

The Weekly British Colonist AND CHRONICLE.

Tuesday, March 26, 1867.

The Confederation Meeting.

It is more natural than surprising that the proposed admission of this Colony into the Confederation of British North America should be opposed by professed sceptics, unprepared or unwilling to become converts to the popular measure. Opposition is healthy; it is as necessary to the well being of the body politic as meat and drink to the body corporate; it is, in fact, the true and only specific whereby the life blood of progressive reform is strengthened and purified; checking abuses, preventing excesses, and pointing out the shoals and quicksands on which the ship of State through over zealous and rash navigation would be liable to suffer shipwreck. The opposition at the meeting of Monday night was feeble, and the resolutions were carried with almost one voice; yet would it be madness to close our eyes to the arguments used against the extension of the scheme to the west of the Rocky Mountains, and if they fail to carry weight when placed in the balance with the many advantages that this Colony will derive from becoming the western link of the chain, they will at least cause us to avoid the folly of again blindly confiding our interests in other hands, and to hesitate before we consent to any other than "fair and equitable terms." It is superfluous to travel again over the now well beaten track, and to reiterate the benefits that this country will derive by the proposed change. It must be too obvious to every thinking man that the exchange of a free and liberal form of Government—the Government of the people by the people—for the hybrid constitution we now possess; the absorption of our Colonial debt, amounting to some \$150 per head, by the large area of the federal population; the great reduction of taxation by dispensing with an extravagant civil list; the sure and certain completion of the great overland route, and the consequent influx of population and capital, are blessings that will and can alone flow from the golden opportunity now within our reach. On each of these heads the speakers at the meeting spoke convincingly. We will therefore confine ourselves to some of the arguments used by the opponents of the measure. And first for Mr Bishop. That gentleman called upon the meeting to weigh the pros and cons well before giving its assent to the scheme. To this there was no dissent. He reminded them of the disastrous consequences of previous hasty and ill-considered legislation. In this all concurred. Having delivered himself of this specious little exhortation, the ratiocinative powers of the learned gentleman were exhausted, and he then bethought him of the old clapnet of "Hudson Bay Company." Here was a bugaboo that would startle the auditory. The tocsin of alarm was sounded with legal emphasis, and "took" for a few moments. Encouraged by cries of "go it, Bishop," "pitch it in," &c., the speaker grew bold and warned the people that the whole scheme was a Hudson Bay movement, got up by the Company for their special aggrandisement, and that by making ourselves a party to it we should only let ourselves into the trap they were laying for us. Now to all who have watched and are conversant with the movement from its inception to the meeting of delegates, and the framing of the Quebec scheme, the absurdity of this insinuation must be too apparent. The Company, it is true, might be enabled to dispose of the Red River territory to advantage, but, on the other hand, would not the opening of the large section of country between this and Fort Garry to settlement be the surest means of effectually destroying the large and profitable trade with the natives which for ages has proved a source of untold wealth to this ancient Corporation? At one time we hear the Company accused of being antediluvian fossils, obstructives in the way of all progress and civilization,

sympathizers with the aboriginals and enemies to the approach of the white man, whom they regard as an intruder on their primeval privileges. At another time, because a chief factor in the company is sufficiently expanded in his ideas to move a resolution in favor of nationalizing British North America from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the opposite cry is raised, and one of the grandest and most progressive conceptions of modern times is pronounced "a Hudson Bay affair." The next opponent was Mr Young, who advanced nothing very cogent beyond a wholesome warning against precipitancy, and stating how the Colony would have escaped its present incubus had his advice on the subject of Union at any price been followed. The gentleman disapproved generally of the scheme, and of placing ourselves under the power of Canadian politicians and office seekers, but his remarks were destitute of pith or argument. The last opponent, Mr Fisher, usually a clear-headed speaker, confined himself chiefly to pointing out the previous political blunders that had been committed in this Colony and the danger of rushing into another. This was in a measure traveling over the same ground as those who preceded him, and had this gentleman confined himself to this line of argument, and to pointing out the risk of losing the valuable aid of the fleet at Esquimaux, it would have been all very well, but he exposed his weakness when he urged among other objections that it would be distasteful to our American neighbors. No doubt America does covet British North America, but as she never can be allowed to have it, the best thing we should imagine for her interests would be the formation of a separate and distinctive power on her northern boundary with whom she could contract reciprocal commercial treaties that need not be interrupted by international differences with other governments. A small number can make a great show of opposition in a public assembly, but if no more formidable opposition against the Confederation scheme, as applied to this Colony, can be brought to bear than what we have yet witnessed, its adoption on fair and equitable terms may be regarded as the almost unanimous desire of the people of this section of the Colony.

