

The Weekly British Colonist AND CHRONICLE.

Tuesday, April 9, 1867.

The Cession of the Russian Possessions.

By the terms of a treaty made in 1825, between Great Britain and Russia, it was stipulated and agreed that an imaginary line should be drawn from the 60th degree of North latitude on the Pacific to the 70th degree of latitude on the Arctic, which supposed line should mark the boundary between the North American possessions of the two Powers. It was also stipulated, in order to secure for Russia certain advantages which were hers by right of discovery, that that power should hold and possess a narrow strip of territory on the seaboard, extending from 54:40 to the 60th degree of North latitude, and running back ten leagues, following the indentations of the coast, and including all the adjacent islands. By this treaty, Russia secured the great peninsula, forming the extreme northwestern portion of the Continent; while Great Britain reserved for the use of her subjects the territory lying south-west of the boundary line and east of the narrow coast strip, with the free navigation of the rivers emptying into the Pacific between 54:40 and 60. The mouths of Stekin and Taco Rivers, with ten leagues of the land lying behind them, are in Russian Territory; but the subjects of Great Britain have secured for their vessels the privilege, in perpetuity, of ascending those streams to communicate or trade with the British territory, without being subject to any port or other charges. No goods, other than Russian, however, can be landed anywhere within ten leagues of the coastline without paying duties. The Hudson Bay Company, about the time that this treaty was ratified, leased from the Russian Government the right to trade with the Indians inhabiting this narrow strip. This lease expired some years ago, and has since been renewed yearly. The present lease will expire in June next; but should the treaty not be renewed, or the Russian Possessions pass into the hands of the Americans, the Company's vessels will still have the privilege of ascending all rivers emptying into the ocean between 54:40 and the 60th ° of latitude, and trading with the Indians of the interior. Russian navigators first discovered the country lying to the north of us, and the strip was accorded that power to compensate her for the vast territory (now known as British Columbia), to which she had consented to abandon all claim. The Pacific end of the line that stretches to the Arctic is marked by Mount Elias, whose head is white with the frosts of eternal winter, and who stands like a grim sentinel watching, as it were, to protect the interests of both nations, and to see that no violation of the Treaty is committed by either with impunity. The Russian American Possessions are about one thousand miles in length by 750 in breadth. The Far Company exercise undisputed authority over that vast extent of country which has proved a mine of wealth to them. The country is also represented as rich in precious and base metals. There are traditions afloat among traders who have visited the sea coast that the Far Company collect large quantities of gold dust annually from the natives. Such stories seldom contain a particle of truth, and generally exist only in the vivid imaginations of those who relate them. But it is a well known fact that copper in a pure state is found on the Atka river, and that the sheets of bright native copper on which are traced Indian hieroglyphics, said to possess great antiquity, and found among the aborigines on that portion of the coast, were obtained on its banks and converted into their present form by some process known only to the natives. Several large streams, heading in British territory, flow through the Russian Possessions and empty into Behring Straits. These streams were partly explored last year by the Russian Telegraph employees, and one of them—the Kivekpak—was ascertained to be navigable for steamboats a distance of fourteen hundred miles. The waters in the vicinity of the coast of Sitka as well as the Aleutian Islands (an important group lying to the southeast of the peninsula of Alaska) furnish valuable fishing grounds, and the vessels of several companies, with their headquarters at San Francisco, are extensively engaged during the summer in catching and curing codfish for the California market. A considerable export trade is transacted in ice for the same

market. The Russian Far Company own several large steamers, which visit the various stations at stated periods and secure rich freights of furs, which are sent to Europe. The coast is almost destitute of timber, and no good coal has been discovered there. The want of such important essentials to life and comfort are these must ever prove a serious barrier to the rapid settlement of the country, it matters not into whose hands it may eventually fall. From a commercial point of view the establishment of a colony of energetic, go-ahead people—who would open the mines of latent wealth that are represented to abound there, and would improve and turn to account every other advantage that the land may possess, would certainly prove beneficial to us; but looking at the cession from a political standpoint, we confess we are not a little startled to observe the strides that our American neighbor is making on all sides to hem in and cut off from every chance of territorial expansion the British North American Confederacy. To Russia, the possessions to the north of us are of no political importance; but to the United States they may prove of incalculable value in view of the great and important change that has lately taken place on the continent. The sum demanded for this territory is said to have been \$7,000,000; but from the opposition offered by the American press, we fancy it is nearer \$70,000,000. To judge from the despatches received last night, it would appear that the ratification of the Treaty by the American Senate is doubtful. Nothing pleases an American more than a knowledge of the fact that his country is adding to her real estate—extending her area—taking slow but positive steps towards the realization of the dream indulged in by Mr. Monroe, whose "doctrine" was that the United States should include the whole North American continent. The opposition of the Senate is therefore strange, and can only be accounted for upon the ground that the Radicals are fearful that Mr. Johnson, by acquiring additional territory, should become so popular as to secure a reelection.

