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THE WEEKLY COLONIST.

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IMPORTANT MEETING OF MINERS.

THE BRITISH COLUMBIA TARIFF CONDEMNED.

The meeting convened by the miners, packers, and traders of British Columbia at the Theatre on Saturday afternoon, to consider the increased imposts and tolls levied in that colony, was very numerously attended. On the platform were noticed Capt. Evans of Lightning Creek, Mr. Loring of the Diller claim, Major Downie of the Meadows, Mr. Jenkinson of the Enterprise claim, Mr. B. Anderson of the Jacksonville and Astoria claims, Mr. Garfield of the Eureka and other claims, Mr. Boone of the Eureka, &c., and in the body of the Theatre were numbers of the "bone and sinew" of the sister colony, together with traders, packers, and merchants interested in its prosperity.

Capt. Evans was unanimously called upon to preside, and Mr. Jenkinson to act as Secretary.

Capt. Evans opened the proceedings by remarking that he fully concurred in the object for which the meeting had been called. The miners were seriously affected by the recent duties in British Columbia. They were the men who had made that colony, and it appeared that the legislature now wanted to fleece and bleed them to their utmost capacity. If the policy at present adopted was enforced it would be the sure means of driving them out of the country. (Hear, hear.) The Chairman further said that this was a meeting purely of miners and others interested in mining in British Columbia, and he invited them all to come forward and express their views, proposing to limit the speakers to fifteen minutes each.

The Secretary was then called upon to read the following series of resolutions which had been prepared for the approval and adoption of the meeting:

Whereas; Our honorable Lawmakers have lately passed at Act, increasing largely the duties on imports into our colony, and we the miners, traders and citizens of the colony who have all our interests there and a natural and earnest desire to see it progress and prosper, deem it to be our privilege as well as our duty to consider calmly, deliberately, and most respectfully this action, and to give the full and honest expression of our views on the subject.

I. Resolved. That in our judgment the amended Customs ordinance, 1865, is an act of legislation which is inopportune, unwise, impolitic, unjust and inequitable in its general provisions.

It is inopportune; 1st. Because it largely increases the cost of living in the colony at a time when the mining and trading interests of the country can least afford to bear such an increase. The past season was in every sense an unprofitable one. The miner's labour was, to a great extent, spent in preparing for future operations and his profits were consequently small. The trader shared the same general feeling of distrust and depression in the country. The increased taxation only tends to add to this feeling, and thus deter both men and capital from going into the country.

2nd. Because a gold export tax of 3 per cent has just been imposed on all treasure leaving the colony, which is in itself a heavy increase upon our former taxes. When to this is added a high tariff on all the necessities of life, it becomes a burden from which men regarding their best interests will flee when the first opportunity is offered. It is unwise and impolitic; 1st. Because it will not increase the revenue of the colony. The great diminution in the amount of imports into the colony caused by this tariff will diminish the aggregate revenue so much that there will be a large deficit to be made up next year, when the mining population will be so small under the operation of our new taxes that it cannot be collected. No direct importations into the country can prevent this result, even if such importations should enable traders to furnish supplies at the same cost that they could have done under the old tariff.

2d. We believe there are rich deposits of gold in the wildest and most inhospitable portions of the colony. These gold fields are as yet unexplored and undiscovered. It will require men and capital combined to discover and develop them. In many instances large companies have been organized and other preparations made to send capital into the country for the purpose. This tariff discourages and cripples all such operations by an unfair increase upon all the articles and implements required for their work. Prospecting in the colony upon which so much of our future success depends is thus checked if it is not entirely prohibited.

3d. There are hundreds of men in the colony who have spent all their means and time during the past three or four years without success. Within the small district of one and a half miles on Williams Creek six hundred thousand dollars have been spent during the past season. These men have experience in the country; they are not altogether discouraged and they purpose to go again into the mines with the hope that they will yet be able to get something in return for their lost labor and means. This tariff discourages such men, and will force them to gather up their small earnings for the season and leave the country forever.

4th. The small trader or packer who has invested his means in provisions, and is now on his way, or about to start for the colony will be compelled to seek another market. He cannot pay a double tariff and compete with those traders now in the country. He will find a better and more profitable market in the neighboring gold fields of Washington and Idaho Territories.

