

The Politician.

From the N. Y. Courier and Enquirer.

BRITISH INDIA.

We are accustomed to look upon North America as first and foremost in the field of material progress. We take peculiar pride in the rapid extension of our railroads, our canals, our telegraphs. But gratifying as is our advance in all these things, we are in danger of being beaten. Did we stop long enough to look about us we should see that old antediluvian Asia is close upon our heels and going ahead at a rate that bids fair to leave young America quite in the rear. At least it is well worth while to take an observation.

In British India there are now four great trunk lines of Railway in process of construction, or projected, of which three exceed any work of the kind in our own country. First, there is the road between Calcutta, on the Bay of Bengal and Lahore in the Punjab, the uppermost part of the British dominions. This road when completed will be some thirteen hundred miles in length, more than two and a half times the length of the Erie. Again there is the road to intersect this from Bombay on the other side of the peninsula, some six hundred miles in length running across the peninsula, uniting Bombay and Madras. Again, the line running across the peninsula further South from the Malabar coast. The object of these roads is to connect the chief points of the four Presidencies. And this object is prosecuted with an energy that insures, at an early day the full completion of these gigantic undertakings. But even these roads vast as is their scale, fall short of that which has been commenced leading to India, uniting the Bosphorus with the Gulf of Persia. It is to run from Scutari, opposite Constantinople, to Basora, at the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab, a distance of 1750 miles, and branches are to be carried from it to the Mediterranean. There is no railway enterprise in the world that can compare with this, save our own Pacific Railroad. And between these two, there is this important difference: the one is progressing, the other has a local habitation and a name, the other a name barely.

As to canals our country has probably accomplished about all it will ever accomplish and yet its greatest work of this kind has been surpassed within the last eight years, on the banks of the Ganges. The Great Ganges Canal is nearly one third longer than the Erie, has more than two and a half times its breadth, and three feet deeper. Another canal has been constructed in the Punjab, 470 miles in length, and other canals of less extent have been made in other regions.

Lines of electric telegraph are being extended with similar energy. Three years and a half ago there was not a foot of telegraph in all India. A year ago there were four thousand miles in excellent working order. Directions have very recently been given for the construction of three thousand miles of additional lines. The electric telegraph has also been introduced into Java. A line of wires already runs between Batavia and Buitenzorg, and it is to be extended to Samarang and Sourabaya.

Are we not right then in saying that within the last seven or eight years a stride has been taken in Asia in the path of material progress which, to say the very least, fully comes up to American energy? It may be said that all this is the work of British capital and British enterprise. But that in no wise detracts from its importance. The Anglo-Indian empire is now a century and a half old, and yet it is only recently that the great material improvements of modern civilization have been seriously pushed forward. Moral improvements have indeed been advancing for the last half century. Thuggism, gang robbery, widow burning, infanticide, hook swinging, the immolation of life to Juggernaut, have all been suppressed. The administration of justice has been reduced to something like a system.—Great progress has been made in carrying into effect a general scheme of education, both English and vernacular. But previous to the Governorship of the Earl of Dalhousie, who took office in 1848, little or nothing had been done in the establishment of great public works for internal improvement. They were at last undertaken quite as much from military as from industrial considerations. The railroads especially were held in estimation for the facilities which they would offer in transporting troops and munitions to all parts of the vast empire without delay. But the irresistible effect of all these improvements must be to infuse a European spirit of enterprise into the native character, and to give a powerful stimulus to the development of the internal resources of Southern Asia. The Commerce of India, rich as it now is, must be vastly augmented by the opening of readier communication with the interior. The Indian Government spares no pains in opening new fields of industry. Cotton-growing has received a great impulse from the late acquisition of the rich cotton districts of Nagpore and Berar. The cultivation of tea has been largely introduced into the upper districts of the North-west provinces, and great quantities are now manufactured every year. The growth of flax has also been greatly extended; and an earnest effort is being made to establish the culture of silk. A beginning too, has been made in developing the mineral resources of the empire especially coal and iron. On all sides, in short there are signs of new life.

