

European News.

From British Papers to the 19th April received by the Hibernia, Steamer.

SPEECH OF SIR HOWARD DOUGLAS, IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, ON THE BOUNDARY QUESTION.

I have thus shown that there was, at the period to which I have brought this sad history, a practical surrender of all that I had contended for in the case of Baker; and of all that I had done to maintain possession, and exercise exclusive jurisdiction throughout my administration. I went to the Ionian Islands in April, 1835. I shall ever retain the interest I feel in the affairs of British North America, and I keep up an active correspondence with it. I saw and feared that this question was, by procrastination and encroachments, getting into the danger which I have just explained. I have not reserved the information and knowledge I possess of that question for any party purpose. I communicated much of what I am saying on American affairs to her Majesty's government; to Lord Glenelg on one occasion; to the Marquis of Normandy, April, 1839, upon another; to Lord John Russell, in December, 1841, on another; sincerely desirous of making that, or any other knowledge or information I may possess, available to the interests of my country, under any administration. The letter to Lord Normanby was particularly directed to show the importance of maintaining, firmly, the actual and exclusive possession, and likewise to urge the government not to listen to any demand for the free navigation of the river St. John, up and down, as a right, which if conceded, the United States would apply to the river St. Lawrence.

I have thus represented the real state of the case at the time Lord Ashburton entered on his functions. What was the effect of these concessions, as proved by the tone and terms used by Mr. Webster in reply to Lord Ashburton's proposition? If the United States had continued to be kept within their own acknowledged boundary, and never permitted to intrude into, or encroach upon, that to which they claimed a right, but of which we exclusively held possession, there must have been a coming up, an advance on the part of the United States, to any conventional line which might be made to compromise this question—and accordingly, as in this case, an actual acquisition of territory by the United States, and a relinquishment by us. But, instead of this, what do we find? Why, that the United States, having been permitted to assume possession of the territory, Mr. Webster, far from speaking of acquisition of territory, talks of the difficulty of relinquishing to Great Britain part of her own possession—yielding a valuable territory in another point, *videlicet*, the Madawaska settlement to the south of the St. John; in another passage, the relinquishment of another large portion of Maine territory north of the St. John; and, as an act of great generosity, consents at length to yield to Great Britain.

"All she needs to secure her an unobstructed communication and connection of her colonies with each other."

The noble lord must have adverted to this, when he spoke of the arrogant tone adopted by Mr. Webster on the part of the United States, in his answer to Lord Ashburton's proposition, as though they, the United States, were the actual owners of the soil. But what else could have been expected, after such a series of encroachments on the one hand, and concessions on the other, as those to which I have referred? Did the noble lord think that, after having been permitted to push their military posts up to the St. John, they would ever retire, unless driven back by force; or, in other words, without a war? Did he think that the United States would, under any circumstances, withdraw from the territory they had been permitted to usurp? that they would abandon and dismantle the fortifications they had been permitted to construct; strike the national flag they had been permitted to hoist—or that they would be satisfied with any conventional boundary, short of the line which the noble lord had permitted them to take? The government of the United States was determined to make their stand there; and to meet Lord Ashburton in a manner and with a tone, which the concessions made by the noble lord enabled and encouraged them to assume; and, if there be anything in this treaty, in the opinion of any honorable members, inconsistent with the interests of the country, prejudicial to the safety of our North American possessions, or derogatory to the honour of the crown, I do say, that it is not to the charge of the present government that these evils should be laid, but to the charge of the noble lord, who had permitted the civil jurisdiction and military occupation of the territory to be subverted and usurped, and which left nothing for his successors to do but to compromise the question by a conventional line, or to adopt the other alternative, and go to war. Now, with respect to the treaty itself, and here again I must express my regret that I must be very brief, I do regret that the line of the St. John, as a frontier, should not have been established throughout, up to its proper source. I admit that having assigned to the United States any territory to the north of the St. John is an error; and certainly if it had been possible for Lord Ashburton to refuse this, without rupturing the negotiations, he is much to blame. I had advised strongly the line of the St. John. It appears that Lord Ashburton proposed and pressed this as far as he could; and there is every reason to believe that, if he stood out for this, the agents of the State of Maine, to whom this was referred, would not have consented,

and that the negotiations would have been ruptured accordingly. That portion of territory cannot for a moment be considered worth standing in the way of the final settlement of this question. It is a poor territory, with very little valuable timber; and, as to its value in a military point of view, as bringing the United States boundary nearer to the river St. Lawrence and affording means of aggression, the frontier in that part is twice as far from the river St. Lawrence as that awarded by the King of Holland which the noble lord accepted. The now decided frontier is five times as far from Quebec as Holton Town, the American port, on the north line, is from the St. John's river; and nine or ten times as far from the river St. Lawrence (with commanding positions intervening) as Fort Fairfield is from the military communication between St. John and Quebec, along the St. John river; and, let the house bear in mind, that this fort the noble lord permitted the Americans to erect.

