

THE WEEKLY BRITISH COLONIST.

VICTORIA, VANCOUVER ISLAND, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1870.

NO. 6.

THE BRITISH COLONIST

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DAVID W. HIGGINS,

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One Week	25 cents

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The Conditions.

Turning from a discussion that cannot possibly aim at higher and more profitable results than a demonstration of the impracticability and unprofitableness of its object, let us invite serious attention to a subject of more immediate concern, and the discussion of which promises more practical consequences. One of the first matters which will claim the attention of the Legislative Council as soon to convene, is that of the union of this colony with the Dominion of Canada. The question will come up doubtless in the form of a Government measure; and it is presumption that the Executive will be occupied during much of the time they intervene in deciding upon the conditions that shall be submitted to the House for transmission to Ottawa. It is fitting, therefore, that the subjects of conditions should, at such a moment, take precedence of every other, and it is fitting also that all circumstances as those that call who take an active share in public affairs shall lay aside personal hobbies and extreme ratches, and, by coming together in a spirit of earnest patriotism, seek to promote the common object of rendering approaching political changes as beneficial as possible to this our adopted home. Such is the spirit in which we shall endeavor to approach this most important subject; and, however fortunate the colony may be in having two representatives sitting at the Executive board, that circumstance does not, above all, from the duty of pointing out what we conceive to be at once the rights and the most pressing wants of the country, although it doubtless has a tendency to render the task lighter and more hopeful. The importance of Executive action in this matter may be gauged by the difficulty there is in effecting, in a House composed as ours is, any material change in a measure which has previously received Executive endorsement; hence our solicitude that the programme which is to be brought down to the Legislative Council may be in the main such as the unofficial members can endorse, and such as the country can accept. So much has already appeared in these columns upon the subject of "conditions," that we can hardly be expected to bring forward anything absolutely new; we can scarcely even hope to present bold ideas in new dress. Inasmuch as we prefer to regard the form of government this colony shall enjoy under Confederation in the light of a general consequence rather than a condition, it may be best to dispose of that point at an antecedent proposition. It would ill become us to ignore the existence of some diversity of opinion upon the subject of immediate consideration. Strongly impressed as we are with the idea that, however simple and crude the form of government bestowed on this colony might necessarily be in the first instance, it should still possess the essential element of direct responsibility to the people; we meet those whose opinions are entitled to much respect—nay, very great weight—who entertain a different belief. There are those, even beyond official circles or influence, who conceive that the colony has not quite reached that condition which would enable its affairs to be most satisfactorily administered by a Cabinet whose members are directly responsible to the people. It is argued that there is a paucity of suitable material from which to select heads of departments by the popular vote, and that where the population of much of the colony is so erratic, and public opinion on many questions is still

to a great extent vacillating, good men would not care to accept onerous and responsible appointments which could only be held by a brittle and capricious tenure. While admitting that there is much force in this view, yet the answer is this: Under Confederation we shall be relieved of those more complex questions of legislation which might threaten to crack the brain of our embryo statesmen; and whether it be now or years hence, we shall have to begin with the A. B. C. of legislation. Mistakes there doubtless will be, begin when we may; but is it not as well to begin at once, and we shall the sooner have passed that inevitable period of creeping, stammering babyhood? Besides, if we look across an international line which some appear anxious to see obliterated we shall find that communities equally crude had not hesitated to assume the full powers of self-government. Whatever course it may be deemed best by the Executive to adopt for the present with regard to departmental officers we venture to think that we do not misinterpret popular sentiment when we tell the Government plainly and emphatically that no system will be acceptable to the people which does not give them a real control of their own local affairs. It is all very well to say that the Colony does not possess material out of which to make departmental officers. The present officials being sole judges, of course it does not; but we prefer to believe that they are not the most competent judges in this matter. The present political constitution of the Colony is but fitted to bring out the latent talent of the community, and we are apt to think that responsible government, if inaugurated to-morrow, would bring to the surface the existence of which has been little dreamed of by the governing classes. Look at other colonies. From what stratum of society, for instance, was O'Shaughnessy drawn? In the most important colonies have not the most able statesmen been drawn from the plebeian grade? The control of provincial affairs by the people under Confederation we are still inclined to regard as a sine qua non. The people will not submit to a feudal or perpetuation of a mock pseudo-representative form of Government, and any attempt to tack any such thing upon a measure for Confederation would be to fly in the face of public opinion so repeatedly, unanimously and毫不动摇ably expressed. But here we are, at the end of our column, and the first condition not yet

