THE WEEKLY BRITISH WHIG.

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Arrival of the Belgian Steamer Constitution.

LATER FROM CHINA

RUSSIAN PREPARATIONS IN THE CAUCASUS.

New York, April 3rd, 1857.

The Belgian steamer Constitution arrived here at 4 o'clock this P. M., bringing London dates to the 17th March. Our files are imperfect and commercial news very meagre.

The steamer Indian, from Portland, and the Asia arrived at Liverpool on the 16th

London Money Market dull.

Consols, Monday 16th, closing weak.

Corn Market heavy at a decline of 1s a 2s.

Liverpool, Saturday.

There is increased enquiry for Wheat at full prices.

Manchester market improved.

Paris money market improved.

Political news unimportant.

The Paris correspondent of the London Times says the King of Prussia has sent new questions to the conference to the effect that recognition of his rights of sovereign in Neufchatel, is the express condition of his renunciation of that sovereignty.

The Spanish expedition against Mexico assumes a more improving aspect.

A despatch from Copenhagen says the Sound Dues Treaty was signed March 14th.

The Overland China Mail confirms the telegraphic accounts of wholesale attempts at poisoning by bakers at Hong Kong.

A large number of junks were collecting for the purpose of attacking Hong Kong.

Some fears were entertained by the English on account of the marauders of the land forces, and an application was make to the Governor General of India.

The French steamers were anchored at the head of the bay of Hong Kong.—The American frigate Levant was also in the harbor. The San Juan had proceeded to Linton to look after some junks that had attempted to intercept the American steamer Lilly. Commissioner Yeh had addressed Commissioner Parks, asking why he had ordered American ships and subjects not to interfere in present difficulties. Mr. Parks' reply was not known.

Tea continued to advance at Shanghae, and the market was excited.

Liverpool March 16.

A Paris letter says the French Charge left Marseilles on the 12th for China, with instructions to the Admiral of the French fleets in the China Seas to operate with the English forces, conformably to an arrangement concluded between the two Governments.

Russian is making preparations for a decisive campaign in the Caucasus. She has 10,000 troops along the shores of the Caspian, and had besides the active co-operation of several native chiefs.

A FEARFUL ACCIDENT.

KINGSTON, April 2nd.

On Thursday afternoon, as the Wolfe Island Ferry Boat (to Cape Vincent) was leaving the ice on the Kingston side of the harbor, about a couple of hundred yards or so from the St. Lawrence Wharf, being pretty full of Passengers, (16 to 20) by some mismanagement, the boat filled and capsized, and the whole number, with their luggage, were thrown into the water. Of these unfortunates, all were rescued from a cold watery death, except five poor souls, who sunk never to rise again. The accident happening in full daylight, and within sight of dozens, the city was immediately on the qui vive to succor those who were saved, and they were taken to sundry hotels. In the course of a few hours four of the bodies were found, and taken to the Dead House, (a most horrible receptacle of all that is abominable) and Mr. Armitage proceeded forthwith to hold an Inquest, which was adjourned until next day. The following are the names of those drowned, viz. Wm. Sanders and John Buggy, sailors, and Wm. Dempsey, James McDonald, and James Mitchell, the four latter belonging to Wolfe Island, all of whom have been found except Mitchell. An American gentleman who was saved, by the timely exertion of three boys, generously gave them five pounds.

FRIDAY, April 3rd.

The Jury met at eleven o'clock this morning, and after a close investigation returned a verdict to the effect, that the deceased came to their deaths by drowning, caused by the over-crowding of the Kingston and Wolfe Island Ferry boat, the man in charge not having sufficient command over the passengers to prevent the catastrophe. The Jury very properly recommended the Coroner to lay before the Council the immediate necessity of erecting a Dead House, in place of the filthy receptacle now used for that purpose.

ANOTHER ACCOUNT.

From the Globe.

Fatal Accident at Kingston—Ice Boat Swamped.

Kingston, April 2.

This afternoon, between two and three o'clock, the ice boat employed in carrying mails and passengers from Kingston to Wolfe Island, left the shore, at the foot of Shaw's wharf, shoving the boat on the ice, until they approached the open channel, about a quarter of a mile from land, when the boat having considerable impetus, and the passengers hastily jumping into it as the boat passed over the edge of the ice, the bow dipped in the water and simultaneously swamped and all were submerged.—The conductor of the boat, J. S. Hunter, and a person named James Travor, saved themselves by swimming to the ice, and clambering upon it, and seven other persons were rescued by some young men from the shore, who saw the occurrence, and hastened to give assistance, at considerable personal risk. They succeeded in saving the mail and some baggage which was floating at various distances from the ice. One of the persons saved, an American, supported himself in the interim, by clinging to his trunk until taken up.

TESTIMONIALS WELL MERITED.

