

THE WEEKLY BRITISH COLONIST.

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DAVID W. HIGGINS

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The Choice of Tariffs.

To-morrow the Legislative Council will be called upon to deal with the question of Customs Tariffs—to choose between the retention of our present Tariff and the acceptance of the Canadian one, upon entering the Dominion. The Legislature has now the answer of the Canadian Government with regard to being allowed to make certain alterations in the British Columbia Tariff and it must be convinced now, if it was not convinced before, that the choice lies not between an amended tariff and the Canadian one, but between the British Columbia Tariff, as it existed when the Terms were first negotiated, and the Canadian one. Such being the case, we cannot see why the Legislature should hesitate to accept the Canadian Tariff. True, the question has been raised as to whether the present Legislature has the right of choice; but we must be excused if we say that there does not appear to be any ground for raising such a doubt. Whatever doubt may now be experienced by any of the Delegates on this point, they did not entertain the slightest doubt upon the subject on their return from Ottawa. The Terms themselves convey no such doubt. The allusion to the matter in the Governor's Speech, in opening the present session of the Legislature, would not justify the belief that the Executive had any such doubt. The reply of the Canadian Government to the request of our own Government to be permitted to make certain alterations in the Tariff does not suggest such doubt. On the contrary, everything points to a different conclusion. The Canadian Government is solely moved by a desire to ascertain the mind of British Columbia on this point; and it appears to us to be idle to pretend that British Columbia has not a right to make her mind known till after Union. This would, indeed, appear to be the proper time, the present Legislature the proper one to make a choice between the two tariffs. The Tariff question was made a distinct and prominent issue at the polls in every District; and if there be one question more than another upon which the present Legislature has a right to speak in the name and on behalf of the people it is that of customs tariffs. If we look to the other side of the Rocky Mountains we shall find something to our present purpose. It will be remembered that a Convention met at Fort Gary about a year ago, in the name of the people of the Red River Settlement, for the purpose of indicating a basis of Union with Canada. Amongst other things, the Convention asked that the Customs Tariff at that time in force in that settlement, which imposed the merely nominal rate of five per cent *ad valorem* upon imports, might be continued for three years, or until the establishment of railway communication. The wish thus expressed was recognized and acted upon by the Canadian Government, and the constitution of Manitoba framed at Ottawa provides for the continuance of that tariff. If the wish of the people of that settlement so loosely expressed by delegates called together under an unconstitutional Government was deemed present sufficient data for the Canadian Government to work upon, how much more must the wish of the people of British Columbia, so unequivocally expressed through a constitutional Legislature merit the attention of the Government of Canada. With due respect to those who fancy they discover in this matter ground for doubt, we confess that we can see no reason for doubting that it was the bona fide intention from first to last of all the parties to the negotiations that to the present Legislature should be submitted the choice between the retention of our present tariff and the acceptance of the Canadian one. It may be remarked, since allusion has been made to the case of the Red River Settlement, that Manitoba elected to retain its old tariff because it imposed a rate of duties infinitely lower than that of the Canadian tariff, whereas British Columbia will act wisely in accepting the Canadian tariff because it imposes a rate of duties greatly lower than that of our present tariff.

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Premature Decay of Fruit Trees.
Three weeks and two days ago we drew attention to the premature decay of certain fruit-trees in this vicinity, and invited those familiar with the subject to shed light upon it. The invitation has been promptly responded to by a controversy which has evoked boldness and temper, and which should not be wholly without profit to the student. It is with no wish either to mix in the controversy or to obstruct its progress that we now invite attention to views expressed in the *Gardener's Chronicle*, the highest English authority upon this class of subjects. The observations are in reply to a correspondent who complains of the unfruitfulness and premature decay of his Apples, Plums, Green-gages, Orleans, and the writer in the *Chronicle* hesitates not to ascribe the mischief to the disastrous effect of old roots remaining in the soil upon new plantations, producing what is termed the fungus poison, which spreads among the roots of the tree, covering them with fungus, resulting in premature decay and certain death unless its progress can be arrested, which would appear to be attended with very great difficulty. "If the case admits of remedy," says the *Chronicle*, "it can only be by carefully cutting away every particle of the root which is infected, and tracing out carefully the old roots from whence it is derived. The fungus will continue to exist in the soil, and will be destructive to gardens if not only proper destructive trees and shrubs, but to strawberry plants where the old stock has been dug in. In this case we are convinced it is a frequent cause of blight and other maladies which consist in a depressed state of vitality which does not allow the plant to arrive at perfection." In this as in most matters, an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure, and it is recommended never to dig in anything which is sufficiently woody to produce fungus spore. Avoid leaf-mould which has not entered into a thorough state of decomposition, so that the component parts cannot be recognized, and above all abhor the bottoms of old faggot ricks. Without the most careful reasoning, concludes the *Chronicle*, it is quite a lottery whether the new trees are not arrested in their growth after a few years and just as they are ready to come into full bearing their health often fails, and after a few more hopeless seasons of repeated disappointment the new plantation follows in the wake of the old. We humbly submit to our more scientific readers whether these remarks may not be applicable to the local conditions which form the subject of the pending controversy.