It is unjust and inequitable;

1st. Because the increase in the absolute necessities of life far exceeds that on the luxuries, thus making the laborer in the country bear the main, if not the whole, burden of the taxation. As an instance, the tariff on beans, one of the principal articles of consumption by the miner, is increased from 3 to 20 per cent, while that on ale and port is only increased from 10 to 40 per cent; the tariff on flour is increased more than three-fold while that on wine is only doubled.

2d. The tariff is made to take effect at once, thus causing a sudden and quick rise in provisions in the mines just as the season begins. By this means the miner will be forced to pay famine prices in the spring, and perhaps be driven by necessity to leave the country before he has had a fair chance to go to work profitably. A reasonable notice for the enforcement of such a measure is as customary in other countries as it is equitable and fair.

II. Resolved.—That in our opinion the idea that such a tariff will encourage direct importations to the colony from distant parts of the world is a delusion.

It will result in no good to the colony. The legislators in British Columbia cannot control the laws of commerce; such legislation is not more onerous to the consumers of the country than it is impracticable and futile for the purposes for which it was enacted.

III. That a copy of these resolutions be prepared for signature, and when signed by the miners and traders of British Columbia now in this city, and by none others, they be forwarded to His Excellency Governor Seymour, who is hereby most respectfully requested to lay them before the hon. Council and Legislative Assembly for their consideration, with this as our prayer, that they will cause the Customs Amendment Act to be revised to suit the circumstances of the country.

Mr. Garfield having been called upon by the meeting to propose the first resolution said it was a question of considerable doubt in his mind whether the meeting had acted wisely in calling upon him to open a discussion on a tariff in British Columbia, as he had not given the subject that careful attention which its importance demanded. He would, however, say this, that he gave his most cordial assent to the purport of the resolution, as he considered the new customs tariff most "inopportune, unwise, impolitic, unjust and inequitable." He regarded any measure having the effect of increasing the cost of living to the miner as injurious to the best interests of the latter and to the country generally. It served to keep the country in a second-rate condition by destroying private enterprise, robbing the country of his hard earnings, and robbing the country of its population. The meeting was well aware that for the last two years the miners of Cariboo had had all they could do to meet their own individual expenses. The mines were remote and topographically difficult of access, the country rough, the mines deep, water plentiful, and the labor greater before reaching the arduous deposit in Cariboo than in Colorado, Nevada, or any of the other mining districts. Numbers of hard-working miners had come back after expending all their labor in Cariboo, utterly ruined. British Columbia was now acting as a kind godmother to them by precluding them from returning (applause). He next denounced the system of levying tolls as most oppressive, and the only redeeming feature that he could see in it was that it would have the effect of driving miners away to other mining countries where they would succeed much better (loud applause). The true object in every system of political economy that he had ever studied was to impose duties on all articles of luxury, and exempt, as much as possible, those which added to the cost of living. In the new customs tariff of British Columbia that policy had not been observed; the necessities of life were heavily charged, while the duties on luxuries were comparatively light. The miners would not object to an equitable system of taxation; there would be no objection to taxing liquors. If drinks were \$5, instead of four bits, he for one, would only take one, where he now took ten, and he would be much better off for it (loud applause). He was firmly convinced that the imposition of taxes on the "beans straight," and other necessities of the miner, was most prejudicial to his interests, and the

welfare of the country. All the material requisite for carrying on mining operations should also be admitted into the country at as low a cost as possible. In fact the policy of the legislature should be to lessen the expenses of the miner by every possible means, that he might open up the country, and bring back the good old times of '60-'61 (cheers). The new laws were particularly inopportune, coming as they did at a time when Cariboo stood worse in public estimation than it had ever previously done (applause). He ventured to assert that no people on God's earth paid more taxes to the government than did the mining community of Cariboo (applause), and yet, at a time when they could least afford it, they were required to submit to increased taxation. It was simply offering a bonus to men to leave the country, instead of encouraging population, and reminded him of the old fable of the man who had a goose that laid a golden egg. Not satisfied with one golden egg a day, the covetous man must needs rip the poor goose open to get all the eggs at once (laughter). Now, the government finding that they wanted more golden eggs, were pursuing the same course, and wanted to extract from the hard earnings of the miner, in one year, what their resources could not bear in five (great applause). The legislators should be careful lest they should find that they had added the last feather that would break the camel's back. In conclusion he, for one, would assert, if he did not speak the voice of the people of Cariboo, that none of those who had supported an iniquitous measure that robbed miners of their hard earnings, should ever obtain their suffrages again (immense applause).

