

The Weekly British Columbia AND CHRONICLE.

Saturday, October 24, 1868.

Draining the Meadows on William Creek.

If the Government of a country have it in their power to perform a public work, or to take charge of any enterprise or undertaking, which is likely to produce greater and better practical results, through being under the control of the Government, than it would if left to capitalists or to one or more public companies who have no care beyond the amount of dividends to be secured, ought the fact of its being unusual for the Executive to embark in what might be termed a commercial venture to be allowed to operate conclusively to prevent such an undertaking being commenced by the Government? The precedent afforded in England by the assumption of the control of the telegraph lines by Parliament, shows that it is not beyond the province of a Government to perform those works which have hitherto been left to private individuals or companies. No doubt there would have been a strong opposition to the Imperial Parliament laying down speculative lines of telegraph wires before the utility of the system had been proven, and possibly the interference of Government would have been thought unjustifiable even now, had not the telegraph system become as much of a necessity as the postal system. We have thus prefaced the remarks that we desire to offer upon the plan suggested by a correspondent, in our columns on Friday last, for draining the meadows on William Creek, because his idea is suggestive of much good being done if the Executive think proper to take the matter up; the letter being that of a practical miner, is well worthy of the attention of all who desire to see our mining prospects improving, and within this category are included probably the whole adult population of British Columbia. For our present purpose we may take it to be an admitted fact, that there is gold in paying quantities in the meadows; the questions then for the consideration of the inhabitants of the Colony are, how long is this vast field of gold to be left unworked, and to all practical effect unprospected, and how the gold which is supposed to underlie the meadows can be brought into use, so as to benefit not only a few miners, but every man in the Colony who depends upon his present daily labor, or upon the products of his past labor invested in the Colony for a living. Although it is almost impossible for the meadows to be mined with any likelihood of success by individual miners before they are drained, on account of the expensive machinery which it would be necessary to employ to get rid of the water, there can be little doubt, if indeed there is any such thing as knowledge and experience in gold mining, that as soon as a drain is carried through the meadows, there will be rich placer diggings from Marysville to Mosquito Creek, and it is perfectly clear that such diggings would be far more beneficial to the Colony than those which require great capital to work; a larger population is attracted by placer diggings, and the gold is circulated much more than when it goes into the hands of a few capitalists. Every one who has mined on William Creek, can speak to the probability of the most favorable results from the draining of the meadows, but we fear that there are few who can suggest any practical way of carrying on so large an operation without the assistance of the Government. It would probably cost over \$200,000 to make a drain as proposed by our correspondent, if the contractors were paid full wages, instead of their being remunerated in other ways so that their profit on the work is made contingent upon its success. It may perhaps appear strange to those who do not know this Colony well, that there should be a difficulty in organizing a joint-stock company to carry out such a work; it would be easy enough no doubt for any joint-stock company

to make the drain, and to reap an enormous profit out of the transaction, if they had the capital subscribed, and were it not only tangible but visible, that is to say, so invested that the miners and contractors undertaking the work would know that their payment was safe. Public companies are not held in great estimation in Canada, and nothing could be done by a company in such an undertaking unless the money were ready to pay for the work as it is performed. It is not that miners are not without speculation; they are probably as ready as any other class of men to risk their labor, time, and money, in any undertaking in which they see a prospect of good pay—provided they have confidence in those with whom they contract. We believe that such confidence would be wanting as between the miners and any joint-stock company in the country, and for this reason we incline to the opinion that the matter might be taken up, with great advantage to the Colony, by the Government in the manner suggested by our correspondent, if as he supposes contractors could be found ready to run the drain through the meadows at the present rate of one dollar and a half per foot, with certain rights secured to them, and if four hundred claims could be sold, or leased, at the rate of one hundred dollars for fifty feet, and these things are easily ascertainable, the thing is practicable, and might be undertaken by the Government as a work of public utility; there would be no risk, no incurring of debt, and no extravagant expenditure of public money. So far as the contractors are concerned it is probable that the privilege of washing the dirt taken out during the construction of the drain, and having the right to levy a certain fixed sum for every working day from all claims which are drained would be sufficient inducement to strong and persevering miners to take up the contract, and if the contract is taken up by practical men upon the proposed terms there will be such a guarantee for the proper performance of the work in the profit derivable by themselves from putting in good work, that there can be little doubt that the four hundred claims would be at once taken up, especially as the fifty feet would be given from hill to bill, so that there could be no doubt of each claim holder having the lead through his claim. We purpose advertising to this matter again, it is one in which all who know anything about mining should take some interest. Doubtless the letter which has already appeared will bring out others—it is a subject that ought to be ventilated.

