

companied us desired the man to dismount, and stand on one side. The chief then gave the word of command, and ordered the creature to slay the wretch. The elephant raised his trunk, and twined it, as if round a human being, the creature then made motions, as if he were depositing a man on the earth before him, then slowly raised his fore foot, placing it alternately upon the spots where the limbs of the sufferer would have been. This he continued to do for some minutes, then, as if satisfied the bones must be crushed, the elephant raised his trunk high above his head, and stood motionless; the chief then ordered him to complete his work, and the creature immediately placed one foot, as if upon the man's abdomen, and the other upon his head, apparently using his entire strength to crush and terminate the wretch's misery. When we bear in mind that the monarch was dethroned in 1815, and the animal had never since that period been called upon to perform the barbarous task to which he had been trained, few, we believe will be disposed to cavil concerning the extraordinary intelligence and memory evinced by the creature.

Communications.

PORTLAND AND HALIFAX RAILWAY. No. 1.

This undertaking has now become a leading topic of conversation, and is more particularly so to the residents on the other side of the Province, who are supposed, and who no doubt are, more interested in its progress and success than the inhabitants of the North Shore. As it is a question, however, which will probably occupy the attention of our Representatives at the approaching Session, and one in which an application will be probably made, as well for a charter to authorize and legalise proceedings, as for an appropriation of public monies to no small extent, it is clearly the duty of the people in the several sections of the Province, to view the question in a calm and dispassionate manner, irrespective of local feeling or sectional interest, and either grant or withhold their support to the measure, as they may deem for the best interests of the Province at large. In the consideration of such questions, private interests has too often more to do in influencing our judgment than most of us are willing to allow; and we frequently find that we oppose a measure, in itself useful, merely because it does not bring grist to our own mill. This, I confess, is rather a contracted and selfish view to adopt; but however much we regret such a state of things, still we must deal with prejudices and interests as we find them, and endeavor rather to remove the injurious effects, than hopelessly to repine over their existence. I believe that such selfish interests will influence many in these Northern Counties in the course they may adopt in the consideration of the present Railway project; and any whose business monopolies, or whose private interests are likely to be affected by it, will be at as little loss for plausible objections to urge against the measure, as they will be for credulous listeners, who know but little about the real merits of the question. Some of these objections I have already heard stated, and shall, in briefly considering the question, deal with them fairly and impartially, and endeavor to arrive at, and point out the comparative advantages and disadvantages which may result therefrom.

There are but few even in our County, who will not admit that a Line of Railway, connecting Halifax with the American or Canadian cities, would be beneficial, and materially promote the prosperity of the country through which such a Line might pass; but this admission contains within itself an objection on the part of the person making it, for while they admit the utility to, and increased prosperity of the country possessing such a mode of transit, and considered so essential in this age of progress, they imagine that the Northern section of the Province will not receive any benefit, because the Line does not pass through it. The objection to the locality is, therefore, as far as we are concerned, likely to be made use of in inflaming the public mind against the measure, although in reality there is nothing in the objection, as we are at present situated. I am willing to admit, that if a reasonable probability existed of the Halifax and Quebec Railway being shortly built, and of its being kept in operation when erected, and that the erection of the Portland and Halifax Railway would be likely to interfere with the former scheme, that then there might be a direct interest in our supporting the Quebec line, and opposing the other; but we must be indeed hoping against hope, if we expect, for many years yet to come, (if at all), to see the latter line established in the face of so many improbabilities.

When the Quebec scheme was first mooted, the Colonies were almost unanimous in its favor, granted extensive tracts of land, and guaranteed a large amount of money towards its erection. Representations were also made to the Colonial Office, for Imperial support, which was refused, although repeatedly urged upon their favorable consideration by both the Government and the Press of the different Colonies interested in its erection: and without English capital, and annual contributions from the Imperial Treasury, a line of so great extent, extending for 600 miles over a tract of country chiefly in a wilderness state, and so sparsely populated as it is, never could be erected by us, and I doubt much if it could be supported if it were built; but while the lapse of time has done nothing with the Brit-