On Monday last, after the money matters of the Managing Committee for the late Provincial Show had been finally wound up, the Chairman, J. B. Marks, Esq. in the name and on the behalf of the Committee, presented H. Horsey, Esq., the Architect of the Crystal Palace, with a splendid Gold Watch and Appendages; and to Capt. Channonhouse, City High Bailiff, with a handsome Snuff Box, both with suitable Inscriptions, as tokens of the appreciation which the Kingston Public entertain of these gentlemen's valuable gratuitous services, before, during, and after the Show. These Testimonials of good will were received by the two gentlemen in a becoming spirit, speeches were made and replied to—and better still, the Managing Committee were invited forthwith to repair to L'Hoist's, where in bumpers of Champagne, Messrs. Horsey and Channonhouse showed that if the Committee could be generous, they could be grateful.

GRAND ORANGE LODGE.

We are requested to state that this body will meet at Kingston on Thursday the Thirtieth instant, instead of the 28th.

THE BOY MURDERER.—The sentence on McGarry for the murder of William Cull, and which was directed to be carried into effect on the 11th of April, has been commuted to imprisonment in the Provincial Penitentiary for life.

Washington, March 31.

BRITISH DESIGNS IN CHINA—THE PART ASSIGNED TO THE UNITED STATES, ETC.—We have learned some faithful important facts with reference to Lord Napier's application to have Mr. Walker or some other distinguished statesman sent to China, as United States Minister. The determination of the English and French governments is to compel China to throw open all her ports and rivers to the commerce of the world, and to secure protection to travellers through that kingdom—in a word, to compel her to come into the great family of civilized States. They do not desire or ask the military co-operation of the United States to effect this purpose but they suggest the name of Mr. Walker as the proper person to act as umpire between the Western Powers and China, so as more speedily to bring about a peace.

A Charge of Jobbery and Corruption in connection with the Sale of Town Plot of Greenock.

A city contemporary—the Globe—has preferred a charge of gross corruption against the Crown Lands department, in connection with the sale of the Town Plot of Greenock. Divested of extraneous circumstances, the charge simply amounts to this—that Dr. Hamilton and Mr. Ogle R. Gowan, who are Commissioners under Government to examine into the manner of selling lands by Government agents, found out that Greenock was intended as a Town Plot; that some eight hundred or a thousand acres were reserved by the Government for the purpose there; and that the whole, for town purposes, is now worth, according to the Globe's estimate, some £30,000 or £40,000. It appears, between the time the land was laid out for a town plot and the sale of it we shall presently mention, some squatters took possession of portions or perhaps of all of it—with what view the Globe does not say. Neither are we informed that they knew it was a Town Plot. However, in this state of matters, Mr. Webster, of Guelph, appears, by the Globe's statement, to have purchased the whole from the Government at 10s. an acre, Dr. Hamilton, the Government Commissioner, having previously bought out the squatters' interests for a mere trifle; and having, according to the same authority, used the powers of his office to coerce them into a sale on easy terms. The alleged job, therefore, consists in the Government abandoning the town plot arrangement and selling the land at 10s. an acre; and in Dr. Hamilton buying out the squatters in the manner stated. It is further charged by the Globe, that the Commissioner of Crown Lands at first refused to consent to the sale, and that Mr Cayley wrote him a letter, which induced him to do so; and that Dr. Hamilton is a political supporter of Mr Cayley in Huron.

These, apart from surmises as to the different parties interested in the purchases, are the evil features of the alleged job, and if the statements are true, there can be but one opinion of the transaction. It is in the last degree wrong and censurable. It is, however, but right to say, that when the papers were moved for yesterday in the House, with a view to a committee of enquiry, the Inspector General at once consented to the production of the entire documents,—maps, plans, names of purchasers, squatters, and all. From this we are bound to believe that the Government, if they do not court, certainly do not fear an enquiry; and that they are willing, if any parties are guilty, that they should be exposed and punished; or, if they are innocent, that the House and the public should be put in possession of such information as will lead to their honorable acquittal. We have stated the whole matter as it is, or rather as we find it in the Globe; and while reserving any opinion till the papers are produced, we cannot help saying, that there are some persons coupled with the transaction whose honor we have never before heard and impeached and whose reputations we hardly believe, will be sullied by any such discreditable transactions.—Colonist.

SENTENCES AT THE HAMILTON ASSIZES.

James Moore—Larceny—4 months Common Gaol, at hard labor.

Thomas Gorman—Larceny—3 months Common Gaol at hard labor.

Patrick Dooley—Larceny—2 years Provincial Penitentiary

Wm Coombs—Larceny—2 indictments—4 months Common Gaol, at hard labor.

Geo Reighteuburg—Larceny—2 charges—3 mon hs Common Gaol, at hard labor.

John McKay—Larceny—3 months Common Gaol.

John Bonshier—a lad of 11 years of age—Larceny—3 months Common Gaol. In this case His Lordship regretted that there was not a proper place to send such youthful offenders to.

Terrence Clancy—Larceny—2 years Provincial Penitentiary.

Cornelius Sarfield—Larceny—3 months in Common Gaol.