It is reported that a new Governor of Sitka is on his way out from St. Petersburg to take charge of that country. This report does not "sit well" in the face of the news of the transfer of the Russian American Possessions to the United States. Bishop Hills has gone to Cowichan on a pastoral visit, and will return on Friday. The Pixley family went to Nagaimo yesterday to fulfil a professional engagement. The U. S. surveying brig Fauntleroy arrived yesterday from Puget Sound.

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE.

Wednesday, April 3rd. A FATHER RESCUES HIS CHILD FROM DROWNING—Brodrick's wharf was the scene of a thrilling incident yesterday morning, at nine o'clock. An American gentleman, with his wife, and a baby some seven months old, who arrived on the Eliza Anderson on Monday night, started to leave the steamer for up-town, and entrusted the baby, which was in a child's carriage, to one of the hands of the steamer to carry ashore. The hand, supposing the carriage to be empty, took it in his arms to follow the father and mother ashore. In crossing the gangplank, the child unobserved rolled out of the carriage and fell into the water. On reaching the spot where the father and mother stood, the latter looked down to adjust the youngster's little bed, when, lo, the carriage was empty! The truth flashed at once across the father's mind, and rushing to the stringpiece he beheld the little fellow floating in the water. Not a moment was to be lost, and with all his clothes still on him the gentleman leaped from the wharf and seized hold of and supported the little fellow in his arms until assistance arrived and both were rescued. Neither the parent nor child apparently sustained any damage beyond a severe wetting. The scene was a thrilling one, and the overjoyed acknowledgments to a kind Providence who watched over their little one in the moment of his peril and returned him to their arms unhurt, can only be appreciated by those who have children of their own.

Big Bend Mining News via Colville—News from Creek 49 is very encouraging. Some letters received from there from parties state that they have found a very good prospect and have made preparations for and soon will be sluicing. They write their friends to come at once, for they believe that the diggings will pay very well. The knowing ones appear to think that this will be a very good camp, though not extensive. Quite a party of miners will start in a few days for that place. 49 creek is a stream emptying into the Kootenay river about fifteen miles above its mouth, and on the north side. The mines are reached by way of the Columbia river to the Kootenay in boats. It will require but very little work to make a good pack trail up the Kootenay into the mines. The country presents fine grazing qualities along this route near the mouth of the Kootenay. There has been no news from the two parties who are at work on the Pen d'Oeille, below the old Kalispel Mission. The party who left Colville some time since in search of them, appear to have had a owing commission, having wandered up and down the river for a number of days, and not finding the parties whom they were hunting for they returned.

THE SALE OF THE "FASHION"—This sale will commence this day at 11 a. m., and having inspected the various articles offered such as paintings, engravings, ornaments, furniture, etc., we can state that the handsome goods yet auctioned in this city will be offered. The piano will be put up at half past twelve, and the bed-room furniture, for convenience, has been removed to the concert room.

PROBATION.—The Council was prorogued at 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon. A report of the Governor's speech appears in our columns. It is believed that the Island members will all return to-day. The Governor will give a ball in a few days at the New Westminster Government House, and Mr Birch will entertain his friends at a dinner, previous to taking his departure for England.

WRECK OF THE SLOOP NORTHERN LIGHT—A telegram from San Juan received last night states that during the gale on the night of the 31st ult. the sloop Northern Light ran upon the rocks near Hibbard's lime kiln and sank in about two or three fathoms water. She was bound for the kiln for a cargo of lime.

THE SEVERE FROSTS at night have had the effect of delaying vegetation; but within the last few days fruit trees have begun to put forth their buds, and early garden and wild flowers are bursting into full bloom. It is believed that the fruit crop on the Island will be large this year.

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European Mail Summary.

[DATES TO FEBRUARY 14.]

