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THE KOOTENAY MINES.

In another column will be found an official document from the Government of British Columbia, in reference to the Kootenay route. It will be seen that it is Governor Seymour's intention, in the absence of a specific knowledge of a better line of travel, to open up communication by way of Hope, and to apply sufficient skill and labor to the undertaking to have the route ready for travel by the middle of April. We believe, all things considered, this is the wisest course His Excellency could pursue. That a better route will have to be opened than that by way of Hope is, we think, pretty generally understood, if we wish to compete successfully with our American neighbors; but in the meantime we must take advantage of the most readily constructed and least expensive line of travel. The last steamer to Portland carried with her a number of our own miners who were, in the absence of through communication and more tedious route by way of Oregon and Washington Territory. This is a state of affairs that must be brought to a cessation at once, and we are glad to see an effort put forward by the Government of British Columbia in this behalf.

The road which Governor Seymour proposes making is merely a mule trail, that will leave the present one at Boundary Creek and strike the Columbia to the northward of the confluence of the Kootenay. This will, no doubt, enable packers and miners to reach the new diggings in time for the summer's work, and will therefore accomplish all that can be expected of any British Columbian line of travel at the present time. There is, however, another and weightier task before Governor Seymour—a route will have to be discovered, surveyed and opened up, sufficiently attractive in its character to induce a large number at least of the Kootenay miners to return by way of the Fraser instead of via Lewiston and Walla Walla. This, we believe, can be accomplished by the Kamloops route, if sufficient vigor and skill be employed the coming spring and summer in its exploration. That one party, inadequately prepared for the undertaking, has failed, is, we are glad to see, no disheartener to the Governor of British Columbia, and we only hope that such steps may be immediately taken as will decide definitely the capacity of the more northern route. In a matter of so much importance to the trade and revenue of the neighboring colony as the construction of a road to Kootenay, the money will be well spent if devoted to the organisation of two or even three exploring expeditions. The great blunder in most new countries is making an expensive road, and exploring afterwards—oftentimes resulting in the necessity of superseding the tortuous and costly highway by one more travelable or more direct. Road-making in British Columbia is probably the most Herculean task that could be set before any incipient Government, and it is therefore essentially requisite that the Executive should look before it leaps. By the organization of two or three exploring parties by way of the Kamloops and Shuswap lakes two important evils would be guarded against—loss of time and loss of money. The first of these is just now a misfortune which can be only remedied by a division of labor that will make exploration effective as well as rapid, and the second will be best avoided by the careful selection of the most available route. There are many considerations, however, besides shortness of distance and easy grades in the construction of pr mitive roads. The permanent as well as the temporary interests of the country must be consulted. At present the most urgent requirement seems to be to connect two termini, without any regard to the intermediate points; as the colony progresses, however, it will be found that roads are as necessary for the settlement of an agricultural population as they are for taking produce to the mines, and this points out to the Government at once the importance of keeping in view the agricultural capacity of the country, and carrying the highway through if possible that portion of the colony best adapted to the cultivation of the soil. It is a pity that this calculation entered so little into the construction of the roads that have been already made to the Cariboo region; for should the mines in this part of British Columbia speedily decline the present highways would serve but few profitable interests. We think in an agricultural or even grazing point of view we have fully as many advantages as are to be found on the Oregon route. In many places, indeed, along the circuitous and difficult road in the American territory, packers have to carry the provender for their cattle. If a road can by any possibility be constructed—and we have no misgivings upon the subject ourselves—by way of the Kamloops and Shuswap, we shall undoubtedly have all the passenger traffic, even if we do not get a monopoly of the goods; above all things therefore, let such exertions be made as will present to the Kootenay miner before the digging season expires a route that will enable him to reach the sea-board in considerably less time than is at present consumed in the difficult and dangerous transit by way of Oregon and Washington Territory.

THE KOOTENAY TRAIL.

The British Columbia *Government Gazette* publishes the following official notice:—

COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
27th January, 1865.