David Barnie—Larceny—3 months in Common Gaol.

James Cameron—Larceny—8 weeks in Common Gaol.

Martin Murphy—Larceny—3 years in Provincial Penitentiary.

John Lynch—Larceny—3 months Common Gaol.

ANDREW NESBIT—MANSLAUGHTER.

His Lordship addressed the prisoner at considerable length. The Jury had done right in convicting him on the evidence; but there was no doubt, that the accident occurred without the prisoner's intending any such result. Now that the majesty of the Law had been sustained, it did not follow that the sentence should be too severe. His Lordship inflicted a fine of £10.

John Crossan—Forgery—4 years Provincial Penitentiary.

John Wilson—Larceny—3 months in Common Gaol.

Alexander Scott—Larceny—3 years in Provincial Penitentiary.

Napoleon Riggs and Andrew Lewis—Two colored boys, aged 10 and 14 years—Burglary—6 months in Common Gaol.

Samuel Crawford—Burglary—3 months Common Gaol.

Mary Hogan—Obtaining goods under false pretence—2 months.

George Williams—Larceny—3 months Common Gaol.

Jeremiah Foley—This prisoner was in gaol for beating his wife, and promising to leave the city, was discharged.

Swinton Harrison—The same offence. The prisoner was discharged.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

March 31st.

The Independence of Parliament bill was read a third time. On the question that it do pass, Mr. Hunt moved an amendment to render Ministers of the Crown incapable of sitting in Parliament, which would assimilate the law to that of the United States.

After a few remarks, the motion was withdrawn.

Mr. Mackenzie moved a rider to dispense with the property qualification of members of the Assembly.

At the recommendation of Mr. Brown, the motion was withdrawn.

Mr. Masson moved an amendment to vacate the seats of members whose property qualification shall have been lost or parted with after the election.

The amendment was lost. Yeas, 21 Nays, 72.

Mr. E. Dorion moved an amendment to prevent the Solicitor General from sitting in Parliament, which was lost.

Mr. Mckenzie then moved a rider to prevent members of the Legislature from holding any office of emolument until the expiration of the session next after their resignation. He instanced the case of Mr. Baker, who stepped into an office which he had himself created; and spoke at length in favor of his amendment.

Mr. Dorion, of Montreal, supported the principle of the amendment, and referred to the case of Mr. Chabot, who sat in the House for nine months after he was promised a seat on the bench. He would not, however, wish to see the amendment pressed so as to endanger the bill.

The amendment was lost, and the bill passed, and ordered to be sent to the Council.

The bill to increase the capital stock of the Port Dalhousie & Thorold Railway was brought down from the Legislative Council.

On the question for the third reading of the bill for the better establishment of an Atlantic Postal line.

Mr. Holton suggested that the bill would authorize a grant of £30,000, in addition to the former grant of £24,000.

After some discussion the objection was waived, and the bill read a third time. On the question that the bill do pass, it was decided in the affirmative. Yeas, 86. Nays, 9.

The bill to amend the Assessment law, so far as relates to Statute Labour, was read a third time and passed.

Mr. Chisholm moved the third reading of the bill for protection of certain persons holding lands on the shore of Lake Ontario.

Mr Cameron moved an amendment to restrict the operation of the bill to three feet depth of water, within which no person should be allowed to dredge for stone. He called the attention of the Attorney-General to the fact of the bill interfering with a well understood principle of law, by which even the Crown could not grant a right to land lying below low-water mark.

Mr. Brown objected to the bill, and produced a numerously signed petition against it, from parties whose livelihood would be interfered with.

Other objections were made, and the bill was defeated.

The Inspector General moved the reception of report of Committee of the whole on his resolution to discontinue the Lunatic Asylum Tax.

Mr. Mckenzie talked for nearly an hour in ignorance of the principle of the bill.

Mr. Brown asked for information respecting the expenditure of the fund.

Mr. Cayley explained. The tax for the present year would be needed to pay debentures already issued for the Lunatic Asylum and the Normal School. The bill would remove the tax and not increase it. The balance of the building fund would be applied to assisting municipalities to erect and improve gaols.

Mr. Brown saw no reason why Lower Canada should have gaols built for her, while Upper Canada built her own gaols.

The Attorney General West pointed out that the resolutions were not open to the objections made to them, as the entire funds would go the benefit of Upper Canada.

Mr. Brown wanted some further guarantees inserted in the bill, that the building fund would not be expended without the control of Parliament.

Mr. Mackenzie moved an amendment that the Lunatic Asylum tax be at once discontinued, instead of being continued for another year.

Some further interesting discussion took place as to the relative taxation of Upper and Lower Canada.

The amendment was put and lost.—Yeas, 20 Nays, 72.

The resolutions were then read a second time.

Mr Mackenzie here attempted to move another amendment, but was greeted with a volley of noises, (produced by scraping the edge of the bookscale on the side of the desks—the invention, it is said, of Mr Sidney Smith). He imputed the interruption to the instigation of the Attorney-General West, and declared the more he was interrupted the longer he should speak.