Now, with respect to defence, it will not, of course, be expected, for obvious reasons, that I should go at any length, or in detail, into this part of the subject; but I have no hesitation in saying that nothing essential to defence has been sacrificed by this treaty. As I have already said, the position most menacing the province of New Brunswick, and most inconvenient and dangerous to the military communication along the river St. John, is the United States military post of Holton Town; because it is the position of that line, as unhappily laid down from the eastern source of the St. Croix, which gives that lineal frontier its dangerous proximity to the river St. John throughout; and it was not in Lord Ashburton's power to remedy this. The great and main point of defence for the river St. John, and for the Province of New Brunswick, is St. Andrew's, and the territory on the right bank of the St. John. A respectable and permanent military post should be established at or near St. Andrew's; and means taken to ensure, under all circumstances, the possession of Passamaquoddy Bay, a capacious and magnificent bay, open at all times and seasons, one of the very finest bays, harbours, and roadsteads on the coast of North America. So long as St. Andrew's and that bay shall be firmly held, no movement can be made towards the city of St. John's; nor any, with safety to an enemy, into the Province of New Brunswick; for St. Andrew's being thus a post into which, as commanding Passamaquoddy Bay, a large force might at any time be thrown, by the command which we have of the sea, St. Andrew's may not only come a point of pure defence, but of active offence, against the enemy's communications, as the map will show, which would effectually deter, if properly supported, any incursions into New Brunswick. Then with respect to Rouse's Point, on the upper end of Lake Champlain, it was awarded to the United States by the King of Holland. The noble lord accepted that award, and pressed its acceptance upon the government of the United States for about three years. Rouse's Point is coveted by the United States, because, in our hands, it would be an offensive point against them by commanding the entrance into the lake; but it is not a defensive point essential to us. If even we retained Rouse's Point, it would not be expedient to erect a fortress or post there, either would be highly inexpedient. It is an error, in general, to establish on any line, frontier, or advance point, any work which, if not well supported, must fall immediately; and which, if supported, would render it necessary to do so, to such an extent, as necessarily to bring on great operations upon a point most inconvenient on the one side, and most convenient on the other. It has been well said that an army thus forced to fight, is more than half beaten. Against Rouse's Point the United States might bring, with the greatest convenience, combined forces, which the command of the lake would enable them to do, and which, to withstand, would require Rouse's Point to be supported with all our force, most disadvantageously and dangerously. The United States having gained that point, have attained their object, but they show no disposition to fortify it.

Now, as to military communications. I have already shown that the inconvenience and danger arising from the proximity of the frontier, to the exercising military communication through New Brunswick, could not have been remedied by anything within Lord Ashburton's competency to effect. The truth is, that the existing military communication, though New Brunswick, with Quebec, is, at best, a very bad, inconvenient, and objectionable line; and this would be so if even Lord Ashburton had gained for us all the territory to the north of Mars' Hill. A military communication near and parallel to a frontier is, and always must be, inconvenient and dangerous. A better and safer military communication between Halifax, through New Brunswick, to the St. Lawrence is by Truro in Nova Scotia to Cumberland at the head of the Bay of Fundy; thence to Shediac, Richibucto, Miramichi, on the gulf shore of that Province; thence to Bathurst and Dalhousie, on the bay of Chaleurs, and from thence by certain rivers and lakes, in the line of which a good military road should be made, taking the line of the river Metis to the St. Lawrence. On this line, called the Kempt road, as suggested by the gallant and distinguished officer whose name it bears, we worked together; and this is the communication that should be established.

With respect to the navigation of the river St. John, I will not attempt to go into detail on this part of the question at this late hour; but I am prepared to defend it.

