

## OTTAWA LETTER.

In consequence of the delay the Australian delegates met with through the flooding of the Fraser, the opening of the Intercolonial Conference here has been postponed from the 22nd to the 28th. As the time approaches the interest in the meeting of the representatives of the Colonial Governments increases. The fact that the Earl of Jersey has been instructed to look on and report may be taken as an indication that the Imperial Government regards it as a meeting of the younger members of the Imperial family, and as such, it does not wish to interfere with the development of their ideas, but to take advantage of them in the future working out of an Imperial policy.

The subject of mail communication between Australia and the United Kingdom will no doubt receive due consideration, and in advance of the action of the Conference, any discussion on the fast Atlantic subsidy might be premature.

The question of a fast Atlantic subsidy is as much a consideration of the Australian Governments as the Canadian, and the question of subsidies to develop the Atlantic-Pacific mail route should be dealt with as a whole scheme, by the joint action of the British Government with the Canadian and Australian Governments.

At the present moment, the Australian mails are carried by the Red Sea route under a subsidy of £185,000, or \$900,000 a year, paid about equally by the British Government and the Australian Provinces, and divided between the two lines of steamers, the Peninsular & Oriental and the Orient. After leaving Australia, they touch at Colombo in Ceylon, Aden and Brindisi, the southern port of Italy, where the mails are transferred and carried by rail to London, and delivered in 31 days from Sydney; the passengers who stick to the steamer, call in at Malta and Gibraltar and are landed in England in 42 days.

Now the Atlantic-Pacific route can offer better facilities both as to speed, coolness of temperature, and importance of connections with the American Continent. An 18 knot service could deliver the mails at Vancouver in about 18 days, C.P.R. across the Continent in 5 days, and the Atlantic voyage 6 days, or a total of 29 days for both mails and passengers as against 31 days by the Red Sea for mails and 42 days for passengers.

That it is the interest of the Australian Governments to develop the competition between the two routes to their own advantage, is beyond a question. At present, England and Australia pay £185,000 for competition between two lines on the same route, which subsidy remains in force till 1896.

The Australian Governments pay, at present, £15,000 to the Canadian Pacific line, and the Canadian Government pays £25,000. There is, therefore, £225,000 available, or will be available in 1896 for redistribution; if that was supplemented by an additional subsidy for the Atlantic service, the Canadian route would become a powerful competitor; and it seems that a useful duty for the Intercolonial Conference to perform is to recommend an apportionment of these subsidies to attain the highest results.

It is as well, *en parenthese*, to draw public attention to the fact that the revenue of the Australias is one hundred and fifty million dollars a year, while the revenue of Canada is thirty-five million dollars a year.

In the revenue of the Australias, however, is included their revenue from railways and telegraphs, but if we were to include the revenue of the C.P.R., G.T.R., and I.C.R., and all our telegraphs we should still fall far short of one hundred and fifty million dollars a year, therefore the available public resources of both countries, with the comparative and respective advantages to be derived by the development of the Pacific and Atlantic mail route are fair subjects for consideration by the Conference.

That the subsidies should be sufficiently liberal to effect a first-class service may be taken for granted; their amount and their apportionment are inter-Imperial in their consideration, towards which the suggestions of the Intercolonial Conference would carry great weight.

The trade question must of necessity form part of the discussion. Where there is such a diversity of tariffs, difficulties naturally present themselves, but as difficulties are created only to be overcome where enterprise and intelligence reign, the discussion is not likely to be shirked. It might be laid down that the broad and beneficent principle of free trade should be the guiding star of the commercial interests of the British Empire.