By Electric Telegraph

SPECIAL TO THE DAILY BRITISH COLONIST

Legislative Proceedings.

EXCITING DEBATES.

Confederation Resolution Carried!

NEW WESTMINSTER, March 18.—Helmcken presented a petition from certain persons against the granting of a license (?) DeCosmos presented a petition from dry goods (clothing?) dealers for a uniform duty on dry goods of seven and a half per cent. Robson presented a petition from attorneys at Victoria praying that the rights of barristers might be extended to them. The committee on the currency bill had a long discourse on the circulation of florins; it was ultimately struck out of the bill. Application followed. Committee rose. In committee on the gold fields bill, amendments and preamble were agreed to and bill reported complete. Ways and means was adjourned. The Customs bill for tariff led to a determined opposition by DeCosmos and Helmcken DeCosmos characterized the action of Government in relation to double duties as that of so many officers of banditti. This speech made a strong impression. Clauses one to ten and twelve to fourteen were carried. Harbor dues, also opposed by Helmcken and DeCosmos, was brought forward. A warm debate followed with speeches from Walkem, Helmcken, DeCosmos, Robson and others. After a few of the clauses had been passed the committee rose and reported progress. Crease asked leave to bring in a bill to improve the law relating to mortgage in this Colony. Leave granted. Bill to repeal tax on real estate, second reading on Thursday. A long and interesting debate followed on confederation, resulting in the unanimous adoption of the following resolution introduced by Pemberton. That this council is of opinion that at this juncture of affairs in British North America east of the Rocky Mountains, it is very advisable that His Excellency be respectfully requested to take such steps without delay as may be deemed by him most advisable to insure the admission of British Columbia into the confederation on fair and equitable terms. This council being confident that in advising this step they are expressing the views of the colonists generally.

Accident to the Active.

NEW WESTMINSTER, March 18th.—The Active arrived about seven o'clock last night and steamed up towards the Camp, delighting the citizens of the Capital by firing her gun from time to time as she passed along. When about a mile above the city she stuck in the mud. Some efforts were made by the

boats from the men of war to help her off, but they were fruitless. The passengers were put ashore in boats and had to walk down to the city. The Active got out of the mud about three o'clock this morning.

LOUISVILLE, Mar 16.—Railroad communication with Memphis is suspended. The road along the Cumberland river being several feet under water.

LONDON, Mar 16.—Large bodies of troops have been sent to Liverpool to preserve the peace. An Irish uprising is apprehended in that city. A large number of Fenians have been captured in various parts of Ireland and many have been committed for high treason. Lord Derby says officially that the forces of the Sublime Porte are to leave Belgrade. The authority of the Turks there is to be merely nominal. Lord Lyons at Constantinople writes that they will push the reform in favor of the Christians in Candia and elsewhere.

A Sarvia despatch says the south Turkish forces have been successful in a battle with the rebels in Thessalia. LONDON, Mar 16.—A general rising of Fenians is expected to take place throughout Ireland tomorrow, St. Patrick's day. The police, who are fully informed of the movement, it is believed will be able to repress the insurrection before it assumes very formidable proportions. The immigration to America from Cork for the past few days has been extremely large. Many emigrants are being arraigned as being connected with a recent uprising near Killarney.

PARIS, Mar 16.—The Moniteur to-day, in an official article, says Marshal Bazaine and the last French troops left Mexico on the tenth of March. VIENNA, Mar 16.—A despatch announces that the Turkish Government has consented to the return of the Cretan exiles. The Candian deputies to the Sublime Porte have reached Constantinople.

Mexico.

SAN FRANCISCO, Mar 17.—Advices from Acapulco state that the town is still in the hands of the Liberals, and that trade had again opened. The usual supplies for both ships and passengers were to be had. The last of the French men-of-war was still in port and understood to be waiting for the mails which were brought by the Golden Age.