A bill founded on the resolutions was introduced by the Inspector General, and read a first time.

The House went into Committee on Mr Cayley's resolutions for providing a proportion of the cost of maintaining lighthouses in the river and gulf of St. Lawrence.

Mr Cayley explained that he proposed to pay a portion of the cost of maintaining these lighthouses, with a view of relieving vessels coming to Canada from lighthouse dues. The expense would probably be £300 per annum for seven years.

The several resolutions were then carried, and the blank filled up with the sum of £750.

The House went into Committee on Mr McDonald's bill to amend the law respecting Appeals, whereupon Mr Mackenzie made another absurd speech about what he did not understand in the least.

Mr. Brown took objections to retired judges being placed in the Court of Appeal.

Mr Mackenzie made a third rambling speech. The several clauses were agreed to, and the Committee rose.

The House went into Committee on Mr McDonald's bill to regulate proceedings in Revenue Suits. After the usual obstructions from Mr. Mackenzie, the clauses were adopted and the Committee rose.

The House went into Committee on Mr McDonald's County Attorneys Bill.

Mr. Cameron suggested the bill being deferred until after the recess, which was agreed to, and the Committee rose.

On motion of Mr. Cayley, the House went into committee of supply, and after a resolution pro forma rose immediately.

The House went into Committee on the bill to amend the Common Law Procedure Act. Several clauses were agreed to.

Mr Cameron proposed to require conveyances to be registered within a limited time, and to limit the period for which judgments against real estate should be in force. The Attorney General approved of the suggestion.

Several clauses having been agreed to, the Committee rose.

April 1st.

Mr. Chisholm's bill to prevent the removal of stone from before certain lands on Lake Ontario was passed.

Mr. Cameron introduced an important bill, which is somewhat in the nature of a Bankrupt law. It empowers a creditor to summon a debtor before the County Judge and compel him to disclose the state of his affairs; and it further provides for notification to his other creditors, and to their making a settlement with him—two thirds being necessary to secure his discharge.

Other bills passed through a stage, and the general questions answered, before the evening session. Shortly after the evening session commenced, and after a short discussion on a proposal to bring forward Government measures, which was opposed by Messrs. Mckenzie and Brown, Mr. Cartier moved a second reading of the bill to enable witnesses to be examined on oath before the different Houses of Parliament, and their Committees. He pointed out the inconvenience that was now felt on account of the want of power to swear witnesses and he instanced several bills were property to a large amount might be affected by legislation, although the witnesses before committees could not be compelled to tell the truth under oath; nor could they be punished if they made false representations. The bill in question, he said, would remedy the evil; and it was like a bill which was introduced into the English Parliament for the same purpose.

Mr. Attorney-General Cartier thought Mr. Cameron's bill contained a dangerous precedent. He said, if witnesses were examined on oath, the reports of Committees would come up in nature of a judgement, and the House would be embarrassed in acting upon. He thought the freedom of action of the House would be interfered with by swearing witnesses. The evidence should be open to comments, and to be questioned by the House, which could not take place if witnesses were sworn. He concluded by saying, that we had better wait till England took action on the subject. It would be time enough for us to act then.

Mr. Hartman said that Mr. Cartier differed strangely from one of his Upper Canada colleagues in waiting for England for everything. He considered that taking evidence on oath by a committee, would not bind the House. All they wanted was to get reliable evidence, and this bill would enable them to get it.

Mr. Solicitor-General Smith thought the bill would be a dangerous innovation. He instanced the only two cases where witnesses were examined on oath before the House of Commons: they were prosecuted for perjury and convicted. The Commons of England had always regarded swearing witnesses as dangerous. He quoted from Hatsell in support of his position.

Mr. Cameron replied, and said that the Solicitor General should not have quoted Hatsell without explaining the facts upon which Hatsell's opinion was founded. He said that Hatsell's opinion was given where it was proposed that Parliament should usurp the powers of the Court which was not contemplated in this Bill. He said that no private Bill was passed in England, without the parties to it being sworn; and he only desired the same power in a more direct way here. He showed that witnesses were now examined on oath on election Committees; and that it was equally necessary they should be examined on others.

Mr. Brown said that there were many cases where it was desirable to examine witnesses on oath. He thought, however, the bill would bring Parliamentary witnesses into Courts of Justice for trial; and he was not prepared to place Parliamentary witnesses in this position. He thought the bill would have the effect of bringing Committees of the House before Courts of Law, which was undesirable; and he urged that Committees of the House were not in a position to examine witnesses; they were capable of understanding the necessary forms. He thought the bill would be attended with great danger and embarrassment.

Mr. Ferres thought the bill a necessary one in many cases, and would support it.

Mr. Attorney General Macdonald thought the arguments of Mr. Brown met the case fully. He said the bill would be establishing Courts in Parliamentary Committee Rooms, which would be a great evil.