Letter From "Sirius."

Victoria, Oct. 16, 1868. Editor Colonist.—I address you as Mr. Editor although I well know that you only occupy the editorial column by sufferance. Bluster and abuse may become you, but depend upon it it will neither disturb me nor delude the public. In your article of October 5th you stated, that in the event of this Colony confederating with the Dominion, that Canada would give this Colony a fixed subsidy of \$142,000. I stated then my opinion that this sum of money would come out of the revenues derived by her from this Colony, and therefore that she would only be giving back again to us some of the money she derived from this Colony. In place of proving this not to be the fact, you attempted to show (Oct 8th) by constructive figures that if this Colony joined herself to Canada, that this Colony would cost Canada \$257,405 per annum! thus inducing the public to be deluded into the idea that this Colony would gain \$257,405 a year. I endeavored to show that your figures were incorrect, and that so far from Canada losing \$257,405 per annum, she would, had Confederation taken place this year, only have lost \$35,576, but if it took place next year (1869), she would probably be a gainer, and in about three years' time would have \$36,000 less expense to bear on account of one of our loans then expiring. I gave reasons too for not admitting the loss which you claimed by substitution of tariff, and showed that such loss (if any did occur) and others, could not be considered cash gained to the Government of this Colony. In this way I tried to show that the \$142,000 given annually to this Colony would only be our own money returned, but also surmised that if this Colony remained separate she would be able to do for herself by similar means, as the Canada was asked to do, and further that we should retain in our hands the power of regulating our own tariff to suit the interests of the

