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Legislative Proceedings.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

CONDENSED REPORT.

TUESDAY, March 30, 1851.

HOUSE IN COMMITTEE ON CERTAIN DESPATCHES FROM THE RIGHT HON. EARL GREY—Mr. M'AULAY in the Chair.

One of these Despatches was on the subject of certain Fees, alleged to have been illegally taken by Mr. Haviland as Private Secretary.

After this Despatch had been read, the Hon. Mr. COLES observed; with reference to it, that Earl Grey appeared to think, that as Mr Haviland had acted as Private Secretary, and had, in that capacity, a right, in his (Earl Grey's) opinion, to the Fees on Marriage Licenses; and as the law, with respect to the Fees on Marriage Bonds, was, perhaps, so clear and explicit as it might have been; it was not altogether unjustifiable in him (Mr. Haviland) to take the Fees thereon, as he had done on Marriage Licences, in the capacity of Private Secretary, particularly as the parties from whom such Fees had been demanded by him, had in no instance, refused to pay them; and that His Lordship thought, the question whether Mr. Haviland had any right to take such Fees, was one between himself and the parties who had to pay such Fees, and between him and the Public Treasury, and that such Fees could not, under any circumstances, have been claimed for the Public Treasurer. But with respect to the Fees on Marriage Bonds, and Ferry Licences, His Lordship thinks, that the question, whether Mr. Haviland had any right to take them, and in which right he took them, was subject to more doubt than that regarding Marriage Licences; and whether the Assembly would allow the subject to drop, and to rest satisfied with having put an end for the future, to what they regard as an abuse. It is now, continued the honorable member, for the House to decide, whether any further steps shall be taken in the business, or not. We have so far done our duty in prosecuting the enquiry; but I agree with what seems to be the opinion of Earl Grey, that as the Government of the day and the Assembly did not interfere to check or remedy the abuse of which we have complained, we ought not now to exercise all the rigor which we may have it in our power to employ with respect to it. As to the Fees on Marriage Bonds, about which the Government actually recover them, they would have to be paid back to the individuals from whom they were at first, taken; I am, therefore, of opinion, that we had better allow that part of the business to rest as it is, between Mr. Haviland and the persons who paid those Fees. But, with respect to the Fees on Tavern, Pedlars, and Ferry Licences, I am clearly of opinion, that they should have been paid into the Treasury, and that Mr Haviland should be called upon to pay over to the Treasurer the amount of Fees, received by him for granting such Licences while acting as Colonial Secretary. The balance due from him, on that account is, £127 4 9, and I cannot think, he will object to pay it, if required to do so. But if the House or opinion, that the sum is not worth asking for, let them say so, and we can well bear the loss of the business. The subject has been often before the House, that there can be no necessity to go further into it now. It is quite plain, that the Salary allowed by law to the Colonial Secretary, when Mr. Haviland held that appointment, was, as now, to be to him (the Colonial Secretary) in lieu of all Fees taken in his Office, which were, therefore, to be paid into the public Treasury; and that consequently, whatever amount of such Fees has been retained by him, should be paid into the Treasury. Throughout the whole of the enquiry, I did no more than, I believe, it to be my duty to do; and now, I ask for no other decision than what may be fair and reasonable. Earl Grey recommends us to allow the subject to drop; and whether the Opinion may determine to proceed further in the business or not I shall acquiesce in their decision, satisfied with having done what I thought, was my duty.

Mr. FRASER said, the subject had been a very disagreeable one, first and last. It had, however, been taken up from motives of public duty; and it was certainly, that it should be finally disposed of in some way or other. He had had, it was true, a good deal to do with the business in the beginning; but he had not been so devoted to it, as it had been alleged he had; and he was very much disposed to have any thing more to do with it. It would be well, he thought, for those who had so much to say on the subject formerly, as well as those who had assisted in drawing the Report, to give their present views of the business.

Hon. Mr. POPE said, he was one of the unfortunate individuals who signed the Report. For the share he had had in it, his views had been grossly misrepresented. He had been subjected to a great deal of abuse; but, had he chosen to retaliate, those who had resulted him on that account, would, he believed, have had little to congratulate themselves upon in the matter. Earl Grey has written, it is his opinion, that it will now be best to allow the subject to drop; but my opinion is, that if we believe, there is any thing justly due to the Government from Mr. Haviland, it is our duty to take measures to compel him to refund it.

The Hon. the SPEAKER was of opinion, that the Assembly having for seven years failed to point out and represent the misconduct made by Mr. Haviland in the filling up of the Blue Books, the present House had had no right to tax him on that account. He also argued, that the Fee Act of 1843, which was not repealed, recognized the Fees of the Private Secretary; and maintained, that it was quite clear, that if Mr. Haviland prepared certain document to be laid before the Governor for his signature, he (Mr. Haviland) was entitled to his Fees for having done so.

Mr. WARBURTON, said, that, because Mr. Haviland had paid into the Treasury, certain Fees which he had for merly retained, it was a proof that he was not entitled to them, and that he ought, therefore, to pay in the balance required by the Hon. the Speaker), thought he ought not to have so paid in such Fees, his having done so would not alter his (the hon. the Speaker's) opinion concerning them; and neither, he said, ought it to alter the opinion with respect to them of any one around the Table. Earl Grey, he remarked, did not appear to think, that any Fees had been illegally taken by Mr. Haviland, and he (Earl Grey) recommended the Assembly to allow the subject to drop. He (the hon. the Speaker) was inclined to think, that the wisest course would lay, to act in pursuance of His Lordship's recommendation.