Cries of Mr. Orr:

Mr. James Orr on ascending the platform was cheered. He said he had only known of the meeting about an hour before and was not aware who had called it or who had framed the resolutions which had been read. He thought however they were rather premature. He agreed with Mr. Garfield on the principle of admitting all articles at as low a rate as possible. He then proceeded to point out instances where he believed the tariff would be found to operate favorably quoting the item of flour to illustrate his argument. He was, however, not altogether in favor of the tariff which he considered was "inopportune" but not "inequitable." It would no doubt bear hardly upon the miners for a few months, but he believed the object and effect of the tariff would be to bring importations direct to British Columbia and save the miners the additional toll on goods entering the colony by way of Victoria. He saw no objection to the resolution of the words unjust and inequitable were expunged.

He observed that there were so many points which this question touched, that he hardly knew where to begin. The last speaker had felt a delicacy in seconding the resolution, unless the word "inequitable" was expunged, but he felt none, as the resolution had his most cordial support. He did not pretend to command a flow of language, but that was not what was wanted, it was sound common sense, and he would speak his mind on the matter, as he thought every miner who was interested should do (applause). The miners of Cariboo had already built up one city, and they had no desire to expend their hard earnings in building up another, (cheers) nor were they particularly anxious to pay for clearing the stamps at New Westminster—(great applause). He considered the recent legislation a monstrous injustice to the mining community, and now was the time for every man, no matter where he hailed from, to raise his voice against it (cheers). Miners had worked hard, hoping to be able to obtain material to work their claims, and now it was to be more heavily taxed, which would render their labor fruitless. He could enumerate 20 companies organized for the purpose of opening up the country, that would contribute largely to the revenue of the colony, and which would be checked by the taxes now sought to be levied on their enterprise. He could instance one company in particular which had been organized last fall, and had come down here for means to carry on their undertaking, they found that on \$10,000 worth of hardware, steel and gunpowder that they would require, they would have to pay \$2,500 out of their pockets direct, to the government. There was the Bed Rock Flume Company, on Williams Creek, which before taking out a single dollar, must expend \$150,000 for the good of the country; this, when complete, would enable single hill claims to be worked, and give employment to 2,000 miners, every man of whom, under this tariff, would have to pay at least sixty dollars, on the very necessities of life. If the miners were only allowed to have a fair show, they would make a country of it. Legislators might try and drive them out of it, and leave the country to Chinamen, but that would not suit men who had their whole stake in that country, and whose success depended entirely upon its prosperity. He concluded by urging upon all miners to come forward and express their views boldly (applause).

The resolution was put by the Chairman, and carried unanimously.

Mr. Butler Anderson came forward to propose the second resolution. He did not know that they had acted wisely in calling on him, but whether or not he had his interest in the colony, and intended to have his little say in the matter. He believed the resolution was the plain, outspoken honest truth. On general principles he was opposed to tariffs everywhere; it was a bad way of getting a revenue. He favored a direct tax. Mr. Orr had said this tariff was for encouraging direct importation, direct importation from anywhere but Victoria. It did not make a particle of difference where the goods came from. The only thing the tariff was intended for was the benefit of certain parties in the colony, he need not say where, but the effect was to raise a large revenue out of the population of Cariboo (applause). It was folly to attempt to control the laws of com-

merce. It could not be done. Mr. Orr said the policy of the tariff was to make merchants import goods direct to New Westminster. He would ask if merchants were any more encouraged to import goods direct to New Westminster under the new tariff than before? If goods could be imported profitably under the new tariff could they not be now profitably imported under the former tariff? (applause). It had been intimated that this tariff had been put on to build up a city in New Westminster. Did any sane man out of New Westminster believe that this tariff would build a city there? (laughter). They had taxed our necessities—our beans and our bacon; our enterprises, our prospectors will be crippled; who knows when another tariff of 12 1/2 per cent, more will be put on? The only effect of this tariff would be to make us make all we could out of the country and skedaddle as quick as possible (applause). Mr. Orr had said that any resolutions we might pass here would be of no avail. Well, they would at least show our legislators, whom many of us had elected, the feeling of the people of Cariboo. He hoped when these resolutions were passed that the names of every miner in Victoria would be attached to them, and they would at least show our legislators what we felt in the matter (applause). He could not see because the most of us lived in Victoria during the winter that we were not entitled to have a voice in the affairs of the country. He himself had every dollar he possessed in the world invested in Cariboo, and he would ask how many of them were not in a similar position? (loud applause). Mr. Anderson concluded a most eloquent and forcible speech by reading again the resolution and sat down amid great applause.