carried up, New Year's. Whilst passing along Cormorant street at 4 o'clock on Sunday morning Sergt McCarthy's auction was drawn to a pile of paper blazing in a recess between two houses. The officer extinguished the fire and was moving on when a celestial emerged from one of the houses and set off a pack of Chinese fire crackers in honor of the New Year. Having more regard for the safety of the town than respect for the New Year, McCarthy nimbly steered his steamer and brought him before the Police Court. Yesterday morning when he was tried.

The CANADIAN PACIFIC.—Is this interesting little book Mr. Pemberton thus refers to the proposition to construct an overland route south of the forty-ninth parallel? In short, taking into consideration the mountain pass, the hopelessly barren nature of the country traversed, and the circumstances of having for its outlet the bar of the Columbia instead of the Straits of Juan de Fuca, this route cannot compete with that proposed to be made in British territory. It cannot be urged that the extension of the American line to Seattle, a port on the east side of Puget Sound, as talked of, would make the comparison more favorable to the American line, by the distance of St. Paul's from Seattle is 2025 miles, of which 1152 miles would pass through an unoccupied region affording but little game at uncertain seasons, and at a late season not a sufficient supply of grass for animals. Governor Stephens of Minnesota believes that the most desirable route to the Pacific will be found in the possession of Great Britain; and that a great interoceanic communication is more likely to be constructed through the Saskatchewan basin than across the American desert—the craggy and comparatively rainless areas of the southern latitudes within the territories of the United States. As there is nothing to apprehend from compulsion, adds Mr. Pemberton, let us examine a little further into the detail of the line proposed, and the soil and climate of the country through which it passes. Then follows a glowing description of the country and of the commanding position this colony must occupy as the highway and the half-way house between Europe, Asia, and Australia, both for mails and merchandise, and the whole is concluded with such a nice intimation about the desirability of consolidation of all the British North American provinces, the author very properly adding, As Judge Haliburton on a similar occasion remarked here, "A fool's errand is to suppose they want to be propitiated." How very pre-.

SHOCKING MURDER.—On Sunday morning, about one o'clock, two Hydah Indians were stabbed by another Indian at a small house in Oriental Alley. One of the men died immediately, having been stabbed twice in the heart. The other lies in a very dangerous state. The murderer made an attempt to stab a third Indian, but was knocked down and beaten until the arrival of special officer Ferrel, by whom he was taken to prison. The Coroner empanelled a jury to hold an inquest over the remains of the dead man and the prisoner was fully identified as the wounded Indian. The enquiry was then adjourned till Thursday.

ARRIVAL OF THE S. S. CALIFORNIA.—The steamship California, Captain Rogers, arrived from Portland at 6 o'clock last evening, anchored in the outer harbor and sent her mail and express ashore, after which she continued on to Port Townsend. The California sailed from Portland on Saturday last. The mail and express having come via Portland, furnished nothing but late news when they wanted to be propitiated. How very pre-

MARINE TELEGRAPH.—A general expression of disappointment heard at the vessel—perhaps we should say inability of the Government to respond to the prayer of the memorialists for direct steam communications. Cannot a step be taken to meet the prayer half-way? If Ben Holiday has no boats to spare for the service at a reasonable rate there is the elegant Olympia towed up for want of business, or the late Russian steamer Alexandria lying idle at San Francisco, March 1st. Mrs. Goodhue extended the general courtesy of their facilities to

FINS.—On Wednesday Mr. J. D. Pemberton opened the Annexation discussion. On Tuesday he concludes it. Some men have not the sufficient sense to know when they are beaten, others have not the moral courage to acknowledge concession. Mr. Pemberton appears to possess both. Strange—is it not—that he should have only now discovered what we have been preaching for months.

MR. W. M. ELLERTON'S BENEFIT.—We are pleased to announce that in addition to Miss Louise Arnot, Mr. Geo. Pauncefot has consented to appear at the benefit of Mr. Ellerton to-morrow evening at Preparation to make the benefit a great success. We are going forward.

THE CALIFORNIA.—Manufacturers of the highest quality of coal, oil, and gas, and

N. BLACK.—What street you

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