Colony and other matters of the utmost importance, instead of being reduced to a mere municipality, our central power taken away and our interests placed at the mercy of the Government at Ottawa, who could exercise a more despotic power than now exists, and we have no remedy. I admit I altered your figures, I stated so at the time; but of that presently. I will now take the last part of your leader of yesterday first, it is as follows: We will admit, however, in order to see its bearing on Confederation, that in 15 years our public debt will be paid off. Let us now suppose that we shall be admitted into the Dominion in 1869, and let us ask whether Canada would be out of debt on our account in 15 years? The Canadian deficit of \$138,268, founded on "Sirius" own showing would in 15 years bring Canada into debt \$2,074,020 for British Columbia! Again, if we admit, for argument sake, that the interest and sinking fund on our Public Debt will be reduced in three years to \$84,000, then the Dominion would save annually \$66,037. At the end of 12 years (the balance of the 15 years) the total deficit of Canada for that period for this Colony would consequently be \$2,296,416 without including interest. If to the latter deficit \$2,296,416 we add the deficit incurred by Canada during the first three years of the fifteen, which is \$772,215, the total deficit of Canada would be \$3,018,631 without interest. Editor (real) of the British Colonist, how can you permit your editorial column to be polluted with so much ignorance—with a statement so totally unfounded laid down with such unblushing effrontery? You know the people of Victoria cannot be deluded by such a piece of impudence. Canada incur a loss of \$3,018,631 without interest in 15 years! Is the revenue of this Colony to remain at a stand still and the supposed debt of Canada to go on, year after year? debt! debt! debt! no improvement under Confederation for the next fifteen years! You first wish to make the people believe that Confederation will populate this Colony—make it prosperous and rich, and now you tell them there will be no improvement in the revenue for the next fifteen years! Will the Congress give this version in their correspondence with the Government of Canada? Need I say any more to show how utterly worthless are your statements? If the Colony be a prey to irresponsible officials and harpies now as you coarsely assert, what would it be under a man such as the one who could pen such a statement as that above culled from your editorial column? No! no! Let us not seek present Confederation, but let us improve our own Government. With regard to the statement that I put down the Canadian deficit at \$138,268, I can only say that it equals in truth the debt of the Canadian Government. I stated that the Canadian Government would soon be a gainer; in 19 years how much would it amount to? I know I ought to stop here and not take any further notice of the article in question, because *ex uno disce omnia*, but lest I should be accused [but what would an accusation amount to from such a quarter] of timidity or something worse, I will reply as briefly as possible. Before proceeding to answer your objections, it must be remembered that you have not proved the tariff of the Dominion to be one of 12 per cent or that of this Colony 17 per cent. Yet that is the basis of the data from which you conclude there will be a loss of revenue to a specified amount. Had you shown [an impossibility] the percentages, even then, as I said before, you could not determine the loss; as that could only be shown after its effect upon the various industries of the country had been seen. You placed the revenue of the Colony going to Canada at \$367,000, less the loss sustained by substitution of Canadian tariff. The loss was not admitted for reasons given. The expenditure of Canada in this Colony you set down at \$521,713, but by correcting your mistakes and reducing exorbitant or fanciful charges, I reduced your estimate to \$402,576, and could even then have justly made further reductions. Recollect I was dealing with your own figures, my first letter having nothing to do with the matter, save and except that it was intended to bring over your statements to give me an opportunity to expose them. Now you complain that I altered your estimate! Of course I did! If I had allowed your designedly constructive estimate, and figures, you could have shown anything you pleased! Doubtless when you appear again your estimates will be changed, and the difference will probably be as great as your estimates last year and this. See *British Colonist* February last. I did scratch out the "four county court Judges." The work can be done by the three Supreme Court Judges. What you term county court Judges are the Gold Commissioners. If the Colony has the revenue arising from the mines, the Colony must pay for its collection. The Canadian Government would soon get rid of them—unless they voted for Confederation! I say the interest and sinking fund is \$120,000, and in little more than three years will be \$36,000. The Government estimates are not false, they are the estimates of expenditure for the year; and so the temporary loans are being paid off—the year has nearly expired. Ask those to whom the Government

owed money whether they have been paid or not. Had Confederation already taken place they might have been put down to the Canadian Government; but as that will neither happen this year nor in 1869, there will not be any for the Canadian Government to take. Now for the following: The next point is his statement that in 3 years the interest and sinking fund will be reduced to \$84,000 by paying off one of the loans. We will admit it merely for the sake of seeing the bearing of it on Confederation. We will suppose that we are admitted into the Dominion in 1869, as the majority of the people desire, but at the end of the three years we find that Canada will have incurred a deficit at the rate of \$257,405 per year of \$772,215 in our behalf. The real state of the case would then be this; that this Colony would be out of debt [for Canada alone would be liable for our Public Debt after Confederation] and this Colony would benefit to the extent of \$772,215 in three years by the deficit of Canada, expended in our behalf. It does strike us that making \$772,215 in three years with Confederation when we cannot make a dollar of that amount without Confederation would be a very business-like transaction indeed, although "Sirius" may not acknowledge it. The people do not desire Confederation in 1869, but a great improvement in the Government of this Colony. They wish not only to retain the power they have, but to acquire more, and to regulate the affairs of the Colony to suit its wants and desires. With regard to the point that "Canada alone would be liable for our Public Debt after Confederation," it is not so in the sense you wish it to be taken. Canada it is true would be liable for the debt, but where does Canada get the money from to pay her debts, excepting from the taxes upon the public? This Colony would be a part of Canada, and as such would be liable not only for its due share of its own debt, but also for that of eighty millions, the debts of the other Provinces included in the Dominion; which Canada is also liable for. The Public Debt is made the second charge upon the revenues of Canada, but if the Dominion Government had not money enough to meet her liabilities, how would she make up the deficiency excepting by general taxation? As we would give Canada more money than she expended for this Colony, including the interest and sinking fund upon Public Debt and Overland Road, what benefit would it be to us that she should become liable for our debt? We have to pay it now and would have to pay it then with our own money. To be liable to our proportionate share of eighty millions more, and as many additional debts, as the Dominion might choose to contract although in no way beneficial to this Colony, is certainly not a great advantage. A nice legacy to leave to our descendants! As I have shown that Canada would not lose anything by this Colony being united to her, it follows that the little bit of poetry about this Colony making \$772,215 by Canada losing so much, is only an extravagant fancy. Let us look on the other side. Suppose our Customs Revenue, &c., to be only doubled in 15 years, say even \$700,000, our public debt will be paid off. Suppose the head-money to be doubled. What will Canada then receive annually from this Colony? Answer, \$349,424 per annum, 15 years hence, say \$5,241,360. Less interest and sinking fund on our Public Debt..... \$402,576..... \$318,576 Add increase of per Capita Subsidy..... 32,000..... \$350,576 Canada receives from British Columbia..... \$700,000 Pays to British Columbia..... 850,576 Gain to Canada..... \$349,424 The expenditure of Canada for this Colony decreases as her income from this Colony increases! This shows the folly of only looking at the present—take a glance at the future and then see whether Confederation will be so very advantageous. Why, sir, this Colony would be bled to death! for what? To send three members to Ottawa, and to be deprived of the management of our own affairs? With regard to the Overland Road, the estimate you put down, viz \$1,012,000, was for the road to the Saskatchewan with Confederation. You may attempt to wrangle out of your own mistake of \$290,000, but it won't do. The reduction to \$722,000 (the Chief Commissioner's estimate) must stand; *cul de sac* and all that stuff is dust; the remainder of the road the other Colony would pay. The Commissioner's estimate is high, even an immigrant road fit for all practical purposes, could be made cheaper. Sir James Douglas, years ago, offered H M Government to build a road from British Columbia to the Saskatchewan for \$250,000! I may some day endeavor to show that this road is not of so great importance for immigration as many suppose, having in view the difficulties and dangers, and the Overland Railway to San Francisco and Puget Sound. I did reduce the interest and sinking fund