VERY QUEER.—The other day we called attention to the fact that in the advertisement published in the *Colonist* calling for tenders for a better steamer than the Douglas on the East Coast route, it was stated that the steamer was to run only "once" a week to Comox. Since then it has been charged to twice a week. Of course it was a mistake—for by no possibility could there be such a thing as a mistake that was done on purpose to misrepresent Mr Bonster to the eyes of his constituents. Of course the thing was all on the square. Yet it is very queer to see the error corrected without an acknowledgement. Of course it is very queer. The above is from yesterday's *Standard*, and was doubtless intended to be sarcastic; but it is a very clumsy attempt. In the first place no advertisement appeared in this journal calling for tenders for a better steamer than the Douglas on the East Coast route. In the second place, the advertisement that did appear did not state that the steamer was to run only once a week to Comox, nor has it been since changed to twice a week. In attempting to correct an imaginary mistake in our columns our contemporary has committed three very stupid mistakes in his own. Nor is he any less unfortunate in attributing to us unworthy motives for an error which we never committed. If we had any wish to injure Mr Bonster in the estimation of his constituents (which we certainly have) there would be no occasion to stoop to misrepresentation, since that object would be far more effectually attained by representing that distinguished statesman exactly as he is. We would advise our contemporary to look a little more into his own knapsack and less into that of his neighbors.

FRANCIS BENEVOLENT SOCIETY.—To invite attention to, and bespeak public approbation and patronage on behalf of, the various benevolent Societies constitutes one of the most agreeable duties of the public journalist; and of none can this be more truly said than of the particular society selected as the subject of the present remarks. Based upon the broadest catholicity, modest and unassuming, yet singularly efficient in its beneficence, the French Benevolent Society of Victoria is preeminently entitled to public sympathy and support. Contrary to what might be inferred from its designation, the doors of this Society are thrown open to the respectable and benevolently disposed of every nation and creed, while the range of its beneficence is as wide as the basis of its membership. The association is a body of men and women, who are united in another column, and it will afford our readers great satisfaction to observe that it is in a highly flourishing condition, extending its operations and usefulness at a most encouraging ratio. The large additions recently made to the capacity and comforts of the Hospital render it a really pleasant and desirable refuge for sick persons who are beyond the reach of the domestic circle, as so frequently happens in a new and remote colony like British Columbia. The French Benevolent Society is engaged in a noble work, and we commend its claims so solemnly and so unobtrusively presented, to the best consideration of the public.

PUGET SOUND ITEMS.—On the 16th six canoes, containing eighteen Indians, started from Cape Flattery to kill seals. A heavy gale sprang up and it is believed that four of the canoes with their occupants were lost. It is said that the Olympia sports who went to the races at Seattle with the object of skinning the sports of that place, got skinned themselves. The people of Seattle are getting up a grand mammoth ball by which to commemorate Washington's birthday. The pioneers of Olympia have organized themselves into an association. It is stated that the Northern Pacific Railway Company has already engaged 2000 Chinese laborers to work on their road in Washington Territory. The Board papers very justly enquire in what way the construction of the road is going to benefit agricultural interests if the labor is to be performed by Chinese.