Major Downie next addressed the meeting. He said he, in common with his brother miners, was also deeply interested in British Columbia, and he claimed an equal right to raise his voice against the hasty, ill-considered, unjust legislation in that colony. He knew of men who had made every preparation for taking goods to Kootenay from Washington Territory, but in consequence of the new tariff they had changed their minds and were now going south of the boundary line to Idaho or Boise. He condemned in emphatic terms the duty imposed upon gold and the increased charges on the "beans straight," and other requirements of the miner, the effect of which would be to drive out men who had spent their last dollar in opening the resources of the country. He had himself been seven years in the country, and had helped to develop it; every cent he was worth had been spent in it, and he saw nothing before him now but to take up his blankets and go south of the boundary line (cheers). This was no buncombe, but the honest truth (laughter and cheers). He had a strong objection to being legislated out of the country by imported legislators, men who were sent out here to make laws for us miners, and don't know a single thing about our requirements or wants. The great aim of these sapient legislators—these wise men of Greece—was to try and make us take a short half-dollar (hooray), for a big one! (shouts of laughter).

No British colony had ever had such opportunities of becoming a great country, but the system of legislation pursued instead of drawing people into it, and giving encouragement to enterprise, caused it to be avoided. He had observed that the editor of the *Columbian* considered it an admirable, far-seeing, wise tariff. Yes, certainly it was a most splendid tariff, but if they thought it was going to build up New Westminster, they were vastly mistaken (applause). He drew a comparison between the relative advantages and prospects of New Westminster and Victoria, and said they might talk about getting their direct cargoes, but he firmly believed that the whole of New Westminster together could not buy one cargo of goods. (great laughter and applause). The speaker alluding to the number of officials in British Columbia whom the miners were called upon to maintain and the advisability of a reduction in the expense which they entailed, concluded by informing the meeting that he should now proceed to Kootenay and prospect there, and if he did not succeed there he should go still further South. He only wished the meeting could have been held in New Westminster instead of Victoria, where they might meet the wiseacres face to face and tell them what they thought of them. (Laughter and great applause).

Capt. Evans, the Chairman, addressed a few forcible remarks to the meeting on the resolution. He said one of the legislators of British Columbia had told him the other day that it mattered nothing to the miners of Cariboo whether they paid two cents or five or six cents of duty on what they used. Now he would ask the meeting if they were of this opinion? Another legislator had told him that there were below Lillooet over 2000 Chinamen mining, who did not contribute a cent to the revenue. The Legislature of British Columbia taxed white men all they could bear, but they allowed these Chinamen to defraud the revenue of over \$11,000 (applause). He did not object so much to the amount of taxation, provided all classes of the community bore their proper share. If, for instance, everybody were caught as was the honorable Treasurer of British Columbia the other day, when he rushed down to Victoria to lay in a supply of mackinack before the new tariff came into operation; the honorable gentleman arrived with his supplies at New Westminster about half-past five o'clock, but alas! the new tariff came in force at half-past three, and just caught him nicely by two hours (loud laughter). He said the legislators of British Columbia seemed to be trying to see what laws they could enact to injure the miners; no sooner had they passed the tariff, than they proposed a Pound Law which would inflict a fine on every packer and miner whose animals were found grazing on pre-empted land, whether fenced or not. Animals would therefore have to be fed on grain on the way up at great expense. The honorable Mr. Cornwall

had four miles of frontage along the Cariboo road, without a fence on it except round a field or two, and he wanted his lands protected from passing pack-trains. Capt. Evans commended severely on the policy pursued by the Government in regard to the mines, and alluded to his own case, having brought out a large number of miners here at great expense from home, and having expended over \$100,000 on Lightning Creek, and now the Government had broken faith with him in refusing the grant which had been promised him. Capt. Evans invited any miner who felt disposed to come forward and give the meeting his views.

