

The Evening Telegram.

ST. JOHN'S, FEBRUARY 1, 1888.

THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK.

An Effort to Reconstruct the Party. PROPOSALS AND COUNTER PROPOSALS. A Few Words of Warning.

Now that the great sensation of the season—the Governor's lecture—is over, and while we are awaiting the Volunteer Committee's report of their interview with the Executive, it may not be amiss to turn our attention for a short time to the political outlook. A remarkable reticence, with respect to public matters, has prevailed here during the past few weeks—so remarkable, indeed, that the casual observer would almost be inclined to think people had lost all interest in politics.

Is such really the case? Have the different classes in this community been so imposed upon, and bamboozled by Government after Government, that they now cease to care who our rulers are, or to what extent the public treasury is being plundered? No, no! We are certain this is not the case. The people still take some interest in the concerns of the Commonwealth, and are still anxious that existing abuses should be reformed and the public service performed in an honest and efficient manner.

But while such is the case with respect to the people generally, it is, at the same time, very obvious that the political and politico-mercantile sections take another view of the situation altogether. These were never more deeply interested in political matters than they are at this very moment. Some of them, especially the last mentioned section, are no longer able to earn an easy living in their "natural occupation"—the fish-buying and fish-exporting business. Hence their anxiety to have sufficient influence with the governing party to secure subsidies and other "considerations" as aids to their legitimate trade.

It may be truthfully said of this class that they take no stock at all in principle. With them it is a matter of very little importance who occupies the office of Premier, or how the Executive is constituted, denominationally or otherwise, so long as they control both and are sure to have their claims allowed, no matter how exorbitant these may be. Business men who are at present in receipt of subsidies would do anything rather than run the risk of having them withdrawn; while those who are not so bountifully blessed by the Commonwealth, and who still languish for access to the public treasury, stand around the offices of the Colonial Building, "with hat in hand," ready to accept any compromise that would give them a share of the spoils.

Such, then, are the environments of the Opposition to-day, and such are some of the difficulties with which the Leader thereof has now to contend. It is not our intention here to dictate to him as to how he should act under these circumstances. He is a gentleman of large experience in politics, and the people of Newfoundland are sufficiently acquainted with his general conduct to feel warranted in placing more confidence in him, as a leader, than in any other man at present in public life here.

Sir William Whiteway, too, knows perfectly well by this time how to discriminate between those who may be safely trusted and those who may not. The Judases who betrayed him in 1885 while their kisses were still warm upon his too-confiding lips, have not yet sufficiently repented of their sins of ingratitude to justify him in restoring them to favor. It is, therefore, unreasonable, as well as unjust, to suppose that he could ever again believe in their sincerity—at any rate, until their new professions of friendship have been put to a rigid and searching test.

On the other hand, there are honest, sturdy men, and enough of them, ready to stand by Sir William and faithfully co-operate with him in every prudent measure for the public good. Some of the latter sternly opposed him for years; but they did so on principle, not because of jealousy and personal spite. These are now prepared to fall into line with his new policy of progress and to support him through thick and thin, so long as his motives continue to be actuated by a desire to improve the condition and prospects of the people.

Now, then, Sir William Whiteway has to choose between the ungrateful men who betrayed him in 1885, and those who at that time honestly opposed him because they could not indorse the policy of his party, but who are now prepared to accept a modified platform. The latter may be depended upon: they are capable of being unbending in their allegiance as steel. The former, well, enough has already been said about their selfishness and general unreliability. We leave the decision, for the present, with Sir William, feeling assured that his choice will be a prudent and popular one.

WHO DISCOVERED AMERICA?

In our first paper on this subject we briefly traced the successive steps which led to the discovery of America by the hardy inhabitants of Northern Europe, showing that Iceland and Greenland were these "successive steps" by which descent upon the New World was made from the north by the maritime Norsemen who inhabited Norway and Sweden. That this theory is a correct one, not only the contents of the Icelandic manuscripts recently given to the world attest, but it is also a reasonable one bearing all the marks of truth that circumstantial evidence can afford. All history attests that the Norsemen were venturesome and explorative; their occupation of the two great northern islands we have named is indisputable, and the probabilities are all in favor of such an accidental discovery of the New World, as Biron, in search of his father, and on the way to Greenland, reputedly made. The geographical probabilities are all in favor of the claim, as the map shows us, for the nearest point of America to Greenland is not more distant than Greenland from Iceland, or Iceland from Norway. To suppose that men like these early adventurers, who were always looking for new fields to raid and conquer, would think anything of a three or four days' sail from one land to another, is not consistent with what we know of their analogous history, tendencies and career. In fact, as some one has already said on this subject, it would be much more difficult to discredit their manuscript claims than to admit and believe them.