Mr. Mackenzie said, if they could trust a Justice of the Peace to administer an oath, he did not see why Parliament should not be at liberty to administer an oath also. He would support the bill, and thought it highly necessary in railroad matters.

The House divided and the Bill was lost on a division.

Mr. Mackenzie then brought up his bill to exempt the tools, implements, and the homestead of the mechanics from seizure to a certain amount. He has made the same speech on it every year since he has been in the House. Those who have read it, will hardly want to read it again; and those who have not, will not lose much by not seeing it here.

Solicitor General Smith thought the bill unsafe, and ought not to be adopted.

Mr. Sydney Smith moved the second reading of the bill to amend the Statute relating to registration of mortgages.

The Solicitor General West would not oppose the second reading, though he opposed judgments binding goods and chattels the same as mortgages.

Mr. Smith said he saw no difficulty in registering judgments against goods and chattels as well as mortgages against them. He proposed that the bill might be more fully considered in committee.

Second reading carried without a division.

Toronto April 3rd.

Both Houses adjourned yesterday at an early hour for the Easter recess. Nothing of special interest was taken up; a number of unopposed measures were moved forward a stage.

MONTREAL, Wednesday, April 1st.

SEAT OF GOVERNMENT.

His Worship the Mayor informed the Council that he had received a letter from R. T. Pennefather, Esq., Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor General, on the subject of the addresses to Her Majesty the Queen adopted by the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, on the Seat of Government. As this was a subject affecting the most important interests of the city, he would suggest that it be laid on the table to be disposed of by the Council, at its next meeting, to be disposed of as they think proper.

The following letter was then read and laid on the table as suggested:

GOVERNOR'S SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
Toronto, C. W., March 28, 1857.

SIR,—You are probably aware that the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly of Canada, have addressed Her Most Gracious Majesty to exercise her Prerogative in the selection of a permanent Seat of Government for the whole Province.

In the event of Her Majesty complying with the prayer of these addresses, His Excellency is anxious that her advisers, in England, should be enabled to place before Her a fair and full statement of the claims of each seperate city, which may be considered a candidate for the honour of becoming the future capital of Canada. As a matter of course the final solution must depend on a comprehensive survey of the interests, not of any place, but of the whole Province as parted British North America.

The claims, however, of each city are likely to be stated by the persons most interested in supporting them, better than they would be by any other party.

His Excellency therefore, invites the Corporation of Montreal to cause to be prepared a paper, setting forth the reasons which may, in their opinion, favor the claim of that place to be selected by the Queen.

With every wish to afford full time for preparing these statements, His Excellency desires that it may be in the hands of the Colonial Secretary by the first week of July in the present year.

You will please, if you see fit to comply with His Excellency's desires, to address the packet to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies, London, and indorse it with the words "City of Montreal, Canada."

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
R. T. PENNEFATHER.

His Worship the Mayor of Montreal.

DOMESTIC ITEMS.

Mr. Brockmyre, who was sentenced to death at the last Assizes, has had the sentence commuted to imprisonment for life in the Provincial Penitentiary. He was taken to his future home on last Friday, and seemed in good spirits at his exceedingly good luck in escaping out of the hands of Jack Ketch.

A NARROW ESCAPE.—On Wednesday, April 1st, while an aged gentleman was examining a mill wheel in the vicinity of the Suspension Bridge, his foot slipped and he fell headlong into the Niagara river, which at this point has a very rapid current. For a distance of about 200 yards, the poor old fellow was whirled downward in the hissing waters, in view of numerous spectators who assembled on the Bridge to witness his struggle for life. After passing under the Bridge, he was carried by the eddy towards a rocky, which he succeeded in clinging to. There arose another difficulty, that of getting the unfortunate individual to the main land, which is some 200 feet higher at this point than the spot where he had found a resting-place. A rope ladder was let down, and descended by a courageous German, who offered to assist the deluged curiosity-seeker to ascend, but the old man, although 57 years of age, and completely chilled from the duration of his bath, refused assistance, and nobly mounted the swinging cords until he placed his foot on terra firma.

Mr J. B. Strathy, of London, charged with obtaining a cheque for the value of £17 from Murray Anderson, who was put on his trial at the London Assizes, last week, and acquitted. The jury were only absent from their box for two minutes, when they agreed on their verdict.

Dr. Tumblety has been committed for trial by the Police Magistrate, on a charge of taking money under false pretences.—The charge evidently rests on light grounds, and there is too much reason to think that the regular profession are engaged in hunting down one whom they in their wisdom consider a quack. There is not the slightest proof that Tumblety mistook the disease or gave improper medicine; no attempt was made to show anything of the kind. We know nothing of Tumblety's practice; we only know that he is a man who, although very illiterate, is believed by any persons to cure many kinds of disease, and we know no reason why he should not use his gifts in the healing art as well as the many noodles who write "M. D." after their names.