on loan to make the road. If the Canadian Government want a loan it will not be for the Rocky Mountain Road \$722,000, but for the whole road from Ontario, a much larger sum. H M Government would probably guarantee the sum; why, because it is one of your—I mean the Yale Conspectives of Confederation? The debt being contracted after Confederation would not be your public debt, but would be borne by all the Confederate provinces, and therefore would come into the general accounts of Canada in the same manner as all general expenses do; therefore even the \$722,000 ought not to be put down as the expenditure of Canada for this place, but a much smaller sum; without you mean to say that this Colony after Confederation should be liable for the interest and sinking fund of the loan and not the other provinces. For instance we should be liable for the loan for the intercolonial railway in the same manner as we shall be liable for the Overland Road. It is possible that Canada would not require a loan for so paltry a sum as \$722,000, because although according to your terms she is bound to commence it the first year after Confederation, yet she may take as long as she pleases to complete the work, so a few thousand dollars might be spent annually and the interest and sinking fund upon portion of the road avoided, and the deficiency of the Canadian Government diminished still more. I cannot therefore alter the sum—it is indeed too high still! You state that the Overland Road will populate the country. If as I have shown Confederation will ruin the farmers of Vancouver Island as also those of the Lower Fraser, and directly and indirectly the cities Victoria and New Westminster, and depopulate them also, what inducements would there be for immigrants to come to this coast overland? Without you think the best way to populate the country is to depopulate it first! or that Canadian immigrants could live comfortably under such conditions as would starve the present inhabitants of the land! Depend upon it, the Overland Road would be more beneficial to this Colony being out of the Confederation, because under our present tariff there is every attraction for farmers to come and settle, under the Dominion tariff every repulsion to drive them away! The amount for "Postal Service" is that now paid. To suppose that your estimate \$40,000 would give us direct steamboat communication with San Francisco every ten days at least, with low fares and good accommodations and pay our inland Mail Service also, is even, if possible, more ridiculous than your other fancies! I have done, but I think I have shown that under Confederation the people of this Colony would pay to the Dominion Government more than it would receive according to your stipulations. Such being the case, this Colony will be able to do for herself, and by similar means all that the Canadian Government is bound to do by your stipulations, and will in addition preserve her freedom and power of taxing herself for her own benefit, instead of giving Canada the power of taxing her to any extent and for purposes not of any immediate benefit to this Colony. Confederation, according to your stipulations, then means ruining the farmers and others, throwing away our power to regulate our own affairs, specifying the rights and interests of our descendants their revenues and property, for the sake of what—a very problematical pecuniary benefit for the ensuing couple of years! Look into this matter, my fellow-citizens, and enquire for yourselves. I must again thank you very sincerely Mr. Editor for publishing my letters, but I cannot conceive, Sir, why you have allowed others to prompt your articles, excepting your wish to give the Yale Conspectives efficient rope to twine and suddenly drop Confederation! P.S.—The latest intelligence from England is that H M Government has neither the desire nor the intention to unite this Colony to the Dominion.