The Governor directs it to be notified that as the explorations beyond the Columbia, for the most desirable route to the Kootenay, are still incomplete, he is unable at present to determine the course which the wagon road to the new mines will take. Immediate access to the Kootenay from the seat of government is, however, required, and he has determined to make the present road by Hope as early as possible suitable in every way for pack trains.

It is intended to leave the present trail at Boundary Creek, and strike the Columbia to the northward of the confluence of the Kootenay, and from thence proceed in a direct line to the head waters of the St. Mary's River. A survey of the line between the Columbia and St. Mary's will be made early in March, and the formation of the road on the other portions of the line will be proceeded with simultaneously. It is confidently expected that the whole work will be completed about the middle of April.

It is believed that a line of country will shortly be discovered by which the navigable waters of the Kamloops and Shuswap Lakes may be made available.

An exploration will at once be made of the Cascade Mountains at Hope, with a view of discovering a more convenient mode of crossing them than that now in use.

It is probable that direct communication between San Francisco and New Westminster will be established early in the spring.

By command. ARTHUR N. BIRCH.

The *Columbian* says: "With respect to the important subject alluded to in the closing paragraph, it is pretty generally understood that we shall have a British line of mail steamers on between this city and Panama early next season, probably about the middle of June, and we understand it is not improbable that a steamer will be placed upon the route in the course of a few weeks as a temporary expedient. We understand that Captain Nicol, of the V. I. Coal Company, has placed before our Government a proposition to place the steamer Thames upon the route, and that it may possibly be entertained by the Government. Be this as it may, there is almost a certainty of having direct steam communication within four or five months, which, with a short and good trail to Kootenay, cannot fail to draw the greater part of the travel this way."

BRITISH COLUMBIAN ITEMS.

[From the North Pacific Times.]

FATAL ACCIDENT.—From parties who arrived from Mud Bay on Thursday night, we learn that a man named Matthew N. Hall was found dead on Thursday morning, with a terrible gunshot wound through his neck. The position in which his gun was lying, leaves little room for doubt that his death was the result of accident. The deceased was about thirty years of age, and a native of Ohio, U. S., where his parents are believed still to reside. He was out on a hunting expedition when he met with the fatal accident.

A subscription list is in circulation for the purpose of bringing to New Westminster, and establishing here, a branch of that useful and benevolent Order, the Sisters of Charity. We understand that His Excellency the Governor, with his accustomed liberality, has headed the list with a subscription of $200. We trust the endeavor may be successful.

THE LEVIATHAN.—On Thursday H. E. steam yacht Leviathan was forced upon the edge of a bank of floating ice, and before she could be got off, turned over and sank close to her wharf. We learn that she has been floated again, but it is a pity she was not left in the Brunette River, where she would have been perfectly safe.

KILLING DEER WITH AN AXE.—On Tuesday evening, Mr. Hyee killed two fine bucks with an axe. They were crossing Burnaby Lake on the ice; he overtook them one after the other, and killed them as stated.

THE RANDOM.—The sloop Random was sold on Thursday to Mr. Moss, for two hundred dollars. He purchased her as she stands, she being well furnished in everything but ground tackle, of which she has none.