It seems to us, that His Excellency Sir Edmund Head has been led to commit a piece of verry unnecessary cruelty, in coming down to the Legislative Council Chamber yesterday, solely to assent to the bill to repeal the Act of last Session, under which a large number of insolvents have obtained, and many others were expected to obtain their discharge from their liabilities on surrendering their property for the benefit of their creditors. There are cases where nothing was wanting but the Judge's order, on the final hearing, to complete a long series of expensive proceedings; and in which the sudden repeal of the law will produce great and undeserved distress, and a serious loss of money as well as time.

Surely those unfortunate insolvents, whose petitions were filed long before the commencement of the Session, and whose final hearings stood fixed for the first or second week in April, should not have been grudged the advantage of these long Easter holidays, of which the Legislature is so ready to avail itself for purposes principally of procrastination and relaxation.

THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT—PUBLIC MEETING.—A large number of citizens "considering the great importance to this city of the fixing of the Seat of Government permanently at Quebec, and, in view of the address of the Provincial Parliament about to be presented to Her Majesty praying her to fix the Seat of Government," have requested the Mayor, "to call a public meeting of the citizens to consider the propriety of naming a delegate to represent in England the claims and interests of the city of Quebec." In compliance with this requisition the Mayor has called a meeting, to be held at the Music Hall, on Thursday afternoon, the 2nd April, at 3 o'clock.

UNITED STATES ITEMS.

Washington, March 30.

It is understood that Lord Napier, the new British Minister, has already had two interviews with General Cass, on the subject of China, and for the United States to take part in the struggle, which is considered the great contest of commerce and civilization in that quarter of the world. Lord Napier has also earnestly urged on the President and his Cabinet the selection of Mr Walker as a Plenipotentiary of the United States, and that he be dispatched forthwith; and has besought Mr. Walker, as a friend to peace, free trade and civilization, to consent to go.

New Orleans, March 30.

It is rumored that an expedition is fitting out here for some point in Central America—it is supposed to be the interior—to make the first demonstration on Veragua, a province of New Grenada, between Costa Rica and Panama. The expedition is said to be friendly to Gen. Walker, and that it is to act in concert with him. It is reported that the Provisional Government have been formed, and that there are considerable funds raised.

Two slaves—a yellow man and a black—owned by a Nashville hotel keeper, attempted to escape from bondage last week, by travelling together as master and servant. One was sufficiently white to carry out the deception, until recognized by a Nashville merchant, Mr. Charles Fox, who was on his way to New York. Lewis, the yellow man, finding he was detected, drew a pistol and shot himself in the abdomen and afterwards cut his throat, preferring death to a return to slavery.

The Buffalo Courier says:—"The Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway Company is pushing with energy the completion of the Road and the improvement of its passenger and freight capacity. We learn that the Board of Directors at a late meeting in London, England, appropriated $1,300,000 for the construction of a steam ferry to run between Fort Erie and Black Rock which shall be able to transfer six cars at a time from one side of the river to the other; for the construction of ships and docks on both sides to accommodate the steamer; for the construction of a track from Black Rock into the city, and to improve the harbor at Goderich, the terminus of the Road on Lake Huron. The contract for building the steamer has been made with one of our ship-building firms.

ARRIVAL OF THE ASIA.

New York, April 4, 1857.

The Cunard steamer Asia arrived about 8 A. M., having left Liverpool on the afternoon of March 21st.

The Fulton touched at Cowes on the 20th.

The Circassian sailed again from Newfoundland on the 19th.

Mr. Bigland & Co. report as follows:

Liverpool March 20.

Breadstuffs.—Our market has shown continued depression throughout the week. On Monday the market was pretty well attended by buyers from a distance, and as holders of wheat were disposed to accept and fair bids, a larger business was done than of late, generally at a decline of 2d per bushel. Western Canal Flour had more attention at 28s to 28 6d, but Ohio was only saleable at retail at 30s. Indian Corn rather pressingly offered, and fair business done at 32s to 32 3d. At to-day's market there was some inquiry for very prime wheat, which maintained Friday's prices. Altogether, shorts were 2d lower, and very difficult to move, making a decline of 4d on Wheat. Flour was dull, and 6d per barrel cheaper. Indian Corn was pressingly offered; sales was made of mixed at 31s 3d to 31s 6d, making a decline of 1s 7d per quarter for the week.

Richardson, Spence & Co., report as follows per Asia:—

Breadstuffs Market very slow in transactions. Provisions without change.

London, March 21st.

It was announced in Parliament last evening that it was the Queen's intention to immediately dissolve Parliament, in order to ascertain, in the most Constitutional manner, the sense of the people to the present state of affairs.

Provisions only moderate. Sales of beef and pork are made, the want of stock curtailing business; bacon meets a fair consumptive demand at full prices. Lard quiet and sells at 72s for prime.

Money in London in good demand, but rather easier towards calls. Consols 93 3-8 a 93 1-2.

American securities quiet and without material change.