KALAMA.—This new railway town, near Vancouver on the Columbia River, threatens to be a big affair. The railway company have secured a large quantity of land, with about three miles of river-frontage, and they are constructing wharves, warehouses and machine-shops at a furious rate. The spirit of land speculation runs high, and large as the site has been made by the company, private speculation is already making addition to it. One party proposed eighty acres of land adjacent to the town site and a few days later was offered and refused \$10,000 for it. They are laying out the eighty acres in town lots, and it is believed they will realize \$50,000 for the same.

WRECK OF A SCHOONER.—Capt Tuttle, late of the Schooner Forest King, with his crew, arrived in an Indian canoe from Barclay Sound on Sunday, having been wrecked on the 27th ult by running on the beach during a dense fog. The schooner was in ballast, bound from Honolulu to Port Gamble, and had been out 17 days. The Indians came off to the wreck and assisted the captain and crew to get ashore and fed them well, but stole all that they could lay their hands upon—even taking the rings off the fingers of the distressed men, and making them assist in packing the plunder ashore. The schooner, which had been abandoned, was the property of Pope & Talbot. Upon the arrival of Capt Tuttle and his men at this port the American Consul took charge of them and will provide for their wants until they can be sent to Port Gamble.

THE CONCERT.—We would remind our local readers that as the time appointed for St Andrew's Church concert (Thursday evening) approaches the chances of being able to obtain tickets and seats are diminishing. A very large number of tickets have already been disposed of, so that there are comparatively few remaining in the hands of the committee. The ladies and gentlemen who have kindly volunteered their services for the occasion are practicing the pieces with the utmost assiduity, and there is no reason to doubt that the most sanguine expectations which have been formed will be fully realized.

THE TRAVEL POLICY.—Referring to the energy with which the Americans are pushing their Northern Pacific Railway forward, the Toronto *Telegraph*, an influential paper and a supporter of the Government, says: "Our Government, having so recently come into possession of the Northwest, cannot be blamed, so far, for not inaugurating a similar activity on our territory. But the public will wait patiently and anxiously for the announcement of a bold and judicious railway and emigration policy at the next session of Parliament."

GOOD TEMPLARS.—Last evening the following officers of the Victoria Lodge of Good Templars were installed by the Lodge Deputy H. T. Mann: W. C. T. James Abrams, W. Y. P. Philip Duros, W. T. Robert Byler, W. F. S. William Cross, W. M. George Lawson, W. C. John Dunsell, Guard Henry Bland, Sentinel Walter Wilson, W. A. S. Wm Reynolds, W. D. M. William Verlin, W. R. E. S. Lawrence Goodacre, W. L. H. S. Thomas Theobald.

ASSAULT.—Tagoon, a Hydah Indian, for assaulting an officer in the discharge of his duty, was yesterday fined before the police court \$50 or six months imprisonment with hard labor.

IMPORTANT AUCTION SALE.—In view of the improved tone of public confidence, and the valuable character of the property to be offered, more interest than commonly attaches to such events is manifested in the auction sale of real estate advertised by Mr. Franklin for Wednesday. In addition to valuable Cook, and Fort street and Victoria West lots, three homesteads, 460 acres of land at New Westminster, with live stock, and desirable farms in Comiaken and Shawigan districts will be put up. Parties seeking investment or a home will do well to visit Mr Franklin's rooms today and bid upon these choice parcels.

FROM PORT TOWNSEND.—The U. S. mail steamer *Albatross*, having connected at that Point with the mail steamer *Alida* from Olympia and other places on Paget Sound. The *Isabel* brought a large number of passengers and a small mail. She will sail at 10:30 this morning. We have to thank the purser for files of late papers.

PORTAGE DU FORT BRIDGE.—It is proposed to construct a bridge over the Ottawa River at Portage du Fort. The Quebec Legislature has voted \$40,000 towards that object, and the Dominion Government has been applied to for aid, and has given encouragement to expect that such aid will not be withheld. It is estimated that the bridge will cost about one hundred thousand dollars.

THE CALIFORNIA.—This propeller arrived at 2 1/2 o'clock yesterday. Her freight consists of about 20 tons. She made the run from Portland to Olympia in 2 1/2 days, the best time, we believe, ever made by a steamer between the two ports. She will sail on Thursday for Portland.

FLOUR.—A very small quantity of flour was brought on the California. It is very high in Oregon and holders are not anxious to sell.