ish Ministry to cheer the prospects of the friends of the scheme, it has done much to lessen its Colonial supporters. The People of Nova Scotia have almost unanimously abandoned the Quebec line as a hopeless project, and have entered into the Portland scheme with energy and zeal. Public meetings have been held, and resolutions passed in its favor; large amounts of stock have been subscribed; cities and districts have declared their intention of applying to the local Parliament for leave to tax themselves to raise the means of its erection, and the local Government has taken hold of the matter, and despatched one of the most talented of its members to advocate the interests of the measure in England; and thus the people of Nova Scotia have abandoned a project which they found impossible to carry out, and are now using every effort to promote the forming of the Portland Line. In Canada, matters stand equally unfavorable for the Quebec line. At no time was the subject taken up with interest by the Canadian people. True, a section of the lower Province, through which the proposed route would pass, were desirous of its being built, and the people of Quebec advocated its erection and continuation to Montreal, with a desire (as is generally supposed) of connecting themselves with that city; but the greater and most influential portion of that Colony were much more interested in effecting the completion of the line from Montreal to Portland; and thus by making the latter place the terminus of the Halifax and St. John route, its advocates have made it the interest of the friends of the Montreal line to promote its erection, and thus the prospect of support to the Halifax and Quebec line is virtually abolished. The chief support of that line, then, must exist in this Province, and the friends of the measure cannot but admit that here its prospects are gloomy indeed. Even in its brightest days the measure was looked upon as even more than doubtful by the southern and western section of the Province; and out of 14 counties, only five gave it cordial support, and of these Westmorland has declared in favor of the Portland line, as more feasible and more likely to be remunerative.

For the present, then, the Quebec and Halifax line may be set down as one of the things which were talked of, and this fate, under existing circumstances, it is impossible to avert. Is it not, then, our interest to abandon a hopeless project at once, and cease to agitate the public mind on a topic from which no public good can result? Is it not also our duty to encourage the Portland line, if we can be satisfied of its practicability, even though it should not pass our own doors? It is high time that we laid aside those sectional feelings and interested motives which have too long swayed our Provincial councils; and in considering a measure, view it in its relation to the public good as a Provincial or national undertaking, and not as a local or party question; as a scheme affecting the prosperity of a people, and not as one for the promotion of a political or family interest.

PROGRESS.

Miramichi, November 9, 1850.

Editor's Department.

MIRAMICHI.

CHATHAM, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1850.

EUROPEAN NEWS.

By the Mail Steamer Africa, at New York, we obtained our British papers to the 26th October. They do not contain any news of special importance. We have, however, taken from them numerous interesting items.

We were disappointed by the non-arrival of the steamer at Halifax with the mail of the second instant. She must therefore have had a tedious passage.

DESTRUCTIVE FIRE AT FREDERICTON.

It is our painful duty to day to record a most disastrous calamity which befel the Seat of Government on Monday last. On the afternoon of that day a fire broke out, which, before it was got under, destroyed the greater portion of the business part of the city. The number of buildings destroyed is estimated at between two and three hundred, and a large amount of other valuable property has also been consumed. We sympathise with our fellow colonists in their sad visitation, which is rendered more distressing, happening as it does, on the eve of the winter season.

The mail brought us no papers, but to a friend we are indebted for a copy of the Head Quarters, from which we copy the following particulars of the sad disaster, which was published by the editor of that paper in a slip on Tuesday last:—

Yesterday about two o'clock, one of the most awful conflagrations which ever visited a small community, broke out in Carleton street, commencing in the rear of the premises formerly occupied by Dr. Emerson, and then in the possession of Miss McLaughlin and Mr. Hillard, which in an incredibly short space of time, communicated with the Methodist Chapel, which, with the building named, were speedily consumed. The most