Canada.

MONTEREAL, March 18.—Although there is nothing on the frontier to cause alarm at present, active preparations are being made to have troops in readiness to move at once to any point.

NEW WESTMINSTER, March 19.—Helmcken moved that \$3000 be granted to the Royal Hospital as having been spent in expectation that it would be granted by the Legislative Assembly.

Robson moved that \$5000 be voted as a premium for the first quartz mill in Shuswap. DeCosmos stated that some apprehension had arisen about his language of the previous day. The President received the explanation.

Gold Fields bill read third time and passed. Customs Declaratory Ordinance brought up and passed with an amendment introduced by Hon Young, that all duties at present collected on goods imported into New Westminster from Victoria shall terminate on the 30th March.

Customs Tariff bill passed through Committee. Standing orders were suspended, and the bill read a third time and passed.

Miscellaneous.

The Hope went up river this morning with the Express and quite a number of passengers, but it is not ascertained how far she will reach.

Telegram on Confederation.

The following is a copy of a despatch received by Dr Powell from Canada, to which allusion was made at the Confederation meeting on Monday:

OTTAWA, C. W. March 19, 1867. Received 11 a. m., 20th.

To J. W. POWELL, Esq. British Columbia may be admitted by order in Council upon address from Parliaments of Canada and Columbia. Signed W. POWELL.

There is some ambiguity in the telegram which, perhaps, could hardly be avoided in the necessary process of condensation, but we take its literal and simple construction to mean—first, that full provision has been made in the Imperial Act for the admission of this Colony into the Confederation at any time that it may seek it; secondly, that such admission is to be effected by an Imperial order in Council; and thirdly, that such order in Council may be obtained upon addresses emanating from the Canadian Parliament and British Columbian Legislature recommending the same, and of course setting forth the conditions upon which such admission has been acceded to. Then arises the question as to the settlement of those conditions. Here, an obstacle presents itself, which it appears to us can only be overcome by a delegation to Canada. This Colony is sufficiently independent in its position to insist upon entering the Confederation only on

Europe.

LIVERPOOL, March 18.—There has been an unusually small number of arrivals at British ports for two or three days owing to the strong easterly gales.

LONDON, March 18.—One of the ironclad ships of the fleet at Woolwich has been sent to Liverpool.

Despatches from Constantinople report that the Sublime Porte shows a disposition to grant the demands of the Viceroy of Egypt.

Eastern States.

NEW YORK, March 20.—Nine car loads of Fenian troops, fully equipped, left for Oswego to-day. It is doubtless intended that they shall operate in the apprehended movement of Fenian against Canada.

The last despatches give no encouragement to the Brotherhood. The excitement has subsided. The belief is that a general insurrection is intended in Ireland, and that the disturbance was accidental and temporary. The movement against Canada claims more attention, and is believed to be near at hand.

Montreal has been greatly excited for several days over the report that the Victoria bridge and the powder magazine would be blown up. A Council has been held and more troops sent to England. Many Irishmen are assembling at St Albans, and it is supposed that that place will be the base of the Fenian movement.

NEW YORK, March 18.—St. Patrick's day was celebrated by a great turn out, and a stand of colors was presented to the 69th Regiment. A serious riot occurred in Grand street, east of Broadway, to-day, growing out of obstruction by a dray. A policeman protecting the dray was attacked and the fight became general. Thirteen policemen were badly injured. Stones, swords and pistols were used. Several rioters were arrested, one a marshal of the procession.

CHICAGO, March 18.—The floods in the South are receding. Railroad communication will soon be reopened through the country.

ST. LOUIS, March 18.—The passengers and crew rescued from the steamer Mercury had arrived at that place. Many of the passengers were badly frozen by standing in the water.

Capt Dickenson reports that the crew of the steamer Gordpalmer plundered the wreck of the Mercury, and rifled the passengers baggage, even stealing the underclothing of the ladies. Seven men who floated down the river on cotton bales and lodged against the drift, were killed by a tree blown down by the storm.