For all these reasons and considerations I will avow, that I approve of this treaty; that I recognise the eminent services of the distinguished individual who has negotiated and brought it to a satisfactory conclusion; and I

approve, highly and decidedly, of the ability and conduct of the noble lord, the present Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and of her Majesty's government, who, by their instructions, have accomplished this great settlement. But I must condemn the conduct of the noble lord opposite to having weakly conceded so much, as to have rendered such a compromise necessary. I admit that many of the despatches written by the noble lord contain strong and good writing, exhibiting many flashes of spirit and most commendable expressions of firmness; but these were but writing: and against all this, dealing with facts, I must again point to the several concessions made by the noble lord which admitted concurrent civil jurisdiction, concurrent military possession, and then the erection of American forts! There they stand! Nor let the noble lord imagine that I, by the vote I gave the other night, refusing inquiry into another part of the noble lord's policy. I do not agree with my right hon. friend, the right hon. baronet at the head of her Majesty's government, that inquiry was inexpedient on account of trenching on the royal prerogative, because that objection, carried out, would preclude all inquiry on the part of this House. But I do agree, and I do feel, that inquiry would do no good—and might do much harm. It would dry up tears; it would assuage no grief, public or private; far from obliterating, it would revive the recollections of a terrible calamity; far from appeasing, it would embitter the sense of a recent disaster; and it certainly would not tend to impress the world with any high notion of British wisdom, or British policy, on the part of the government which directed that measure. The errors that were then committed have been repaired; that ill-fated movement, beyond natural and reasonable limits, has been retraced, with credit to our arms, and with as little discredit to the country; and not more of anguish, than are consistent with, and due to, the terrible traces we have left behind—the remains of our gallant countrymen, and their associates in arms, mouldering, unburied and unblest, in the fastnesses of a remote and savage region. The peace which had been disturbed by the noble lord has been restored; the confidence, which had been impaired, has been regained; the empire, which had been shaken to its basis, has been re-established in all strength, moral, military, and poetical. It needed not, then, to institute unavailing inquiry into what cannot be undone; and no more need be said on a subject, on which enough has been said and felt, to condemn it to all posterity. If, in the attack which the noble lord has made on the foreign policy of her Majesty's present government, and on the conduct of Lord Ashburton, the noble lord opposite should have suggested, excited, or awakened any suspicion that there is anything in this arrangement inconsistent with the public interest, detrimental to British North America, or derogatory to the honour of the crown, then will that noble lord have, by the proceedings of this night, called down upon his own head, in an especial manner, the serious responsibility of having, by procrastination and concession, rendered that compromise, or a far worse alternative, necessary; and if, amid considerations so momentous, and interests so vast this House can stop, for a moment, to listen to those which speak in the person who has now the honour of addressing the House, I hope that the House will think I did my duty in maintaining, firmly, as the servant of the then government the rights of jurisdiction, possession, and sovereignty which that government nobly asserted; and that now, under existing circumstances, I do my duty, as conscientiously, and not less fearlessly, in defending an arrangement which upon the whole, I think, accomplishes every reasonable expectation and attainable object; and which entitles the government of her Majesty, by which this settlement has been accomplished, and the eminent and distinguished person who has been the happy instrument of effecting it, to the approbation of this House, and to the gratitude of the country.

From Willmer's American News Letter.

GENERAL SUMMARY.

The excitement which has for some time prevailed is now rapidly subsiding, and the firm tone which has been assumed by Government which references to some of the great questions in agitation, has not been without its effects upon the minds and actions of the people. The events which have occurred since our last publication, have, with some exceptions, been comparatively destitute of interest.

In the revenue returns, to 5th instant, the quarters upon customs is considerable, which may be chiefly ascribed to the discontinuance of the revenue from corn. There is a small decline in the return for the quarter of the Excise duties. The decline upon the year is £1059,000, but of this less than £2,000 occurs in the last quarter.

Disturbances have taken place in some parts of Ireland, especially in the neighbourhood of Monaghan, with a view to obtain a reduction of rent. The lower class of the people, having assembled themselves in numbers, committing numerous outrages; the stewards of the different estates being in general the object of their furious indignation. No life has been lost; and the determined conduct of those in authority will probably prevent, for a time at least, the recurrence of such violent proceedings.

Considerable excitement prevails in reference to Sir James Graham's proposed education bill. The Dissenters, Papists, and all who are opposed to the established church consider the provisions of this bill to be an infringement of their religious rights, and they have expressed a fear that, should it come into operation, their own schools will be superseded. The Government, however seem to be firm in their maintenance of the measure and the supremacy which is supposed to give to the national church.