During a debate in the English House of Lords, on the subject of the navy estimates, the Duke of Somerset said he was glad that the United States iron-clad Miantonomoh visited England, as the known danger to the lives of the men serving in her would perhaps deter the advocates of such vessels in that country from recommending them for service. The Duke said that he had been told by an officer attached to the Miantonomoh that her crew were liable to be suffocated in a few minutes in any time by an accident in the ventilating machinery, which he described.

Correspondence from Berlin and Munich state the important fact that the tide of German emigration to the United States is likely to become a complete torrent as the spring season advances, under the influence of many new and exciting causes, resulting from the late war in the Confederation.

The London Times of the 7th of February has the following in its city article.—The committee of bondholders of the Confederate cotton loan have presented to-day a memorial to Her Majesty's government, on behalf of Mr. Flemming, Queen's Counsel, and Mr. J. H. Lloyd. The fact of this loan having a special stipulation of cotton, which was forcibly taken by the North, they consider places their federate loan.

In the English House of Lords, on the 7th of February, Lord St. Leonards laid upon the table a bill for the establishment of courts of conciliation and arbitration. He explained this object was to provide for the settlement of disputes between masters and workmen. Courts of conciliation already existed in France, and had been found to work satisfactorily. He believed that the establishment of similar institutions in England would tend greatly to put a stop to strikes. The bill was read a first time.

In the House of Lords on the 8th of February, the proposed London reform demonstration of the 11th of January was debated. Earl Derby strongly protested such demonstrations, but admitted that the Government could not interfere so long as there was no breach of the peace.

With regard to the projected English Parliamentary commission on the subject of trades' unions, a meeting of the Working Men's Association was held in London on the opinion was very generally expressed that any legislation upon the subject of trades' unions unrepresented was not likely to be satisfactory or beneficial to the members of trade societies. Queen Victoria will hold, during the season at Buckingham palace, five courts for the reception and presentation of a certain number of ladies and gentlemen, the limit being two hundred at sixty at each court. The Prince of Wales will again hold levees, and the Princess of Wales "drawing rooms" on behalf of the Queen.

In the House of Commons in London, on the 6th, Mr. Kavanagh, the new member for Wexford county, Ireland, having neither hand nor feet, was brought to the table in a wheeled chair to be sworn. The hon. member, after taking the oath, signed the parliamentary roll by placing the pen between the ends of his arms. He appeared to write with great fluency. After signing his name, he was in the usual form introduced to the Speaker, to whom he bowed, and then, by placing his arms in brass sockets and turning some screws which operated upon the wheels of his chair, he passed out of the House. Considerable curiosity was manifested, and several honorable members went to the table to inspect Mr. Kavanagh's signature. After the House rose Sir D. Le Marchant, Captain Gosset, and Colonel Forster were engaged in finding a suitable place in the House for the honorable member during the debates.

The London Times admits that the raggedness of the ministerial resolutions of reform cannot be too strongly condemned, and says that it is so mistaken the temper and time to think such proposals might be adopted. It is still true that the resolutions, as a whole point to a complete measure. The Times urges the House of Commons to take the good, eliminate the bad, supply what is deficient, amend what is capable of correction, and resist all attempts to dilute or under the banner of this or that candidate for office.

The Manchester Examiner says there is no prospect of a settlement of the wages dispute in the Staffordshire iron trade. The men appear to be adopting the policy which led to

the last disastrous lockout, accepting the reduction in some districts, in order that they might fight the masters in detail, and support strikes in the districts where a Gen. Manteuffel has at his own request been relieved from the command of the 9th Prussian army corps on account of his health but for a period of one year he will retain his post as aid-de-camp to the King.

A Pesh telegram of the 25th of January tends to confirm the statement that the Hungarian difficulties have been adjusted. The Independence Hellenique, January 17, states that the insurrectionists of Epirus and Thessaly have proceeded to the formation of a provisional government. The seal of the new government bears a buckler and the Hellenic crown. All around the inscription are these words:—"Provisional government of Epirus and Thessaly." The government has addressed to the consuls of the great Powers a declaration, dated Petritio, in which it complains of the wrongs and exactions of the Ottoman government.

The news of the banishment of the Duke and Duchess of Montpensier, as well as that of the Infanta D. Enrique de Bourbon, brother of the King of Spain, is confirmed. It was reported that a large political party in Spain wished to place the Duke on the throne of Spain.

The Viceroy of the Emperor of China has returned, it is stated, to Nanking, having, according to Chinese accounts, fought thirteen battles with the Nienfei, and captured ten thousand men and enormous quantities of loot. The Nienfeis are now said to be fairly exterminated from Shantung.