The Sardinian Chambers of Deputies have voted 50,000,000 francs to put the fortifications at Alexandria in an immediate state of defence, in view of approaching hostilities with Austria. Full instructions were sent from Cadiz on the 12th of March, to the Governor General of Havana respecting the difficulties with Mexico.

The Irish Liberals have adopted their Electioneering programme, of which the following are the leading points:—

1st. Tenant right as recently modified.
2nd. Disendowment of all religious sects, and the abolition of the Irish Church as a state establishment.
3rd. Religious equality, involving the Repeal of Ecclesiastical titles.
4th. Involving County Franchise.
5th. Abolition of Property qualification.

FRANCE.

A modification of the French Cabinet is again discussed: the believed object is to incorporate the Cabinet with the Department of State and the Imperial Household.

SPAIN

Ramond Concha will be re-called from Cuba—doubtful.

CHINA.

Private letters to Paris say four persons had been convicted of any attempt to poison the British Charge and family at Hong Kong.

It is said a great portion of Canton, both within and without the walls, has been destroyed.

The Paris correspondent of the Daily News asserts positively that negotiations are progressing between France and England to send a French army of 200,000 to China.

LATEST.

Parliament was formally dissolved by a speech from the Throne, the Lord Chancellor acting as Proxy to the Queen.

The Asia passed off Tasoan Light on the 22nd, ult, the Steamship City of Washington, on the same day off Kinsale, the Niagara.

The Asia brings nearly 2 millions francs.

New York, March 4.

Flour market is lower with less doing. Sales 3,600 barrels at $5.60 a 5.70 for superfine state; $5 60 a 5,70 for extra do; $5.60 a 5,80 for superfine western; $5,50 a 6.30 for extra do.

Canal so lower. Sales 450 barrels at 5 40 a 6,10; superfine 6 25 a 6.50 extra. Wheat firm with limited supply. Sales of red Southern at 1,40 for common; 1,55 a 60 for white.

Rye steady at 86 a 88. Corn one cent lower, with limited sales of old mixed wes.

Pork 69c in store. Oats steady.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Toronto, 28th March, 1857.

USURY LAWS.

In the Council last night, Mr. Moore brought up his Bill for the repeal of the Usury Laws. The same gentleman has made the same motion every year for three years past, and though on each of these occasions he succeeded in inducing a majority of his colleagues in the Council to think with him, his measure was thrown out by the Assembly. The object of his Bill is virtually to declare that there shall be no standard rate of interest. The Bill passed in 1853 removed the barrier which prevented persons from lending money at more than legal interest on pain of forfeiture of principal and interest alike, but it maintained a legal standard to be recognized in courts of law. Mr. Moore desired to do away with this legal standard, and declare that the money-lender might go into the court of justice and demand the payment of any amount of interest that might be agreed upon. He was supported in this view by the Mr. DeBlaquiere and the Mr. Ferguson. The Mr. Patton opposed the bill, and moved to give it a six-months' hoist, and in this motion he received the support of the Messrs. Vankoughnet, Perry, Boulton and Laterriere. The principal ground upon which the supporters of the Bill claim that it should pass, was that the law as it stood was very frequently violated, and that money should be dealt with like any other commodity, and allowed to find its own value in the market according to the supply and demand, and that if this were done, it would tend very much to bring capital into the country. Mr Vankoughnet answered these points in this manner: The mere violation of law was no good reason why it should be repealed, else all the laws against crime should at once be swept from the statute book. He argued strongly against the danger of making so serious an experiment upon the mere presumption, a presumption founded neither upon experience nor strict reason, that capital would be brought into the country in consequence. There appears to be a distinction, hold the advocates of the Usury Laws, between money and any other article, which gentlemen, who contend that they should be similarly dealt with, entirely overlook. Money has a fixed value—a fictitious one of you will—but nevertheless fixed. A dollar will pass current for five shillings at all times and under all circumstances. True it may, owing to the great scarcity of dollars at any particular time, be worth more than that, and the professional money-lender, watching the fluctuations in the money market, may, at such times, demand more for it. Yet even then it is but a dollar, and the man who borrows it, and pays twenty-five per cent interest for it, can pass it current only for that amount. This is not so with flour or produce or any other article. They have no fixed value; and hence the distinction which has been maintained by the Upper House. It is for this reason, argue advocates of the Usury Laws, that any attempt entirely to destroy all semblance of a legal standard of interest becomes dangerous, and ought to be resisted. If the interest at present allowed by law is not sufficient, let it be increased; and that this will be done during the present session, there is very little doubt. The motion to give the Bill a six-months' hoist was carried by a vote of 12 to 10.

RAILWAY ACCIDENT PREVENTION BILL.

