

the Colony within the past twelve months, and after one of the most severe financial disasters that ever fell upon any community shows that its recuperative powers are phenomenal. I most heartily congratulate you upon this aspect of affairs which, I consider, justifies our taking a hopeful view of the economic condition of the Island.

The success that attended the prosecution of the fisheries last year, although to some extent limited by reason of low prices, was an important factor in removing the commercial depression. Had the seal fishery of the past spring been an average one, no doubt the revival in trade would have been still more marked.

The shortage in the catch of codfish this season by foreign competitors has already had the effect of improving the markets for our staple, and the prospect thus afforded of better markets next year has encouraged suppliers to make large advances for the approaching fishing season.

The progress made by the railway contractor last year on the work of the western extension was entirely satisfactory. Seventy miles of railway were completed. It is probable that by the end of the present year the line will be built to Port-aux-Basques, which is the southern terminus. We cannot fail to recognise the importance of the railway system of the Colony, and the great and beneficent influence it is likely to exert upon the development of our material wealth.

It affords me pleasure to observe that the mining industry of this country is attracting the increased attention of foreign capitalists. The deposit of iron ore on Bell Island in Conception Bay is pronounced to be practically inexhaustible. A large amount of foreign capital has been invested in this property and a considerable amount of employment may therefore be anticipated in connexion with the working of the mine. I am informed that other mineral deposits will be developed during the present year.

My Government expected to have been in a position to invite the Legislature to ratify an agreement for the working of the coal area near Grand Lake, but the action of the Newfoundland Railway Company in placing an injunction upon the disposition of the property may possibly retard the completion of the negotiations. The claim set up by the Newfoundland Railway Company is now before the Supreme Court, and it is to be earnestly hoped that there will be an early settlement of the question at issue.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Honourable House  
of Assembly :

The Receiver-General estimates the total receipts for the fiscal year which will end on the 30th June 1896, at \$1,550,000, and the total expenditure at \$1,350,000, in which sum is included the interest on the Public Debt. This would leave a surplus for the entire year of about \$200,000. The public accounts and estimates will be submitted to you at an early date, and I am confident you will make needful provision for the public service.