The Overland China Mail gives the following account of crime in Canton.—A proclamation has been issued for the suppression of gambling hells and brothels. The Chinese say that it rates the officers soundly for their venality and connivance at crime, and is issued by order of the Governor General. Its character is such that they do not care to give it any publicity which they can avoid. We have only heard of two posted in public, and they are so mutilated as to be unintelligible. Canton is beginning to feel the effects of the new ordinance in Hong Kong. The rowdies are abundant, and the bands of robbers have already commenced their depredations. Within the last two weeks there have been several successful raids by these banditti; in one a few raw silk, and a reward of \$300 has been offered for their apprehension.

A correspondent in Queenstown, writing on the 9th of February, says: In view of the withdrawal of the subsidy, the Cunard company are about to inaugurate an additional line of steamers to and from New York weekly, calling at Queenland home and out. The first of these steamers will, it is said, sail from Liverpool on the first Thursday in March next, and from Queenstown on the following day, taking the ocean mail, emigrants, and second cabin passengers. No change will be made in their present sailing of regular and extra steamers from Liverpool and here, with this exception, that their steamers sailing from Liverpool on Saturdays and from Queenstown on Sundays will only take first class cabin passengers and the usual mails. It is said they intend sailing their fastest on the Thursdays from Liverpool and following day from here.

After a protracted trial of the four persons charged with the scuttling of the British ship Severn, with the object of defrauding the underwriters, and which had attracted great attention in the mercantile world, the jury returned a verdict of guilty, and the following sentences were passed. Berwick, the owner of the ship, and Holdsworth, the broker, twenty years penal servitude; Webb, the mate of the ship, who bored the holes in her ten years, and De-n, the broker's clerk, fifteen other charges against Berwick and Holdsworth for scuttling ships.

M. Bourree, the French Ambassador at Constantinople, and M. Prokesch, the Austrian representative, submitted to the Sultan excellent advice in favor of the Christian population of the empire. It is affirmed at Pera that the Sultan replied in these words: I hope that neither France nor the other Powers, to which guarantees have been made, will doubt my serious intention of fulfilling the promises I have made on different occasions. It is my most ardent wish to realize the grand idea of my father, the Sultan Mahomed, that Mussulmans were to be looked on as such only in their mosques, Christians in their churches and Jews in their synagogues.

Lieutenant Brand and Colonel Nelson, formerly in the army of Jamaica, have been arrested and partially examined on a charge of murder, in killing the man Gordon, who was shot by order of a Court-Martial during the Jamaica Insurrection. They are prosecuted at the instance of the Jamaica Committee, which has taken upon itself the task of bringing to punishment Governor Eyre and all others in authority at Jamaica during the disturbances. Lieutenant Brand was a member of the court-martial which convicted Gordon, and Colonel Nelson commanded the troops who shot him. The prosecution claim that the establishment of martial law in Jamaica, was an illegal act, and that all acts done under it by soldiers, at the command of their superiors, were illegal.

There had been rumors of a dissolution of the French Chamber of Deputies from some imaginary fear of the opposition of the majority to the reforms proposed by the Emperor Napoleon, but the rumors are not supposed to be well founded.

An imperial decree had been issued determining the relations of the Senate and Corps Legislatif towards the Emperor and the Council of State, and establishing the organic conditions under which their labors will be conducted. This decree, which is a modification of that of January 19, contains no important legislations not already known.

All that was known of the result of the elections for the German Parliament appears to be favorable to the liberal cause. At Berlin and other great cities the candidates of that side have triumphed. Some curious incidents are related. M. de Munchauhen, the old Hanoverian Minister, the author of the protest, has been chosen at Hanover at Frankfurt, as stated by telegraph, Baron Charles de Rothschild, who has made himself remarkable by his opposition to the acts of the Prussian authorities, is the elected deputy for the old free city.

Lastly, at Elberfeld, a second election has become necessary between Count de Bismarck and M. de Forckenbeck, President of the Chamber of Deputies.

The semi official North German Gazette denies the statement, published by some journals, that Bavaria desires to conclude an alliance with Prussia on account of France having made demands for compensation. The North German Gazette adds that France has made no such demands.