England is unquestionably governed by

mixed motives in all her movement in Asia.—Selfish, perhaps, more than generous, considerations impel her. But there can be no doubt that she is the instrument of Providence whereby most stupendous changes are to be wrought on that ancient continent. She already rules over a hundred and fifty millions of the Asiatic race, and every year both extends her dominions and consolidates her power.—The same tremendous energy in modern civilization is at work upon that continent that is at work upon this—the Anglo Saxon element; and the inevitable effect upon both spheres of action, must be developments of material strength such as have never yet been realized in the history of the world.

COLONIAL PRESS.

From the Fredericton Head Quarters.
OUR RAILWAY PROSPECTS.

A canvas has been made against the Government for their railway conduct,—in St. John because they did not appoint five commissioners, and because they constructed a few miles of the road in the winter season,—in York because they have done so little towards carrying out Mr Fisher's great scheme. The elections have terminated in St. John, it would be a waste of time to meet the objections there raised; but the canvass made against Messrs. Macpherson and Allen in York is so exceedingly unjust that we cannot let it pass unnoticed.

The local peculiarities of the Province have hitherto promoted a jealousy between the counties lying on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and those situated on the River St. John, which has been one of the principal causes why we are without a railway from our chief port to Quebec.

For the late Government to carry a measure for constructing a railway to Canada by the valley of the St. John was simply ridiculous. Mr Fisher was fully aware of this when he joined forces with Mr Johnson, and therefore his mission to England was merely to find means to buy out the contract from Jackson & Co., and complete the St. John and Shediac Railway. He could never have contemplated seriously the construction of the river line, because he knew the impossibility which existed. When the House first met in 1856, he broached a grand scheme, but when the railway bill was introduced, it was found to be entirely different. Instead of providing that a railway should be built from Fredericton to Woodstock, and providing the means to build it, the Bill left it optional with the Government to expend on the line a sum not exceeding £50,000 in five years, or to expend nothing; and it is to the vigilance of Messrs. Macpherson and Allen—not Mr Fisher—that we owe the alteration in the Bill which made the expenditure of the said sum compulsory instead of optional. Up to a very recent date, then, we had scarcely any grounds for believing that this Province and Canada would be connected by railway, if we except the St. Andrew's line, which, without any further aid from the Province, will probably be continued until it unites with the Quebec and River du Loup railway; but at the moment when our despair was greatest, a gleam of light appeared, and the railway from St. John to Quebec may yet become a fixed fact.

At the commencement of the war with Russia the British Government was obliged to withdraw troops and military stores from her Colonies. Canada was then left almost defenceless, if we except the strong arms and loyal hearts of her own hardy sons. The United States, ever on the alert to embarrass England, seized the moment as the one most favorable to their designs, and bullied, and blustered, and finally dismissed the British Minister. The British Government would fain have returned the troops and military supplies to Canada, but the United States refused them a passage through their territory, and to send them overland from St. John in the middle of winter amounted almost to an impossibility. We are informed that since General Eyre's arrival in Canada, he has paid particular attention to the subject, and has represented in the strongest terms to the Home Government the importance of maintaining the connexion with the Canadas at present existing, and the improbability of being able to do so many years without railway connexion between Quebec and the nearest and best port, through British territory.

It appears that the British Government (as well as the Canadian Government) view with favor General Eyre's representations, and have requested Canada, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia each to send a delegate to England the coming summer, to confer with the British Government and military authorities upon the feasibility of the scheme, and the means of carrying it into effect without delay. Mr Wilnot publicly announced this on the hustings in St. John, on the day on which the candidates were nominated, previous to the late election. He also stated that for some time past the Government had been in communication with the Canadian Government on the subject; and that they were negotiating with the St. Andrews and Quebec Railway Company to induce them to approach Fredericton as near as possible, so that a junction may be formed with their road from Fredericton to Woodstock.

We are now at liberty to state what we knew several weeks ago. At the very time when the Government were charged with apathetic feelings in regard to the river line, they were negotiating with the St. Andrew's Com-

pany, and with the Canadian Government.—When Messrs. Allen and Macpherson were censured by the Opposition for not withdrawing from a Government that slighted the river Counties, that very Government were exerting themselves to the utmost to ensure the construction of a railway from St. John to the River St. Lawrence, not solely upon the credit of the Province, but by and with the assistance of Canada, and material aid from the mother country, and that with every prospect of success! When the survey of the railway route from Fredericton to the Grand Falls, on the northern side of the river, was commenced, under a storm of ridicule from the Opposition, Messrs. Allen and Macpherson knew that it was in accordance with arrangements entered into with Canada, and with a view to obtain more substantial aid from Great Britain!