FIRST PREMIUM.—It is somewhat gratifying to find that the only article of Colonial manufacture exhibited at the late Industrial Exhibition in San Francisco, was awarded the first premium. Our readers will probably remember reading in our columns a few months ago, the description of a racing gig, built by Mr. Christopher Coyle, of New Brunswick, at Alberni Mills, for an association of spirited young men in this city. The owners of the boat publicly challenged all comers to pull against them, for $1,000, but met with no response. They subsequently, (through Mr. George Cruickshank, the local secretary) shipped the boat to San Francisco for exhibition. Another challenge was then inserted in the papers, offering to race any boat in the State, for one, two, or three thousand dollars, but without effect. The challenge was thereupon affixed in large letters to the boat as she lay in the exhibition, and to use the words of a correspondent writing to his friend here, "the first thing they asked was where was she built? and on being told at Vancouver Island, you bet some of them did not like her any the better for that." The same authority adds, "they cannot say that they have no boat, for they have built one, and have another of the fastest class started, but the fact is they are *scared* of the Victoria boat. We want you to make known the contents of this letter, for we think that Victoria is entitled to all the credit, and we desire to give it to her." We hope that the San Franciscans will be able to compete with the next article we send to their exhibition. The boat was the only foreign article in it, and they should not allow her to leave the State without a trial.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE LECTURE. — The second lecture of the course was delivered before the Mechanics' Literary Institute last night, in the Lyceum Hall, by Lieut.-Com. Verney, R. N. Notwithstanding the rival attractions of the theatre, and the hourly expected arrival of the mail steamer, the Hall was completely filled by a most respectable audience, including a number of ladies. At eight o'clock the lecturer made his appearance, and delivered a very interesting lecture under the quaint title of "Ocean's Sixty," being a popular explanation of the mode of taking the latitude and longitude on board ship, and of the various scientific operations performed in navigation. The lecturer succeeded in rendering a rather abstruse subject, both interesting and instructive, as was shown by the marked attention with which he was listened to throughout. At the conclusion of the lecture, which occupied nearly an hour, a hearty vote of thanks was given to Lieut. Verney and the meeting dispersed.

LEECH RIVER—Mr. Alfred Barnett, Expressman, arrived from Sooke on Saturday night. Travelling is heavier than it has been all the winter, owing to the depth of snow. In some places drift snow lies as deep as from three to four feet. Leech river is extremely low and miners are busily at work mostly making good wages. The frost of last week did not impede operations. Game is abundant. Geese and ducks are very plentiful in Sooke Harbor, affording fine shooting for sportsmen. Mr. Barnett leaves Williams' stable this morning at half-past nine with an Express for Leech river returning on Wednesday.

ICE IN THE FRASER.—The river at New Westminster on Saturday last was filled with fields of floating ice nearly four inches thick, which came sweeping down the stream with great force, severely trying even the great strength of the staunch little steamer Fideliter. It was expected that the weight of the snow and rain which fell during last week would sink the solid ice which covers the river higher up and open it for navigation.

COAL SUPPLY.—The Vancouver Company, we understand, have still about 300 tons of coal left at Nanaimo. The dealers in town have all a large supply on hand, and at Esquimalt there are nearly 800 tons, sufficient to supply the mail steamers until March.

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE.—A prisoner in New Westminster gaol attempted to commit suicide, on Saturday last, by taking a dose of strychnine. Fortunately for the rash man, however, the quantity swallowed was so excessive as to defeat his object, and he is likely to recover.

FOR ENGLAND.—Mr. John Cooper, for several years chief clerk of the British Columbia Treasury, and one of the oldest officials in the colony, leaves this morning for England on six months' leave of absence.

DEATH OF A DISTINGUISHED MAN.—The Hon. Edward Everett, the great American statesman, orator and writer, died the week before last in Boston, aged upwards of 70 years.

RETURNED—Amongst the list of passengers by the Oregon we notice the name of our fellow-townsman Mr. Leopold Lowenberg, who has returned from a visit to Europe.

A WORKING MAN ON THE FREE PORT.

EDITOR BRITISH COLONIST.—SIR,—The question of questions at the present moment undoubtedly is, shall our Free Port cease to exist? Amid all the discussion which has taken place upon this question, it appears to me that the real gist of the matter has been avoided by the Free Porters. There are certain principles involved which seem to have been entirely lost sight of. The advocates of our Free Port no doubt draw their inspirations from England. It is a truism old as the Creation itself, that there is no effect without a cause, either in nature, art or science, and I venture to say in political economy also. It is also true that the same cause or causes invariably produce the same effects. The unexampled progress of English commerce during the last twenty years is attributed to what we call Free Trade principles, that is, free trade in agricultural and dairy produce, and free trade in navigation, for to say that England is at the present moment governed upon the principles of free trade is simply nonsense. There is not a free port in England. There is not a port in England into which you can take a pound of tobacco, a chest of tea, a bag of sugar, or a gallon of rum. Let us glance for a moment at the position of England, and then let us see whether we can find any parallel in the present position of Vancouver Island. If we turn to England we find a nation in the possession of such an amount of wealth, as compared with which every other is poor. She levies contributions by that wealth from almost every country in the world, from American railroads, from Mexican mines, from the cotton fields of India, and we have even to pay England for the privilege of clearing out our own harbor.