If indeed we are to give any credit to the statements recently made in the House of commons of the truly lamentable extent to which in the ignorance and, consequently, crime prevail in the manufacturing districts, we shall be disposed to think that there is an ample field in which both Dissenters and Churchmen may exercise their laudable zeal in the removal of the ignorance which now unhappily so extensively prevails.

There is a rumour of the formation of a new Irish party in the House of Commons in opposition to the ministry, and under the auspices of Mr. O'Connell. The *Dublin Evening Mail* is spoken of as its organ.

PARLIAMENTARY.

The spirit of party, which has for so long a period disgraced the legislative assembly of this nation, seems to give way, and the principles which are involved in the various measures seems to be more regarded than the members by which they are proposed, or the party by which they are, for the most part, supported. An instance of this would be found in the motion of Lord Ashley, with reference to the opium trade, brought forward in opposition to the ministry, though he professedly, and in most instances, their supporter.

THE OPIUM TRADE.

On the 4th instant, Lord Ashley, in the House of Commons, brought forward a motion, that it was the opinion of the house that the countenance of the trade in opium was destructive of amicable relations between England and China, that it was injurious to our manufacturing interests, utterly inconsistent with the Christianity of the kingdom, and that immediate steps should be taken to abolish the evil. He stated that though the war with China was concluded, the cause of it still remained, and might, at any future time, be productive of the same effects. He alluded to the extent to which the smuggling of opium was carried, in direct violation of the Chinese law, and the injury of the English character. The Chinese, he said were desirous of maintaining an honourable traffic with this country, and were the temptation to purchase opium removed, would as readily spend their dollars in manufactures which would prove much more advantageous to Great Britain. The trade was, in its principal object, repugnant to every feeling of humanity; and in carrying it on with the Chinese, the grossest and most revolting barbarities had been perpetrated by those in command of the opium ships, which bore much more resemblance to pirates than to merchantmen. It would be impossible, while these outrages were allowed, or even countenanced by the government, to create favourable impression upon the minds of the Chinese people of the British character, and therefore the continuance of this disgraceful trade would prove an insuperable barrier to missionary enterprise. If the trade were discontinued by the government of this country, the growth of the poppy would not be permitted in China; neither was that country favourable to its cultivation. His lordship concluded by stating, that the conduct of Englishmen to the Chinese, with reference to the opium trade, was inconsistent with every idea of justice, and a duty devolving itself upon the population of this country to use every effort for its immediate abolition.

Mr. Baring, in reply, stated that the East India Company had used every exertion to repress the opium trade, but without success; and as the use of this drug had become as necessary to the Chinese as wine to ourselves, he thought that the only way to remove the evil was to prevail upon the Emperor of China to legalise a trade which he had no power to exclude; which would at once preserve the amicable relations between this country and China. After speeches from several members Sir R. Peel rose and said, that it was a matter of delicate importance, as it affected the revenue to the amount of £1,200,000 a year, and, therefore, he thought that the resolution should be modified. He contended that were the Chinese not to be supplied with opium by the British traders, they will receive it from other quarters. He stated that the subject had received the attention of government, and that Sir H. Pottinger had instructions to treat with the Emperor for the legalisation of traffic. It was impossible to calculate the effects of measures of this description upon India; and as the burdens on the people of that country were already heavy, he thought they ought not to be increased. He concluded by requesting the house to postpone the subject and leave the matter for the present in the hands of the government. Lord Ashley stated, that if the motion would have the effect of impeding the negotiations in which the government were engaged, he would withdraw his motion. It was accordingly withdrawn.

COLONIZATION.

On the 8th inst. pursuant to notice, Mr Buller brought forward his motion in the House of Commons, praying that Her Majesty would take into consideration the most effective means for promoting an extensive and systematic plan of Colonization, and thus employ, to the benefit of the country, a portion of its superabundant population. He alluded to the distress which existed among the labouring class of the community, which he allowed might be produced by various secondary causes, such, for instance, as over-production, but that these causes were only temporary in their effects, and the great evil and first cause, even of the over-production itself, is in the increase of capital and labour, without a corresponding field having at the same time been opened for their employment. He stated that an obvious remedy in this case was the promotion of colonization; which, though he did not expect it to be effective in entirely removing the evil, would go far to prevent its frequent recurrence, and very materially mitigate its effects. In our colonies there