With regard to the degree of their heroism, and the extent of their hardships, in discovering the new world, we think, on examination, these will compare very favorably with those of the late Southern navigator, Columbus, as the candid reader will admit, on more extended examination. The ruling motive in both cases was that curiously mixed one which animates, and has animated, men to make discoveries from the earliest ages, namely, a desire to acquire new possessions. That Biron was fairly entitled to the credit of his discovery, though an accidental one, few will be disposed to deny; for any man engaged in original research is always fully entitled to any accidental discoveries he may happen to make within the paths of legitimate investigation. It is thus generally conceded in connection with experiments in chemistry and the allied sciences. Much more so then when a man voyaging to a new land is driven out of his course by providential causes, and undergoes whatever privations this involuntary deviation involves. But apart from that, it must be quite evident to the intelligent observer that even if Biron had not made his accidental discovery in the year 1,000, the cumulative and aggressive researches of his wandering tribe would inevitably have led them to America within a few years at the latest. This will be made clear as we proceed with the narrative.

After wintering (as is supposed) on the coast of Massachusetts or Rhode Island during the winter of 1,000, as already described, in the spring Leif returned to Iceland; and the accounts of his discoveries had the result of stimulating others to prosecute the work of exploration. Another expedition sailed in the year 1004, under the care of Thorwald, who seems to have profited by his predecessor's experiences, and steered a more direct course for the American coast. Coming to a peculiarly shaped headland, opposite to another with a fine bay between, he named it Keel Cape. This is supposed to have been Cape Cod. Doubling this, Thorwald continued his course until he arrived at a fine promontory, beautifully wooded, which so charmed him that he resolved to found a settlement there. On landing, they found three canoes, under each of which were three Indians, or Skraelings as they called them, the latter being the name for the Eskimos. This was the first meeting of Europeans and the aboriginal inhabitants of North America, and its result was a foretaste of the many bloody encounters destined to occur in after years between the settler and the savage. The natives seemingly were in no wise alarmed at the advent of the white strangers, and stood their ground manfully. In the fight which ensued, however, the superiority of the white man was soon apparent, and eight out of the nine were slain. The other managed to effect his escape, and soon returned with a considerable company of his tribe. Thorwald and his men were compelled to retreat to their ship; but, unfortunately, the commander of the expedition himself received a mortal wound in the fight. An arrow pierced him under the right arm, and he soon became aware that his end was nigh. His last words were instructions to bury him on the promontory he had thought so fair, and then make their way home as speedily as they conveniently could. After carrying out their leader's instructions as to his burial, the party sailed to Lelbuthir, where they passed the winter, and in the following spring returned to Greenland.

The next voyage was a complete failure. Thornstein, third son of Eric the Red, embarked along with his wife; but after being driven about by tempestuous winds all summer, they quite lost their reckoning. The winter season was already come when they succeeded in reaching the western coast of Greenland, where they were obliged to remain. Here Thornstein died; and in the following spring his widow brought the ship back to Eric'sford. The object of this expedition was to recover the body of Thorwald and bring it home to Greenland; but instead of succeeding in his purpose, poor Thornstein found a grave himself far from his home and kindred.

In the summer of the following year (1006) a much more important expedition was fitted out for the further investigation of the new continent. The expedition was under the command of Thorfinn, surnamed the Hopeful. He was a man of wealth, and was descended from illustrious ancestors, some being of royal rank. However, if the old manuscripts are correct, his blood must have been anything but pure, as among the more worthy of his "forebears" are said to have been Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Scottish, and Irish persons of high and powerful station! When the festival of Yule arrived, the customary festivities were observed in true Scandinavian fashion. Thorfinn was captivated by the charms of Gudrida—Thornstein's widow—and she, having evidently forgot her sorrows, became his wife before the expedition sailed. It consisted of three ships and one hundred and forty men. An attempt was to be made to found a permanent colony, and all sorts of necessaries were taken on board ship, including live-stock and domestic animals of every description. At last, everything was in readiness, and the expedition set sail. Hellaland was the first touched at, then Woodland, where abundance of wild animals were met with. At these places, however, they did not delay, but pressed southwards to more favoured lands. Keel Cape was sighted and passed, after which they coasted along a great tract of sandy beach till they came to where a fiord of firth ran a great way inland. At the mouth of the firth was an island, and both here and farther up the estuary strong currents were encountered, which considerably retarded their progress. The island they called Straume, or Stream-island; and the firth, Straum-fjord. The island is conjectured to have been that now known as Martha's Vineyard; and the firth would probably be Buzzard Bay. Here they remained for some time, exploring the country round about, and found it to be of a very fine description. To men accustomed to the bleak shores and unkindly climate of Greenland and Iceland, the magnificent summer climate and luxuriant vegetation of this southerly latitude must have been charming in the extreme.