The reader must know that if a practical route can be discovered on the opposite side of the river, from Fredericton to the Grand Falls, a saving of about forty miles in the distance will be effected; while the road will be received with more favor by the military authorities and the British Government, as it is in contemplation to maintain a strong garrison at the Grand Falls, and the line will be secure from interruption by an invading foe. The construction of such a line would not prevent the construction of the contemplated road to Woodstock, for the more aid we receive from England the more means will we have wherewith to construct other railways; and if negotiations are successfully carried out with the St. Andrew's and Quebec Company, their line can be brought within some twenty-five miles of Fredericton, and one line would be sufficient thence to Woodstock. We have only to add that arrangements to carry these objects into effect had so far advanced that a delegation was determined on, and a member of the Government was making preparations to proceed to England on the mission, when the rupture took place that compelled the Government to appeal to the people by dissolving the House.

News of the Week.

NOVA SCOTIA.

The steamer George McKenzie has been sold by the new Glasgow Company to Messrs J. W. & J. R. Carmichael, and after undergoing necessary repairs, will ply between New Glasgow and Pictou.

BERMUDA AND THE WEST INDIES.—By the arrival of the screw propeller Delta, Capt. Hunter, at this port on Wednesday last, very late papers have been received from Bermuda and St. Thomas. The weather has been rather boisterous at Bermuda; high winds have done considerable damage to property, &c.; and the Dromedary, convict hulk, was recently struck by lightning, happily without injury to any person on board. The several West India Islands are reported healthy. Meetings have been held in most of these localities to hear explanations from Capt. Raasloff, C. E., formerly a Danish artillery officer of distinction, relative to the project of uniting the Windward and Leeward Islands by electric telegraph with the London and Newfoundland Company's submarine cable. The enterprise has so far met with great favor at the hands of the West Indians, and it is expected that the Legislatures of each of them will come down handsomely to effect the object in view. Governor Hincks proposed that Barbadoes should pledge itself for £2,500 on behalf of the Windward Islands; British Guiana, £3,000; and Antigua, on behalf of the Leeward Islands, £1,500 per annum. He does not expect much from the smaller islands. Trinidad appears to be very anxious to participate in the undertaking, and thus keep pace with her neighbours. Capt. Raasloff has also been successful in his appeal to the French, Danish, and Spanish islands. British Guiana is declared free from cholera, and clean bills of health are issued to vessels leaving Demerara. The expenses incurred by the recent visit of the epidemic, will exceed \$30,000. Several estates have lately been sold at very good prices, ranging from \$40,000 to \$22,000 each.

Peace has at length been concluded between the Haytian Empire and the Dominican Republic. Tranquillity will continue, it is thought, for at least two years. The new Governor of Quadeloupe had arrived at Basseterre, 4th inst. and assumed the reins of administration under highly favorable auspices.

Melancholy Disaster.—During the severe gale on Monday night last, a fine large fishing boat owned by Mr Matthew McDonald, of Ketch Harbour, in which were his two sons, and a young man named Frank Martin. In running in for the land, mistook, it is thought, the land, and struck on Duncan's Reef, when, melancholy to relate, all three perished. The bodies of these young Fishermen were recovered, by dragging for them, on Thursday last, and interred by their sorrowing friends on the following day. Young Martin leaves a widow and three children, the youngest of which was born on the morning of the sad disaster. Much sympathy has been manifested by the shore people and not a few of our fellow citizens towards the bereaved by this sad and most melancholy event.

The splendid iron screw troop ship, Lebanon disembarked a Company of Royal Artillery at the Cunard wharf yesterday forenoon, only fifteen days after receiving them on board at Woolwich. She has proceeded on to Quebec with two Companies of the same corps, for service in the Canadas. There was one birth on the passage.