strenuous efforts were made to confine the devouring element to the block on which it originated, but these efforts were without avail. At this juncture a strong wind blew from the north-west, which forced the flames to the opposite side of King street, consuming the new building owned by Mr. Morgan the house occupied by the Rev. Mr. Temple, and from thence backwards to within one building of the Masonic Hall. The corner house on Carleton street, opposite the Methodist Chapel, was soon after in flames, and Magee's bakery, the Temperance Hall, and all the buildings along to Flewelling's corner, was speedily followed on the other side, while the premises occupied by John Reilly, and the building owned by Patrick Kelly, better known as Perks's tavern, on the other—all the buildings on that block, in Carleton street, being consumed, with the exception of that known as Anderson's corner. From this time the progress of the flames became irresistible. The military, the firemen, and the citizens generally worked as men should work for the preservation of life and property; but still the flames rushed on, consuming nearly three entire blocks in the very centre of the city, and were not stayed until they had reached from above Carleton street upwards, to St. John street, downwards, and from the south side of Queen street to Brunswick st., backwards, leaving on St. John street, the property belonging to the Bank of British N. America, and that of E. W. Miller, Esq.; on Brunswick street the property owned by Beverley Robinson, Esq., the residence of the Roman Catholic Bishop; the Roman Catholic Church, which was several times on fire, and the residence of Mr. Charles Grigor. On the south of Queen's street, between the points mentioned, there only remains the property of Mr. Grosvenor, Mr. Stewart, and the new brick building owned by the heirs of the late Mr. Staples.

By this awful calamity upwards of two thousand souls have been driven out of their houses, many of whom do not up to this hour (5 o'clock) know where to lay their heads. The loss by this calamity, it would be in vain now to estimate, but our readers may form some idea of its extent when we mention that this morning we counted one hundred and fifty six separate tenements, totally consumed, without taking into account the out-houses and back stores attached thereto, which might amount in all to some three hundred. The business portion of the community have suffered very severely, but those who have lost their all, are most to be pitied, and for them public sympathy will, we hope, be felt abroad as well as here. We subjoin the proceedings had at a public meeting held here to-day:

At a Public Meeting held in the Court House, this 12th day of November, to take into consideration the means of relieving the sufferers by the fire of yesterday—His Excellency the Lieut. Governor in the Chair, Present, the Lord Bishop of Fredericton, His Honor the Master of the Rolls, the Venerable the Archdeacon, the Rev. J. M. Brooke, the Hon. Provincial Secretary, the Hon. Attorney General, Hon. C. Fisher, His Worship the Mayor, the High Sheriff, and a large number of the leading members of the community.

His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor addressed the meeting, expressing his sympathy with the sufferers in the late calamity, and his anxiety to co-operate with the meeting for their relief.

On motion of the Hon. Attorney General, the Rev. W. Q. Ketchum was unanimously requested to act as Secretary.

On motion of His Lordship the Bishop, seconded by the Hon. C. Fisher,

Whereas a large number of our fellow citizens were last night deprived of their houses and goods, it becomes the special duty of those who, by the blessing of Providence escaped such visitation, to assist those who may thus be left destitute and in urgent want at the approach of winter, it is

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to receive subscriptions to be appropriated—1st, to provide shelter for indigent persons deprived of their houses by fire; 2nd, to supplying such necessary food and fuel and other necessaries as may be urgently needed.

On motion of the Hon. the Master of the Rolls, seconded by the Hon. J. R. Partelow, a Committee of sixteen of the leading inhabitants of the City was appointed to receive subscriptions.

On motion of His Worship the Mayor, seconded by the Hon. T. Baillie,

Resolved, That subscriptions be paid to the Treasurer, or by permission of the Directors of the Central Bank of New Brunswick, to his account there, and a list opened for this purpose.

On motion of Dr. Robb, seconded by Rev. J. M. Brooke,

Resolved unanimously, That the cordial thanks of this community are due to the officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates of Her Majesty's 97th Regiment, and of the Royal Artillery, for their untiring and valuable exertions throughout the disastrous conflagration of yesterday.

On motion of the Lord Bishop, seconded by the Attorney General,

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of the meeting be given to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor for his conduct in the Chair, and for the zeal and sympathy which he has manifested in behalf of the sufferers by the late fire.

At the close of the meeting, a subscription list for the relief of the sufferers was opened. His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor headed the list with £30; four other gentlemen present contributed in the aggregate £59.