The second resolution was here put by the chairman and carried unanimously. Mr. Garfield said he should like the sense of the miners to be taken on the point he had previously advanced as to whether the miners would in future return any member to represent them who voted for increased taxation on the miner's labor.

At the suggestion of the chairman this was reserved until the last resolution had been put.

Mr. Garfield then spoke to the third resolution, and said he would do so by asking the meeting first, how an increased tariff was going to promote direct importation? and secondly, how does an increase of tariff in a non-producing country reduce the price of living? (Applause) How would it affect the aim of its farmers in giving Victoria the go by and building up New Westminster into a city. It was a solecism. He showed the extreme folly of increasing taxes at a time when the country could not afford it. The laws of commerce, like the laws of the universe, were immutable. Commerce collected and flowed in from every rift until it swelled into a mighty stream and flowed into that ocean mart where people congregated for commercial purposes. The Legislature he contended had not the power of diverting the legitimate channels of commerce any more than they could change the laws of creation. The speaker concluded by calling in question a remark which he had understood to fall from Mr. Orr, with reference to increased taxes reducing the price of living.

Mr. Orr said he had been misunderstood, and explained the position he had taken.

Mr. Anderson in seconding the last resolution said the whole purpose of this tariff was to raise more money—more revenue for the Government. He would like to ask what became of all the revenue which was raised from the Court at Williams' Creek. The miners would remember that \$2 1/2 which so many of them had to pay, and that "bit"—they could not forget that "bit" (laughter). The true cause of the want of more revenue was the swarms of officials in the country (applause). Dismiss three-fourths of all the officials and let the rest of them do a man's work, and this oppressive tariff would be found quite unnecessary (cheers).

This resolution was also carried unanimously.

Mr. Garfield then offered the following resolution:

"Resolved that the miners present will hereafter vote for no man who favors an increase of taxation in British Columbia, believing as they do that the burthens of the people of that colony are greater than they can bear.

He said the miners had partly themselves to blame for the mode in which they were at present over-burdened with taxes, as they had never obtained an expression of their sentiments. He heard nothing individually for any squabbles between New Westminster and Victoria. He would like to see both prosper and grow until they became a second London. Nor did he care whether the goods came from Victoria, London, San Francisco, Sandwich Islands, or the Canibal Islands, what he and the rest of the miners wanted was the best goods at the cheapest rate. (Cheers).

This terminated the proceedings, and Maj. Downie having gone round with the hat to collect contributions to defray the expenses, the meeting, which was one of the most orderly and most unanimous we ever attended, quietly dispersed.

RUMORS FROM THE SEAT OF WAR.

A number of men arrived in town on Saturday night from Seattle, who report that telegrams had been received at that place announcing the capture of Charleston, South Carolina, by Sherman's forces. One of the party, Mr. Foster, states that he gathered the above information from the bulletin board of the Seattle Gazette. The confirmation or otherwise of the rumor will be anxiously looked for by the arrival of the Eliza Anderson to-morrow morning.

ENTERPRISE DISCOURAGED.—The projectors of the Williams Creek Meadows Amalgamation Company have been so discouraged by the recent unwise legislation in British Columbia that they have seriously thought of abandoning the whole scheme. The action of the government in refusing the promised grant to Capt. Evans, after his two years of arduous and expensive labor on Lightning Creek, leads the Meadows Company to fear that a like liberal policy may be pursued in regard to their contemplated application for similar advantages on Williams Creek.

THE MINERS' PETITION.—The resolutions passed at the meeting of British Columbia miners on Saturday lies at Well, Fargo & Co's Express office for signature.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE LIBRARY.—The Institute has received from Mr. F. F. Davis a donation of fifteen volumes for the library, including Boswell's Life of Johnson, Bibliographical Manual of English Literature, Pilgrim's Progress (illustrated), Fremont's Oregon and California, &c.

Sanich
Port Angelos
Peterson, Port Angelos
n, Saanich
e, Jones, Sooke
Nanaimo

IRTH
19th, the wife of William
h inst., the wife of Mr. J.

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ster daughter of Alexander
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IED.
Hospital, Cariboo, on the
Psychama, Charles Bankel,

copy.
14th inst., Mary, aged 6
st daughter of G. Fromis.
10th inst., Frances Sarah,
pt. J. Swanson, aged 32

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need any comment

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at the Court House on the day

ARTHUR N. BIRCH,
sionce of the Surveyor General.
15th February, 1865. 1c13