Mrs McGee, widow of Thomas D'Arcy McGee, died lately at Montreal. She was found dead, kneeling with her prayer book in her hand.

THE LADY LAMPSON.—The R. E. Company's bark Lady Lampson, will sail for London, England, to-day, with a cargo of oils and furs.

SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER.—W. H. Lamont, on a charge of being a suspicious character, was again remanded yesterday for three days.

THE PROPPELLER G. S. Wright, coaled at Nanaimo on Saturday for Sitka.

The bark *Antipodes* was towed to Moody's mills by the Grappler on Sunday morning.

Legislative Council

MONDAY, Feb 6th, 1871.

Council met at 1 p. m. Present—The Hon Speaker, Hon Chief Commissioner, Hon Attorney-General, Hon Collector of Customs, Mr Humphreys, Hon Dr Helmecken, Mr Nelson, Mr Nathan, Mr Skinner, Mr Bonster, Mr Alston, Mr DeCosmos, Mr Corwall, Hon Dr Carrall, Mr Pemberton.

Minutes of the last meeting read and confirmed.

Mr Humphreys gave notice that he would on Tuesday move an address to His Excellency the Governor asking an appropriation of \$250 toward carrying the mails from Clinton to Comox creek.

Mr Nelson moved that he had assented to the Kurtz & Lane Mining Co's Bill. Also, the Revenue Bill for 1871.

Dr Helmecken presented a petition from Philip Cadd respecting a machine for moping. Also a petition from a number of citizens praying that the Bill granting a monopoly to the Thomson Road Steamer Co do not pass.

Mr Bonster moved that he would on Tuesday move an address to His Excellency the Governor asking an appropriation of \$250 toward carrying the mails from Clinton to Comox creek.

Mr Carrall moved that he would on Tuesday move an address to His Excellency the Governor asking an appropriation of \$250 toward carrying the mails from Clinton to Comox creek.

Mr Humphreys said he entirely agreed with the Hon Chief Commissioner. He thought the bill good as it stands and he would accept it as it is. The bill was a good one—much better than he had expected. Hon Dr Carrall would also take the bill as it stood.

Mr Bonster moved that one member be struck out of Kootenay and give it to Nanaimo. He said at Kootenay there were only 65 voters, while at Nanaimo there were 188 and as it had been understood that the basis of division was to be population, Nanaimo should have three times as many members as Kootenay.

After a good deal of discussion, the Council agreed to let the district be divided as follows: Hon Attorney General moved to amend the Victoria District clause by inserting in the second line, "other than and except Victoria City District," and adding "provided that all islands not heretofore mentioned and parts of islands adjacent to any of the above districts in Vancouver Island shall be included in the districts which are nearest to those islands and parts of islands respectively. Carried."

Hon Dr Helmecken moved that Chemung District and Cowichan District be amalgamated to form one district, called Cowichan District, and have 10 members. Carried.

Hon Dr Helmecken moved that Metohagan District be called Esquamalt District. Carried.

Mr Bonster moved that one member be taken from Victoria City District and given to Nanaimo. Lost.

The Schedule then passed as amended.

Mr DeCosmos moved the following amendment to No 9: "Provided, always, that in the construction of this section the words contract or agreement be construed to mean a contract or agreement if writing and under seal."

Mr Bonster supported the amendment. Hon Attorney General said that such an amendment would nullify the whole clause. The Government might make a contract and not put seal to it, and the meaning and intention of the clause would be defeated. The clause was a copy from a Bill in Canada and similar to one in Australia. The clause qualified itself—it did not mean a simple purchase, but a contract for the public service of the colony. It would, indeed, be singular to see that this was the only country in the world that thought it necessary to put those words in the customary law.

The motion to amend was lost and the original clause passed.

The committee rose and reported the bill complete.

Mr Nelson moved that, whereas the tolls levied upon certain goods and commodities passing over the trunk road of the mainland portion of British Columbia have hitherto been upon the industrial interests of the interior; and whereas the public debt incurred by the construction of the said trunk road will be assumed by the Dominion Government upon the union of this colony with Canada, it be Resolved, That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, recommending that on and after the union of this colony with Canada the tolls now levied upon certain goods and commodities passing over the said trunk road of the mainland portion of British Columbia shall cease and determine.