THE war-fever is still epidemic at the Commercial Rooms. There was another meeting of the "immortal few" yesterday, when Field-Marshal Oterbridge's plan of the first campaign was discussed and finally adopted. Splendid tributes were paid to the unrivalled military genius of the Field-Marshal, some of the "warriors bold"—including our own inimitable "Rupert"—regarding him as equal in that respect to even Count Von Moltke himself. We hope there'll be no harm done!

LAST Sunday was known in Gower and Cochrane Street Methodist Churches as Thanksgiving Sunday, when the people were asked to give a thank-offering to God for His past mercies. The people gave willingly, and when the various sums put on the plates were added, the handsome sum of six hundred and forty-one dollars and seventy-three cents (\$641.73) was announced as the offering for the day. The sums in which this amount was reached clearly showed that the people enjoyed "the luxury of giving."

THE friends of Queen's Road Congregational Church are arranging for a "Sociable" in the basement to-morrow (Thursday) evening, commencing at 7.45. The object of the interesting affair is to obtain funds for the purchase of a new school organ. In addition to an excellent tea, members of the choir and others have prepared a charming programme of songs, solos, &c., for the occasion. So, you see, a very pleasant and profitable evening may be anticipated.

WE believe the great event of the season is to be the Church of England Temperance Tea, to be held in St. Patrick's Hall on the 7th instant. The committee every year have earned the reputation of getting up a first-class meeting and entertainment; but this year they mean to excel themselves. They are leaving no stone unturned to make everything go smoothly, and to provide for the pleasure and comfort of their patrons. The tickets are selling fast at 45 cents each, and many who have not already bought them have "bespoken" them. Remember that delays are dangerous, and that "many" a Peri stood at the gate of Paradise last year and vainly sought admittance, as all things are said to be well here.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

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A GLANCE AT THE SITUATION.

The Cobbler Reigns Supreme.

PROBABLE EFFECT of the BALLOT ACT

Dwarfed Condition of the Merchant.

OTHER MATTERS of GENERAL INTEREST.

It was Charles Lamb who once observed that the birth of a new year is of interest too wide to be pretermitted by either king or cobbler. That may be true in a general sense, so far as England is concerned, but if outward observance count for anything, the saying applies with peculiar force to Newfoundland, the king and his government may be said to have entirely disappeared and "the cobbler reigns supreme."

A diminished and diminishing income is not a thing that presents itself wholly in the light of a blessing, even to the most ascetic mind. We can see now the economic disadvantage, rather than the moral beauty of the new position, in which it has pleased the present Government to place us. We share, to our misfortune, the fate of all who breathe an atmosphere unfavourable to the growth of justice.

THE BALLOT ACT

ushers in a new era in Newfoundland politics. By his unfortunate relationship to the fisherman, the merchant, originally, it may be, of promising human material, has been dwarfed and rendered incapable of perceiving what things are really lovely in life. He has identified virtue with his own desires, thus making confusion of right and wrong. The fishermen have too often and too long stood to him in the evil light of tardy payers—men lazy by nature, and grumblers by profession, who of late years have added to their sins by forgetting the respect due to the lords of pork and pound-cotton. Now, however, is the day of the merchant's moral regeneration. As his virtue could not be made to shine by force of its inner light, it has been kindled from without. In declaring that he must not interfere with the franchise of the fisherman, the law is touching the long disused springs of his higher impulses. For a space they will be unused to it, possibly recalcitrant; but the ultimate result will be sanative.

As for the fishermen, they have too long known the uses of adversity and experienced to the uttermost the pride and tyranny of power perverted. They have protested time and again against the injuries inflicted upon them, but without avail. Instead of securing that attention from constituted authority which the justness of their claims merited, they have been assailed with abuse and pestered with gratuitous advice not only by the mercantile body in whom selfishness had the plea of habit, but by their representatives and writers holding with well advertised cautiousness to a cast-iron theory of economics, or moved by a natural instinct of resistance to change. And the daily-increasing evils, were materially assisted into life and warmly defended until death, by a press guided on the one side by practical holiness and modulated ethics on the other. In connection with this matter a retro-spection far from agreeable must ensue. Surely a sense of shame will visit men who have abused the power which the arrangements of society permitted them to usurp; and if those who delayed the passage of the "Ballot Act," and finally helped to emasculate it, are now proud of their past, they must be peculiarly graceless and conscienceless. It is easy to talk of the sanctity of the law, and to take shelter behind the obdurate walls of a system that must be good because, forsooth, it exists. But the knowledge of suffering, and the moral sense quickened thereby, ultimately break through even these. There are, however, forces at work less subject to the legislative contract—forces that may be, as yet, only imperfectly discerned.

