

You will find the Estimates contemplate a large outlay in the construction of roads and trails to facilitate access to the new mining district of the Columbia. Fully persuaded that you will agree with me, in the importance of opening communication with the Upper Columbia, for the early spring traffic, I have already sanctioned the construction of a waggon road from the main trunk line at Cache Creek to Savana's Ferry, and arrangements have been entered into for a Steamer to be in readiness for the navigation of the Kamloops and Shuswap Lakes, at once placing the new Gold Fields of the Upper Columbia within easy and cheap access of the Fraser River. The expenses connected with these undertakings will be found in the Estimates. An appropriation will also be asked for opening a route to the newly discovered Gold Diggings on the upper branches of the Bridge River.

It is with great reluctance that I propose to you the abolition of the Duty on the Export of Gold. Of the justice and equity of the Tax, I am as fully convinced as when in this Council I strongly advocated the measure, and I should now hesitate to take this step, did I not consider it to be the paramount duty of the Executive to carry out as far as possible the well understood wishes of the community. I cannot but observe that from various causes a large majority of the people of British Columbia formerly in favour are now opposed to this mode of taxation. Admitting this, I am confident I only carry out the wishes of the Governor in taking this course; to use His Excellency's own words—"The last thing the Government of this Colony would desire to do, is to discourage the miners from developing its resources, or allow any portion of our population to lapse into a state of political discontent."

The public works which I think you will agree with me as absolutely necessary to be undertaken in promotion of the progress and welfare of the Colony, oblige me to propose to you additional taxation to meet the loss which will accrue to the Revenue by the abolition of the Gold Tax. Following out the recommendation of the Mining Board, I advise that the Mining Licence be made compulsory on all employed in mining pursuits. Her Majesty's "Instructions" forbid any restrictions being placed on "persons of African, Asiatic, or Indian birth, to which persons of European birth or descent are not subjected or made liable." It is therefore, only by this measure that our large Chinese population can be made to contribute to the Revenue in equal proportion to the white race. Few Chinamen now take out a Mining Licence, whereas on the other hand few white miners are to be found without one.

I further suggest for your consideration the propriety of increasing the Trade and Liquor Licences throughout the Colony.

Should you agree with me in the expediency of abolishing the Duty on the Export of Gold, there will be no means left to the Executive to obtain any statistical information of the annual yield of Gold, a matter I consider of much importance. I therefore invite you to consider whether some system of Registration might not be adopted for this object, not liable to the same objections as those brought forward against the Gold Export Tax.

The Postal Service requires your attentive consideration. Tenders for the conveyance of the Mails during the present year have been called for by Public Notice, and when received will be laid before you. It will be for you to consider whether the Revenue justifies a bi-weekly service to our Northern Mines, especially at a time when I believe you are unanimous in the opinion that it is incumbent upon the Government to provide direct Steam communication with San Francisco. The establishment of direct Steam communication is a matter of the utmost importance. I am now in correspondence on this subject, and trust to be able to make satisfactory arrangements before the commencement of the spring traffic.

The material interests, and the permanent stability of the Colony are dependent on a fixed population. I would invite your earnest attention to the best means to adopt for introducing and fostering the immigration of a class of Settlers likely to make this country their home. The opening of new and extensive mining and agricultural districts during the past season, and also of different lines of access to them, offer many and favourable inducements for settlement hitherto unknown. The experience of the last year has clearly shown that the agricultural lands of this Colony are well adapted for the cultivation of cereals and vegetables of all descriptions, and large tracts of the best lands are fortunately most favourably situated for the supply of the principal Mining districts.

I am aware that a numerous signed Petition will shortly be presented to you, emanating from Miners and Traders in the Cariboo District, praying that some alteration may be made in the Mining Laws "to provide for the speedy hearing and determining of all disputes concerning Mining interests." I fully agree with the Petitioners that the present expensive system of litigation is "productive of great injury to the general welfare, progress, and development of the whole Mining interests of the Colony." A considerable portion of our last Session was occupied in consolidating and amending the Mining Laws, more especially with a view to remedy the evil of which the Petitioners complain, the Draft Ordinance introduced