There is probably not a kingdom in Europe which does not contribute to the wealth of England, by expending part of its taxation in paying interest upon English capital. She has also mineral resources superior to almost all the world. Her coal and iron are fully developed, her production of the one and her manufacture of the other are thoroughly organised. The possession of these, accompanied by her wealth, places her in position to enable her to defy the world. There is no nation can compete with her upon equal terms in the manufacture of any article, in which either coal or iron is required. Even America, with all her coal and iron cannot compete with the iron manufacturers of England. Let America abolish her duty upon iron, railroad iron for example, and there probably would not be a single furnace in operation in Pennsylvania three years hence. As it is, half the railroads in America are laid with English rails. I contend that free trade alone, free trade unsupported by her immense wealth, would never have made England what she is to-day. England has something to offer in exchange for everything she has to buy, something upon which she has expended labor, and by that labor extracted a profit from that which without labor is of itself valueless. She does not require to pay cash for three-fourths of what she buys; she could not do it; no nation can do so and prosper. Now, sir, if any of the advocates of our free port can discover any parallel between the position of England at the present day and our present position I shall be glad to see it. If the same causes do not exist here, does any sane man expect to produce the same results. It is certainly no proof of sanity if he does. You may expend any length of time, any amount of money, in training a London dray-horse, but you can never train him to win the Derby. Roast beef and plum pudding may be very good for a full-grown vigorous man, but then it is not necessarily good for a suckling. Free trade in grain may be very good for England, but then free trade in everything is not necessarily good for Vancouver.

No country ever has become, or ever will become a nation, by mere buying and selling for cash. Suppose we require to buy goods to the amount of $300,000, which we must pay for either in kind or coin, we have produce to the amount of $100,000, the balance we must pay in cash. Where is it to come from? Why, from the mines. Suppose the mines should fail, what then? Why bankruptcy; but then we are told the mines will perhaps do better this year. Such is the gambler's principle; he says—when losing—"better luck next time." And yet we are gravely required to stake not only our prosperity but our very existence as a nation upon the uncertain nature of gold mining—upon the turning up of a card.

The only argument I have heard advanced by the advocates of a free port is "See what a city our free port has created?" Again, some members of our Legislature, and our Chamber of Commerce tell us that we are only fit to become a distributing port, a commercial emporium for the north Pacific. If that is the height of our ambition, if we aim at nothing higher than becoming a mere commercial city, then I say by all means retain our free port, but in doing so I ask why should we expend $37,000 in making roads and erecting bridges? What use have we for a Governor or for such a Government as we at present have? As a mere commercial city we could be governed just as well and a great deal cheaper by a Municipal Government. But if we want to make our country a nation, something more than a mere city existing for the benefit of a few importers, we must put on such a tariff as will secure to a man whose only capital is his labor, fair play for that capital. When the Corn Laws were repealed in England, what did the English landholders and farmers do? Instead of sitting down with folded hands and whining over what they could not help, they immediately called in science to their aid—science told them that by a judicious system of draining and manuring they might just double the productive power of the soil.

The English farmer had capital enough to do so and he did it, he drained and manured and cultivated his land, until, with the aid of capital directed by science, he has made farming in England a more profitable business to-day than it was thirty years ago, simply by increasing the productive power of the land. But if England had not had her capital with which to improve her land, the farmers would have been in a very different position to-day. Science told them how to do it, but science also told them it required capital; so it is with us, our farmers know how to do it but it requires money, and that money they have not got. They require and they must have if we are ever to become a nation, some protection or some aid for a few years to enable them gradually to acquire that capital, and thus enable them to compete upon equal terms with our neighbors across the way.

