholics, who had been engaged there several years. The Hudson Bay Company had a chapel at Victoria, and about a year ago an unordained labourer, a catechist, was sent out by one of the great missionary societies of this country to the southern part of the island. The gentlemen who brought their geographical knowledge to bear upon the missionary work of the Church, had looked on Vancouver Island as an unoccupied field, and had directed the attention of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to it. A grant of 250*l.* had been expended in sending out two missionaries. The population amounted to between 20,000 and 30,000 of native inhabitants, according to the last census given by the Hudson Bay Company. With respect to the climate and nature of the country, all the information that the Society had been able to obtain, went to show that there was nothing in either respect which the Anglo-Saxon race might not most easily overcome. The coal, to which allusion has been made, he had reason to believe, was spread over a large field, and was of very excellent quality, well suited for furnaces and for steam purposes. With coal and wood, and with what, there was every reason to believe, would be found in mineral products as well, Vancouver Island appeared to him to be one of the most promising fields open to the English settler.

MR. R. BLANCHARD, F.R.G.S., late Governor of Vancouver Island, begged leave to offer an observation with regard to the population. Colonel Grant estimated it at 17,000, and Mr. Belcher at between 20,000 and 30,000. When he was there he took great pains to make inquiries of the people who, he considered, were best qualified to judge, and they stated the numbers to be, at the outside, 10,000, and that the population was decreasing.