Commander Shortland, of the Columbia, 6, steam surveying vessel, returned from England in the last R. M. S. from England, whether he had proceeded on leave some time since, and has again resumed the command of his ship. Columbia will continue to be employed in the survey of the coasts in this quarter.

UNITED STATES.

The Snow Storm.—Destruction of a Suspension Bridge. The Rochester (N. Y.) papers of Tuesday says, it commenced snowing in that city on Sunday noon, and continued until Tuesday noon. The snow was very deep, wet and heavy, occasioned a great destruction of fruit trees. The masses clinging to and accumulating upon the branches, have broken down hundreds of fine peach trees, plum, cherry and ornamental trees. In many instances where the body of the tree has been spared, large branches are broken off. The principal disaster caused by this extraordinary storm, was the destruction of the wire suspension bridge across the Genesee, about three miles from the centre of the town. It gave way under the mass of snow about three o'clock on Tuesday morning, about sixty feet of the centre falling into the river and the remainder attached to the cables hanging from the banks. The towers on the east bank were thrown into the river, while those on the west side were crushed into a heap. It is estimated that the pressure on the bridge was only about fifty tons, while it was calculated to sustain a weight of two thousand tons! It was said by experienced builders that the anchorages of the bridge were very insecure, and liable at any time to give way, and the event has justified the assertion.

The Snow in Western Massachusetts.—The Hartford Times learns from a passenger from Granville (just over the Mass. line) that the snow is two feet deep there, and the sleighing is good. He came in a part of the way on runners. The drifts between West Granville and Hartland are from five to six feet deep! The storm was considered as severe in that vicinity as the great January snow storm.

There was good sleighing on Thursday in several towns in Litchfield, Ct.

\$32,000 of the required \$50,000 has been already subscribed in 13 towns and cities of New York, for the establishment of an Asylum for the scientific treatment of imbeciles.

Utah letters state that Major Ben McCulloch the Texan Ranger, has been offered the Governorship, and that he will accept it. The administration intend to pursue a peaceful policy towards Utah, in order that the laws may be executed, and the rights of the inhabitants protected without recourse to arms.

The Steamer Arabia sailed from New York on Wednesday last, for Liverpool, with nearly 200 passengers, and upwards of \$1,000,000 in specie.

From California and Nicaragua.—Dates to the 6th April have been received from San Francisco. The news is not of much importance. The Pacific Mail Express Company, which represented the ends of the old insolvent companies had failed. Business was dull at Francisco.

The news from the Isthmus is most disastrous for Walker, who had suffered defeat, and had all his Atlantic resources cut off by the Costa Ricans. His men were deserting him in large numbers.

The British ship of war, Orion, had left San Juan for the purpose of blockading Cartagena.

MEXICO.

City advices are to April 4. A revolutionary movement, headed by the clergy, and some of Santa Anna's emissaries, has been discovered in the capital. Several arrests had been made, among them General Franconis and Aguilar, the latter formerly one of Santa Anna's cabinet ministers. The excitement about the threatened Spanish invasion continued. The British charge had sent his ultimatum to the Government, allowing nine days for an answer.

NEW BRUNSWICK.

Falling of a Bridge.—We regret to have to announce that the bridge across the stream at Wark's Mills, near Tobique, fell on Friday night last, at the moment at which the mail stage was crossing. The horses were precipitated into the gulf below. One of them, a valuable horse, was rendered perfectly useless; the other was injured, but may recover.—Strange to say the driver received but little injury.

On Dit.—It is said about town, to-day, that Mr Lawrence, the defeated Candidate for Saint John City, is to offer for King's County, on Monday.

Fire in Portland.—Three houses in Portland were burned down yesterday morning. Some of the inhabitants had only just moved in, and all their effects were destroyed. Some lives were in danger for some time, the inmates were however fortunately rescued. We have not learned how far the parties were insured.—Leader.

We learn that the scrutiny against Mr J. W. Cudlip has been abandoned. Therefore Messrs. Wright, Cudlip, Wilnot, and Gray, will be the members returned for the County. The City scrutineers progress very slowly.—Western Recorder.

W. O. Smith, Esq., has been appointed Mayor of the city of St. John.