A Warning.

Editor Colonist.—It is true and sad, that so many of our juvenile population have fallen victims to disease within the past few months. There is a cause to produce an effect—the reason that disease is now more prevalent than ever known in the Colony, I cannot account for, and I doubt whether the entire medical fraternity can. I would advise parents and the custodians of children to do their utmost to thoroughly cleanse their habitations, and use every means to disinfect them, in order to destroy the latent poison containing the germ of small-pox, diphtheria or other disease. Again, in localities where disease has prevailed or prevailed, it would strongly urge that the utmost caution be taken to keep children away from the same, so that contact be avoided until the prevailing epidemics disappear. How many homes have been made desolate by want of these precautions, and how many little departed ones might have survived if these suggestions had been adopted but a short time since! Alas! perhaps it is too late to advise the surviving parents of the young ones who have been so recently translated to a better and happier world; but even now, I think it is not too late to give an word of warning when warning is necessary.

VACCINE.

By Electric

SPECIAL TO THE DAILY... ADRID, Oct. 13—Sun-a has issued another... the extinction of all... The internal tax on... wares has been abol... sional Junta is sure... Korsundi, Captain Ge... LONDON, Oct. 13—... to the Emperor Nap... sional Junta desire... with France and pre... be acceptable to F... The provinces of Bar... being strongly prote... recognize the Junta... LONDON, Oct. 12—... for the relief of the... quakes in Peru; the... ed. Among the pro... took part in the p... Governor of the Be... Rothschilds and Bari... sterling was raised... The Spanish Junta... perty of the Jesuits... the order... Gladstone comm... canvas in Lancashire... in which he denounce... financial policies and... the Irish Church que... LONDON, Oct. 14... India report that... northern Afghanistan... LONDON, Oct. 14... Spain say that the... nounced against the... PARIS, Oct. 14—Y... Prime Minister is sa... on a special mission... LIVERPOOL, Oct... dressed a political me... charged the Govern... possible for uneces... expenditures and arg... ment of the civil chu... LONDON, Oct. 14—... represents that the... Mount Vesuvius has... and violent; it sends... lava... MADRID, Oct. 15—... all the administrative... Junta. The sitting of... for December 15th, so... from Cuba and Porto... LONDON, Oct. 15—... the Anglo American A... intend to abolish after... the system of contin... making the tariffs and... LONDON, Oct. 15—... has called 30,000 men... navy... MADRID, Oct. 15—... empty from the new tax... and the Junta has re... Hucos and the Bisho... accused of having aid... demonstration... LONDON, Oct. 15... government on the recent... The Daily News say... party had only remaine... flash blunders woul... power; but the Democ... greater aptitude for... The Morning Post... limitations have dedi... contest... The Telegraph whil... sees in it the ruin of... in which so many wid... financial questions... MOS Eastern... PHILADELPHIA, O... ties show a Democr... The same countries... Democratic majority... six counties are yet... which last year gave... jority of 6711. The... by 8000 to 9000... The Herald says t... ais to the Democr... Seymour, and clearly... sion of Grant, and... loss of New York... reay... INDIANAPOLIS, Oc... now concede the el... lian State ticket by... majority. The De... Congressmen; the... majority in both bra... ture... PHILADELPHIA, O... the estimated repo... majorities in all the... canis foots up 13,00