The Pontifical Minister of Finance has presented to the Council of State his budget for 1867. It shows 36,434,058. of receipts and 73,833,754. of expenditure, being a deficiency of 37,402,696. The government counts upon the twenty millions which the Italian government has to pay in March for arrears of the public debt of 1859, and for the annual interest on the Pontifical debt allotted to the former provinces of the Church.

A curious circumstance was noticed at the recent opening of the Diet of the Grand Duchy of Finland. After the Governor had read the opening speech in the Russian language, the Senator Peterson gave it in Swedish and Finnish. The Marshal of the country replied in the name of the nobility, and the Archbishop in that of the clergy, in French; the Speaker of the citizen class in Swedish; and that of the peasants in Finnish.

The intention of the Turkish government respecting the inhabitants of Crete cannot but be, the Opinion Nationale conceives, in unison with the declaration made in Queen Victoria's speech on opening the Parliament, that "the combined efforts of the cabinets of London, Paris and St. Petersburg have tended to bring about better relations between the Porte and its Christian subjects." Consequently a certain amount of independence must, the writer thinks, be accorded to that portion of the Turkish subject, and their position rendered supportable.

According to an official return issued by the French customs administration the value of the imports in 1866 shows an increase of 317,000,000. on the previous year.

Abandonment of the Russian-American Telegraph Line.

(From the Brooklyn Union, February, 28.)

At a recent meeting of the Directors of the Western Union Russian-American Extension Telegraph Company, important action was taken affecting the interests of the stockholders in that Company. It was voted that future operations on the Pacific slope and in Russian Siberia be suspended, as it is deemed impracticable to finish the work, about the importance and necessity of which so much has been written during the past three years. It is understood that Colonel Charles S. Buckley, of this city, has been informed by telegraph of the action of the Directors, and he will immediately turn over all property belonging to the company now in San Francisco to Mr. G. H. Mumford, who sailed for that port a fortnight since. This property consists of one steamer and several sailing vessels, besides a large amount of wire, over 400 miles of English cable, etc.

There has been built over eight hundred miles of telegraph line north of New Westminster, which is in fine working order, but which is, under this action, now almost useless, unless patronized by the Katzas, Chinook, and other tribes of fish-eating Indians, or it may be run to the Cariboo gold mines, to be made of some considerable service to miners in that picturesque but almost isolated portion of the British possessions.

The cable intended to span the Behring Sea, above the Aleutian Islands, from Prince William Bay to the Gulf of Anadyr, and thus connect the projected land lines of the two continents, has had what is called a "hard luck" since it left England, the vessel on which it was coiled having been almost wrecked, necessitating the transfer of the cable to another vessel. It is claimed, however, that it is still in good order, and as it was manufactured by the same firm that made the Atlantic cable, there is not much question as to its value.

At the close of last year's work in the northern latitudes a party of young men were induced to volunteer to remain at a very remote point, near Mount St. Elias, in order to be ready to make necessary explorations as soon as spring should open this year. Of course they will now be recalled, but no word can reach them in their Arctic home, provided they have survived the rigors of the late winter, until somewhere near the first of June. Ample quantities of provisions, arms, ammunition, a small library, and other essentials, were left with them to beguile the tedium of their winter's life. We believe they intended establishing a theatrical company and a negro minstrel troupe for their own amusement and as incentives to civilization among the Esquimaux. One of the performances said to be under preparation was an improved representation of the "Sea of Ice," for which they must have enjoyed unusual facilities in the way of material.

It would not be surprising if the Russian Government should conclude to complete the line, especially when the fact is taken into consideration that many millions of dollars in stock have been subscribed by leading nobles of that Empire. Of equal interest, pecuniarily, will this action be found at the courts of Vienna and Berlin, where large amounts of stock are said to have been bought of Messrs Sibley and Collins during their visit to St. Petersburg and the other capitals mentioned.

Not many of the original owners of the stock probably will suffer from the suspension of the enterprise, as they undoubtedly sold out months ago, and we hear of none of our Wall street operators being much damaged by the smash. We are happy in being able to state that the efforts made to induce Chief Walrus, of the Esquimaux tribe of Behring's Straits, to take stock were unsuccessful, he not being able to "see" anything in the trading line other than tobacco or whiskey; consequently there will be no "lame ducks" on "Change" at Esquimaux village, which is gratifying.

It is, however, a matter of regret that such an enterprise, partaking largely of a national character, should thus ingloriously "fall out," as they say on "Change, and the Yankee nation is invited to lay the blame therefor to the successful working of a British enterprise known as the Atlantic Cable.