I before observed that mere buying and selling will never make a nation. For example, a merchant clears $20,000 last year in business. He invests that money in buying twenty lots. The mere transfer of these lots does not enhance their value; our purchasing power is not one dollar more with these lots in the hands of that merchant than it was before he bought them. Does he expend any labor upon improving these lots? No; he waits quietly until some good, honest soul comes along and gives him six bits or a dollar per foot, for the privilege of erecting a house upon one of them. It is labor—and labor alone—that creates wealth, that enriches a country, whether it is clearing and cultivating an acre of land, felling a tree and converting it into lumber, or catching a barrel of fish and salting it. If a man buys a coat in England for $15, brings it here and sells it for $20, how much is Vancouver Island enriched by the operation? But suppose we bring the sheep here, grow the wool from the herbage of our country, convert that wool into yarn, that yarn into cloth, that cloth into a coat, and then sell that coat for $20. Then we are just the price of that coat richer, less the provisions consumed during the manufacture of it. The same principle applies to any other production, whether it is clothing, provisions, lumber, fish, or other natural production of a country. There is no road to national wealth except by the expenditure of labor upon that which, without labor, is of itself valueless.

Your evening contemporary, the *Times*, amongst a good deal of nonsense which he has written upon the subject, has several times appealed to working men, and asked them if they would submit to have their bread and their children's bread taxed, having hitherto been blessed with such an abundance of untaxed bread? I also shall appeal to working men, and I ask them, which of the positions would be most conducive to their interests, to pay 10 per cent. upon everything they eat, drink, and wear with a fair probability of steady employment, at one and a half or two dollars per day, than to have provisions and everthing else at present prices and no work at all? A large loaf for a small coin is quite a pleasant thing to look at; but then if one has not got the small coin one may look a very long time before it does him any good. I believe that a 10 per cent. duty would scarcely affect present prices at all. Retail profits are exorbitantly high in Victoria, and I believe that competition would prevent any general rise in retail prices, but, even supposing that the 10 per cent. was added to present prices, I still contend that it is more the interest of every working man to pay 10 per cent. and work than not to pay it and have no work at all.

I do not pretend to say that if we had a tariff enacted to-day that work would be more plentiful to-morrow; but this I do say, that I have no doubt if we had a judicious tariff imposed to-morrow, and next day such a tax levied upon all uncultivated agricultural lands within twenty miles of Victoria, as would compel the holders of those lands either to cultivate or to sell them, that before twelvemonths the demand for laborers would employ every idle man upon the Island, and if one third of those left for the mines in the spring of 1866, then their places would require to be filled up by immigration from elsewhere, and thus lay the foundation of a permanent population, which would, in the course of a few years, prove a greater source of wealth to Victoria than either Cariboo, Sooke, or Kootenay are likely to do. Those mines should be made the means to an end, not the end itself. Your evening contemporary seems to have some most extraordinary ideas upon taxation. Does he not know that it is the consumer who pays almost all taxes, whether it is taken from him directly or indirectly? I cannot buy a coat in Victoria without paying less or more taxation! It is simply nonsense or perhaps something worse, to appeal to working men to support our present free port system because under that system they pay no taxes, and under a tariff they would. I ask him is it the English tobacco manufacturer who pays the duty in England or the consumer who smokes it?

Yours, respectfully, W. L.

Victoria Jan. 29th, 1865.

STEAM TO SAN FRANCISCO.—It was rumored in town yesterday that the steamer Fideliter had been chartered by the British Columbian government to run as a mail boat between New Westminster and San Francisco. It is affirmed that the steamer can make the trip in three and a half days. She would only carry the mails and a few passengers. A proposition to Governor Seymour by Capt. Nicol, of the Nanaimo Coal Company, to place Messrs. Anderson & Co's steamer Thames on the line to San Francisco has been made, but no arrangement has yet been effected.

TRADES LICENSES.—The Assessor gives notice that the Court of Revision under the Trades' Licenses Act, appointed by His Excellency the Governor will hold its first sitting at the Sheriff's Office on Friday next, February 3rd at half-past ten, a.m.