It would be wilful blindness to ignore the fact that the question of bettering the condition of Newfoundland is not entirely dependant upon either her Legislature or Executive councils. By whatever means it is to be brought about, improvement must primarily lie in the direction of considerable enlargement of the fishing interests in the out-harbors; and the mode in which this is to be obtained, with due regard to a developed sense of justice and reasonable foresight, may well call for the patient thought of the ablest amongst us. This fast and furious conflict between labor and capital; this strain between despondent hunger and luxurious bread-winner is a troublesome problem, but courage and sympathy in attack have succeeded before and will succeed again.

The present party came into power in October, 1885, and in order to avoid meeting their constituents they formed a coalition—an (in)expediency which, prior to the election, they had in unmeasured terms denounced. If any circumstance or contingency in life, more forcibly than another, suggests the cruel irony

of fate, it is the unenviable position which the present Government has, with bashful eagerness, been compelled to occupy.

On a superficial party unity or re-union, which merely skins over deep-seated divergencies of view, or is secured by concession of vital principles on the one side or the other, we place no value. Such a union cannot endure, it can not, under any circumstances, produce results worth the price that must be paid for it. Better, far, that the party of progress should accept temporary exclusion from political power, and content itself with the task of educating the newly-enfranchised masses to a fuller knowledge of their responsibilities and their rights, than that it should obtain an insecure control of the legislative and administrative functions of the state, through the adhesion of half-hearted allies, and then attempt to deal with the great problems of the time by inadequate or timorous measures of reform. All practical legislation is the result of compromise; but a compromise of essential principles can never be fruitful of real good. (To be continued.)

SAD DROWNING ACCIDENT.

Arrival of S.S. "Falcon."

SEALING PROSPECTS FAVORABLE.

Ten Taken in Nets Yesterday.

(Special to the Evening Telegram.) GREENSPOND, This Afternoon.

A sad accident occurred near here on Tuesday night last, by which one young man named Joseph Gill lost his life by drowning and another narrowly escaped. They were going from Inner Islands to Pinchard's Island, a distance of about a mile on ice, and the night being thick and stormy, they went astray, and Gill fell through the ice. His companion made several attempts to rescue him, but each time as he was within his reach the ice sank beneath him and he barely escaped with his own life. Gill's body has not yet been recovered.

A man named John Taylor of Gooseberry Islands has had his hand badly shattered by an explosion of a gun. He is here for medical treatment.

The *Falcon* arrived here at noon yesterday. She had a smooth time and met no ice. The wind to-day is N.N.W., moderate, and weather very fine. Several seals were captured here during last week, and ten were taken in nets yesterday.

LOCAL VARIETIES.

"Music and the dance" will hold sway in the T. A. Hall to-night.

The mail steamer *Newfoundland* is on her way here, having left Halifax at 5 o'clock yesterday evening.

The barquentine *Corisande*, in salt, having made the quick run across from Cadiz in twenty days, is the only arrival here since yesterday.

The coastal boat *Curlwe* will leave on her route Westward after receiving her mails from the S.S. *Newfoundland*, due here on Friday forenoon.

The tug *Ingraham* towed the schooner *Zepho* to Brigus last night. The expiration of insurance on crafts renders this precaution necessary.

A CORRESPONDENT at the Harbor Grace Junction writes as follows: "The past two days over one hundred men are returning home, being used up and discharged."

The ladies and gentlemen taking part in the Benevolent Concert Chorus are requested to meet for practice to-morrow (Thursday) evening, at 7.30, in the Methodist College.

"CAPTAIN KYD" is a melodrama of the most sensational description, that never fails to interest the multitude; and the probability is that, with the superior cast from the T. A. Troupe, who will delineate it on Friday night, it will draw a crowded house.

The banking schooner *Delight*, Captain M. Boland, got in yesterday morning with a general cargo of American goods from Boston. She was fifteen days out; to Scatterie she met head winds and stormy seas, thence hither she came since Saturday morning last.

The following are some of the characters that will be represented at the Skating Carnival which takes place at the Parade Rink on to-morrow (Thursday) evening, ice permitting:—Terra Nova, Italian Flower Girl, Shepherdess, Haidie's Bean, Masher at the Rink, Fresh from School, Court Lady (Queen Elizabeth Period), Hibernian Minstrel, Lord Dandresay, Lady of Fashion, The May Queen, Dawn, and a great many others too numerous to mention—about 150 in all.

MARRIED. On the 31st of January, by the Rev. G. Boyd, Richard Grant, of Bird Island Cove, to Susannah Porter, of St. John's.

DIED. At Mobile, on the 27th January, after a protracted illness, Philip, eldest son of J. Robert and the late Mary Margaret Davis, aged 15 years.—R.I.P.