NEW YORK, March 18.—A royal decree has been issued in Spain, authorizing the Spanish Minister of Marine to contract for a submarine cable to Porto Rico, Mexico and Panama.

the fairest and most equitable terms. Much valuable time might, and no doubt would be wasted in arranging those terms, and, after all, lead to no practical results. The scheme could only have been perfected on the Atlantic side by the various delegations that have met to discuss it in its different phases, and if we hope to attain our end we must follow suit, and lose no time in despatching one or more competent delegates, empowered to negotiate the terms of our admission into the new and promising nationality.

Interesting Correspondence.

We have been requested to publish the following correspondence, which we do with pleasure, because Messrs Drake & Jackson are not the only gentlemen who have had occasion to complain of "impertinence" from the same quarter:

BASTION STREET, VICTORIA, March 19. SIR—We beg to forward for publication the following correspondence, which has taken place between ourselves and the Collector of Customs at New Westminster, as we believe this is the only course which will prevent other persons being subjected to similar comments from that gentleman. Your obedient servants, DRAKE & JACKSON. EDITORS COLONIST.

19th February, 1867. DEAR SIR—Before our clients execute the bond which has been approved by you, they are desirous of having a clear understanding with the Government on the 97th Section of the Customs Law Consolidation Act, and whether the duties on goods will be claimed under the circumstances therein mentioned. This point we wish to have as clear as possible, as the bond does not in words except these contingencies. In England the question is so well settled that discussion could arise, but here with an empty Treasury, &c., the position of affairs is very different, and any ambiguity on a question of this importance will lead to endless litigation. We are, dear Sir, Your obedient servants, DRAKE & JACKSON. T. L. Wood, Esq., H.M. Solicitor General.

CUSTOM HOUSE, NEW WESTMINSTER, 5th, March, 1867.

GENTLEMEN—Your letter to Mr Wood respecting the 97th section of the Customs Consolidation Act has been forwarded to me and I have in reply to state that the 97th section of the Customs Consolidation Act gives authority to the Commissioners of Customs in England, to remit or return, if they shall see fit, customs duties on goods warehoused or about to be warehoused, if lost or destroyed by unavoidable accident. The power of the Commissioners of Customs in England is vested in the Governor of the Colony here.

In the course of eight years, no such case of loss or destruction of goods has happened in the warehouses at New Westminster, and it is not very likely to be of frequent occurrence in Victoria, but should such cases happen, they will be treated each on its own merits, the law having given authority to the Governor to return or remit the duties, if under the circumstances he is in his judgment shall find that it is right to do so. The insinuation that the law will not be put in force as faithfully here as in England, and that the state of the Colonial Treasury could influence the Governor in the discharge of his duty, is an impertinence of which I should have thought no professional person in the position of a gentleman, could possibly have been guilty. I am, Gentlemen, Your obedient servant, W. HAMLEY. Messrs Drake & Jackson.

VICTORIA, V. I., March 12th, 1867.

SIR—We have already replied to your letter of the 5th instant, as far as regards the material portion of it, but it now becomes our duty to remark on the tone you have used to us individually in that letter.

We certainly are not surprised that you should justify the acts of doubtful legality, openly avowed by the official element in the Council, acts admitted by the law advisers of the Crown to be illegal, and justified by him on the ground of expediency, but we are surprised that the Governor should remain in Her Majesty's service, a person so unqualified for the duties of the office you hold, as you appear to be from the language you have adopted towards us in an official document, and which we cannot condense to treat in any other way than with the contempt it deserves, and in future communications with us we beg you will confine yourself to the strict line of your duties. We shall reserve the right to publish this correspondence.

Your obedient servants, DRAKE & JACKSON. W. Hamley, Esq.

Another Rush.

J. BRAUN & Co., do a rushing business; selling fine Clothing, fine French Hats, Caps, Gentlemen's Furnishing Goods. Our Goods and our Prices will defy Capital Humburg. Never fail to see the Red Flag, opposite the Bank of British North America. Greenbacks and Sovereigns as usual.

MR. DALLY takes pleasure in announcing to the inhabitants of Victoria and its vicinity that the alterations in his photographic gallery are now completed, and that those who favor him with a visit may depend upon getting a faithful portrait. Views of houses or scenery photographed in an artistic manner, Fort street, near Government.