W. Q. KETCHUM, Secretary. Fredericton, November 12, 1850.

Before leaving this subject, we cannot forbear mentioning the highly praiseworthy conduct of the officers and men belonging to the Regiment in Garrison, the Royal Artillery, and the inhabitants generally, in endeavoring to save property. The ladies, too, lent their aid, and might be seen busily engaged in rescuing property from the flames, and also displayed great activity in conveying articles to places of safety. To the people residing on Brunswick street, and part of Regent street, the new Jail formed a safe depot for property, and the courtesy of Mr. Brannen and his family, in taking care of sick persons left in their charge, is worthy of the highest commendation.

His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor was early at the scene of devastation, and continued to aid in saving property until the fire was extinguished.

We understand that of the property consumed there is only insured about £12,000, between three and four of which falls upon the Central Office in this city, and the remainder in offices in the United States. We are also authorised to state, that any person wishing to re-build in this city, who at the time of this fire was insured in the Central Fire Insurance Office, will have their legal claims liquidated forthwith.

We hope to be able to give some further particulars on Thursday, until which day we are obliged to delay the publication of the Head Quarters.

The following is from the Head Quarters of Thursday:—

"We were incorrect in making the number of separate tenements destroyed 156, the real number is ascertained to be 122, occupied by 177 families, and the estimated loss is £30,830. The property covered by insurance is £19,000, and the number of families requiring immediate aid is eighty nine, and there can hardly be a doubt that the Government of the country will interfere to protect those who have no means of protecting themselves."

ENTERPRISE IN WESTMORLAND.—We copy below an extract from a letter we obtained from a correspondent in this county. It is pleasing to hear that a spirit of enterprise is awakened in any portion of the Province; and it is also gratifying to learn that the labors of those pioneers, who, by their perseverance and foresight, have opened up new branches of trade, have been crowned with a measure of success. We trust the example set by the Merchants and Fishermen in Westmorland, will be followed by those classes on the Gull Shore, who have ample materials in fish, lumber and agricultural produce, to carry on a successful trade with the United States and the West Indies. Our Correspondent says:—

"On Wednesday last, a Brigantine of 150 tons, named the Triumph, was launched from the shipyard of Charles Dixon, Esq., in Sackville. She is intended for the West India trade and is to be loaded immediately and despatched on her first voyage. Mariner Wood, Esq., who is part owner of this vessel, commenced the trade with the West Indies direct last autumn. He sent out, by way of experiment, a cargo made up of a little of almost everything produced in the Country; among other things Potatoes, Oats, Boards, Plank, Shingles, Scantling, Grindstones and some live stock. The cargo was disposed of chiefly at Port au Prince, where a return freight to New York was obtained. As another cargo was sent in the same direction immediately afterwards, it is probable that remunerative prices were realised. It is pleasing to see any new trade opening up in these times of depression and discouragement.

"Our fishermen, too, have been making a move in the right direction. Instead of putting up carelessly the beautiful Shad with which our Bay abounds, and disposing of them at their own doors, for such prices and mode of payment as they could, they have begun to wake up to the fact that, by taking a little more pains in putting up, better price and better pay can be had in New York and Boston, and have governed themselves accordingly. A large quantity has been shipped this season, principally to New York, where half barrels of No. 1 fish neatly put up for family use, have netted the fishermen Twenty Shillings each; and returns have been made in Money, or in Flour at New York prices."

UNITED STATES.—The Portland Transcript gives the following hard rap at the inconsistent conduct of our neighbors, who are constantly boasting of their liberty:—

"Is't it rather a queer spectacle to see men daily fleeing from the 'land of the free' to seek liberty and safety in the Colonies of the tyrannical British Kingdom?"

SCRAPS.—Byron is said to have remarked that the greatest trial to a woman's beauty is the ungraceful act of eating eggs. Some Yankee remarks that the poet could never have seen a lady hanging on by the teeth to a blazing hot corn cob!

A young lady asked a boy in a bookseller's and perfumer's store, if he had the "Exile of Siberia."

"No ma'am," was the answer, "we haint got no eggs ile; but we've got a prime article of hair ile, if that'll answer."