The report of the Chamber of Commerce of Great Britain for the year shows that the export and import trade of Great Britain stands at the head of the list of the leading nations of the world. She is supreme in her commercial ascendancy and maintains it against every condition of opposition. What is the secret? It is the economic power of free trade. That same principle applied throughout the Empire will distribute the same elements of commercial prosperity over all its component parts. When we see the disastrous effects of protection in the United States, a country in which all the conditions are favorable to protection: the wealthiest zone, diversity of production, sixty-five million of an enterprising people with free institutions, what is the actual condition? Wealth accumulating in fewer hands year by year, industrial employment uncertain, and a lower standard of foreign trade. These are evidences of protection to place in contrast with the commercial activity of the British Isles.

The argument is often used: What can there be in free trade when England is the only nation in the world to adopt it? The answer is, that other nations being in the grasp of protected interests cannot shake them off. These are all reasons why a conference gathered to deliberate upon the wide and diverse interests appertaining to the welfare of the British Empire in its unity, should be careful not to set out on false, economic commercial conditions, and lay a foundation that will engulf its interests in the whirlpool of commercial protection, which, in the long run, means atrophy.

Contributions from the colonies to the naval defence of the Empire may be made from a safer source than that typified in the childlike and bland system of drawing your teeth without making you feel the pain, or as the French statesman put it, plucking as many feathers from your geese as you can without making them squak.

The House is thin—which is the proper Parliamentary expression to use—the members for Ontario having gone west to take a hand in the elections; like old war horses, when the bugle sounds, they cannot be held back.

Ottawa, June 18th, 1894.

VIVANDIER.

## OUR ORIGINALS. — III.

[From the French of Benjamin Sulte, F.R.S.C.]

Thus it was that on the dissolution of the India Company (1675), the Canadian authorities became displeased at the turn things were taking, and took umbrage at the large numbers of *coureurs de bois* who did not return and settle, despite the orders to that effect.

On the one hand, the King, by abolishing all monopolies in trade (1675), freed all those under bond or contract with the India Company: on the other, the Supreme Council of Quebec, making itself the exponent of the edict for Lower Canada, required the instant return of all sons of colonists gone on distant journeys.

The position thus rendered strait, worked a sorting-out among the *coureurs de bois*. Some of them resumed their agricultural labour in their native parishes. Others considered themselves their own masters, at liberty to choose their own destiny, and returned no more to the home-fold. These latter proved no light weight in the scale of those events which happened between 1675 and 1760, for they assured to us the friendship of the savage tribes far away. The implanting of French ideas among the diverse tribes which peopled the interior of the continent resulted in rendering us formidable in the eyes of the English colonies. From Quebec, we could keep up a correspondence with the regions about the head-waters of the Ohio, the great lakes, the Mississippi, the North-West, and that chiefly, thanks to the *coureurs de bois*. Strangely enough, the Supreme Council reiterated persistently the order to these indocile men to return to their own country while constantly taking advantage of their journeys, and their influence among the savages, to consolidate the prestige of the French name.

About 1680 there were eight hundred men of this class dispersed through the State of New York, in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Illinois, and one must admit the roll was very large. At that time we were no more than six thousand souls, French, in Canada.

Ought not these *coureurs de bois* to have sufficiently indicated to the mother-land what course to pursue in the future. With such an advance-guard all was possible if the body of the nation bestirred itself and marched. It never moved. It was at this moment, so propitious to our interests, that the despatch of colonists from France ceased: one may say for ever.

Overcoming all obstacles, our *coureurs de bois* had reached the bounds of the English settlements and pushed them close, having, in a way, become possessors of the vast territory, which secured their rear, and united us still to them. This invasion, similar to that we now see in the entry of our compatriots into the manufactures of New England, but of more importance in the sense that we were taking a new country, ought to have been sustained. Both in Versailles and Quebec they endeavoured to restrain it. It was perhaps a blunder; unfortunately a still graver one was committed when they left Canada to herself, at the moment when, already prosperous, she called for more settlers from France. We were entering into the path of sacrifices. The restrictions launched against the *coureurs de bois* attained its apogee of meanness towards 1690. They declared these men deserters; they were nothing of the sort,