

proposed to make it temporary, and upon a division whether for seven or ten years, it was carried for the latter; but the Lords returning it amended, by inserting seven years instead of ten, the Commons agreed to the amendment, and passed the bill. The Commons, however, to prevent their being surprised into such an act for the future, came to a resolution, which was made a standing Order of the House, that no petition should be received for confirming the Charter unless the Charter itself was annexed to the petition.

“The Act for confirming the Company’s Charter,” he continues, “expired above 50 years ago. *They have not had the assurance to apply for a renewal, and yet have been mean enough to keep the absolute possession of what they knew was become the property of the nation.*”

The foregoing statements are sufficiently indicative of the lamentable results of the monopoly established by the Hudson’s Bay Company, both with reference to the natives of Rupert’s Land, and the interests of the mother country; and it is sincerely to be desired that the legislature should open its eyes to the policy of introducing a healthier system, namely, by throwing open trade to those territories over which the Company exercise their illegal jurisdiction. The advantages of such a course are manifest; first, in the facilities which the occupancy of settlements on the sea-coast would afford to our rapidly declining whale fisheries; secondly, in the opening of a new channel for British enterprise and employment of capital, by working the valuable mines of silver, lead, and copper, especially the two latter, in which the country is known to abound; thirdly, by the establishing of salmon, porpoise, and seal fisheries along the coast; fourthly, by leasing, or letting as pasture lands, until the country could be brought into more general cultivation, the extensive plains which now support thousands of droves of wild buffaloes and horses; 5thly, the establishing of a good export trade in wood, tallow, hides, wool, corn, and other natural productions of the country—sources of revenue which the Company wholly neglect, modestly contenting themselves with the enormous profits accruing to them from their exclusive trade in furs. But apart from the political and commercial importance of the subject to the British government, the condition of the natives is even more deserving of its attention. When we assert that they are steeped in ignorance, debased in mind, and crushed in spirit, that by the exercise of an illegal claim over the country of their forefathers, they are deprived of the natural rights and privileges of free born men, that they are virtually slaves, as absolutely as the unredeemed negro population of the slave states of America—that by a barbarous and selfish policy, founded on a love of lucre, their affections are alienated from the British name and government, and they themselves shut out from civilisation, and debarred from every incentive threto—that the same heinous system is gradually effacing whole tribes from the soil on which they were born and nurtured, so that a few years hence not one man from among them will be left to point out where the bones of his ancestors repose—when we assert all this in honest, simple truth, does it not behove every Christian man to demand that the British legislature should not continue to incur the fearful responsibility of permitting the extinction of these helpless, forlorn thousands of their fellow creatures, by lending its countenance to a monopoly engendering so huge a mountain of human misery. For the honour of our nature we trust it may not be—for the honour of this great country, we pray it will not be; and, sincerely trust we, some few voices will respond earnestly, Amen.