Mr. Vankoughnet carried his Railway accident prevention bill through the Upper House this evening with some amendments. The measure is likely to prove a useful one. It is founded in great measure upon the English law. The principal amendments made were to give the Inspectors in case of need power to use the telegraph line belonging to any Railway, and striking out the provision which would have required bridges to be made after plans furnished by the Railway Board. The Mr. DeBlaquiere and others endeavored to get a clause inserted, forbidding trains to be run through cities, towns or villages, at a faster rate than three miles per hour or across any carriage road elsewhere. The Mr. Ross pointed out how impossible it would be to carry out the latter part of such a clause, and maintained an average rate of speed which would enable our railways to complete with those of the United States. The rate within towns was finally fixed at a maximum of ten miles per hour, which is much too fast. It might almost as well have been twenty or thirty.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 2nd April, 1857.

The Speaker took the chair at three o'clock.

Mr. Powell presented the petition of the Municipal Councillors of Carleton, setting forth the advantages that would accrue from the construction of a Canal connecting the waters of the St. Lawrence.

Mr Rhodes presented the petition of Joseph Bouchette, Esq., praying for aid in publishing a new edition of his Map of Canada.

Mr Bowes presented a petition from the Mayor and Corporation of Toronto against the Bill to amend the charter of the Metropolitan Gas and Water Company.

Mr. Cameron presented the petition of the Board of Trade of the City of Toronto, praying for an enquiry into the tenure by which the Hudson's Bay Company hold their lands. Also, the petition of Rev. Messrs. Fuller, Brough, and Strong, on the subject of arrears of stipend.

Crown Lands.

Mr. Cauchon laid before the House the annual report of the Crown Lands Department.

Toronto University.

Mr. Terrill presented the annual report of the Senate of the University of Toronto.

Contingencies.

Dr. T. Fortier moved that the 4th report of the Contingencies Committee, recommending the continuance this session of the bonus of 15 per cent, on the salaries of employes of the house, be adopted.

Motion Carried.

South Quebec Dock Company.

Mr. Lemieux introduced a Bill entituled "An Act to incorporate certain persons under the name of the South Quebec Warehouse, Dock and Wharfage Company."

Third Reasings.

On motion of Mr. Whitney,

The Bill further to amend the Act to encourage buildings, and the Bill to amend the Act authorizing the formation of Joint Stock Companies, were severally read a third time, and passed.

St. Lawrence Light Houses.

On Motion of Mr. Cayley,

The House concurred in certain resolutions reported from the Committee of the Whole, providing for the payment by the Province of its share of the expence of erecting and maintaining light houses in the River and Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Mr. Cayley introduced a Bill founded on the said resolutions.

Courts of Appeal.

On motion of Attorney General Macdonald,

The House received the Report of the Committee of the Whole on the Bill to amend the laws respecting Appeals, and after the constitution of the Court of Error and Appeal, and concurred in the amendments of the Committee.

Railway Accidents.

On motion of Mr. Cayley,

A Bill sent down from the Legislative Council, for the better prevention of accidents on railroads, was read a first time.

Board of Works.

Mr Lemieux rose and before the House the Annual Report of the Board of Works, and moved that 5,000 copies of the same be printed for the use of members.—Carried.

Huntingdon Registry Office.

On motion of Mr Somerville,

The House received the Report of the Committee of the Whole on the Bill to provide for the transfer of certain books and documents from the Registry Office of Chateauguay to that of Huntingdon, and concurred in the amendments reported by the Committee.

Second Readings.

The following Bills were read a second time and referred to Committees:—

On motion of Mr. Cayley.

The Bill to enable the Municipal Council of Stanley to construct a Harbour at the entrance of the river Bayfield into Lake Huron.

On motion of Mr. Brown, in absence of Mr. Mackenzie,

The Bill to enable the surviving Executor of the late John McIntosh, Esq., to lease certain real property in Toronto.

On motion of Mr. Somerville,

The Bill to authorize the running of a boundary line between the Seigniory of Beauharnois, the Township of Godmanchester, and the Parish of St. Anicet.

On motion of Mr. Cameron,

The Bill to amend the Charter of the Bank of Toronto.

On motion of Mr. A. Morrison,

The Bill to authorize the Courts of Chancery, Queen's Bench, and Common Pleas, to admit John Syme to practice as a Solicitor and Attorney therein.

On motion of Mr. Gamble,

The Bill to incorporate the Toronto Pressed Brick Company.

On motion of Mr. Ferres, the Bill to incorporate a Company to construct a macadamized road from St Athanase to South Stukely Mills.

On motion of Mr. Sidney Smith, in absence of Mr. Conger, the Bill to attach the townships of Galway, Cavendish and Anstruther to the county of Peterborough.

On motion of Mr. Holton, the Bill to define the powers and confirm certain proceedings of the Champlain and St. Lawrence and Montreal and New York Railroad Companies.

THE ADJOURNMENT.

On motion of Mr. Bowes,

The House adjourned at 4 o'clock, the adjournment being to the 15th instant.

Mr. Roblin has three measures of his own before the House of Assembly.—1st. A Bill to amend the Usury Laws Act, granting seven per cent. instead of six on Bank Notes