Hon. Mr. COLES He wished for nothing unreasonable. Mr. Haviland knew the law as well as any one; he (Mr. Haviland) retained the Fees on Marriage Licences, but paid those on Tavern Licences into the Treasury, after the subject had been taken up by the Assembly. It was quite clear, that by the law, the Fees paid on all Licences granted in the office of the Colonial Secretary, were to be paid into the Treasury.

Hon. Mr. WARBURTON. The law is not much changed; and I might now, with propriety, take fees for many things which I do, if Mr. Haviland was justified in doing so; but I do not, I think, that where it is quite clear, that fees retained by Mr. Haviland should have been paid into the Public Treasury, he should now be called upon to pay their amount over to the Treasurer; I will therefore move a Resolution to that effect.

The following is the Resolution which was then submitted by the Hon. Mr. Warburton:

"Whereas the House of Assembly in its last Session, addressed His Excellency, the Lieut. Governor, on the subject of certain Fees retained by the late Colonial Secretary, in his alleged capacity of Private Secretary: And whereas His Excellency forwarded the Assembly's Address to the Right Honorable Secretary of State for the Colonies, accompanied by a Report of a Special Committee of the House of Assembly on the same subject, together with Mr. Haviland's answer thereto, in order to obtain His Lordship's opinion on the same: And whereas His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor has laid before the House of Assembly, during the present Session, a Despatch addressed to His Excellency by the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Colonies, wherein His Lordship has given expression to the following opinions: "That the question relating to retention of Fees by the late Colonial Secretary, is one which would have been more properly submitted for the Courts of Law; but that inasmuch as Mr. Haviland acted in the capacity of Private Secretary, the Fees retained by him for Marriage Licences, according to the best opinion he was able to form on the materials before him, were rightly retained; that as regards the Fees on Marriage Bonds, it is, in His Lordship's opinion, a question to be settled between Mr. Haviland and the parties who paid those Fees, who might contest the claim of the former to those Fees, if it were an improper one; and that as respects the Fees on Tavern, Pedlar, and Ferry Licences, His Lordship considers Mr. Haviland's claim to those and such some doubtful than his claim to the Fees on Marriage Licences, but recommends the Assembly to allow the subject to drop, and to rest satisfied with having put an end, for the future, to what they regard as an abuse: *And whereas* the House of Assembly deems it inexpedient, at this period, to take any steps with the view of enforcing the refunding of Fees exacted upon Marriage Bonds and Licences, the right of the late Colonial Secretary to which, is regarded as open to doubt and uncertainty; but that inasmuch as the abolition of an abuse is no justification of an alleged exaction of Fees for Tavern, Pedlar, and Ferry Licences, the absence of any right to which, on the part of Mr. Haviland, is in the opinion of the House of Assembly, unquestionable; *Resolved therefore*, That the House be recommended to address the Government of this Colony, requesting them to take the necessary proceedings against the former Mr. Haviland, the sum of One hundred and Twenty-seven Pounds, Four Shillings, and Five pence, being the amount of Fees illegally retained by him for granting Tavern, Pedlar, and Ferry Licences."

Mr. LAIRD seconded the Resolution, and in doing so, observed, that Mr. Haviland, by paying into the Treasury the Fees on Tavern, Pedlar, and Ferry Licences, after his attention had been called to the subject, by the proceedings of the Assembly with reference to them, had acknowledged, that he had taken, what he was not entitled to; and no one, therefore, could question the propriety of his being called upon to pay over the amount of them he might have retained, into the Public Treasury.

Hon Mr. COLES. The Act I had in more explicit than I thought it was. According to the construction put upon it by the Treasurer, but keeper shall be left with the Colonial Secretary, that he may grant a Licence. The words of the Act are, "And such Bond, with the Certificate hereinbefore mentioned, shall be left with the Colonial Secretary at the time of delivering the Licence." It clearly points out, that the duty is to be performed by the Colonial Secretary; and therefore, it is evident, that the Fee should be paid into the Public Treasury. There can be no doubt concerning it if there were room for doubt, it would be right that Mr. Haviland should have the benefit of it. I myself have no doubt, as to the illegality of his retention, as Private Secretary, of the other Fees which have been claimed by the House for the Public Treasury; for neither Governor Huntley nor Governor Campbell had a Private Secretary. Still Mr. Haviland may have thought, that he was entitled to those Fees, because the previous Colonial Secretary, Mr. Collins, received them as Private Secretary. But it must be remembered, that the law was changed in Mr. Haviland's time, and although he may have thought himself entitled to those Fees, the law, I think, would determine otherwise. The honorable member then proposed amending the Resolution by the omission of the word "illegally," observing, that the expression was too strong, and that he was very far from wishing, that any undue censure should be conveyed by the language of the Resolution.

Mr. LAIRD objected to the proposed amendment, that if the Fees were not illegally taken, the House could have no claim to them.

On motion by the Hon. Mr. COLES, the Resolution was then amended by adding at the end, "while acting as Colonial Secretary."

The House having been resumed, the foregoing Resolution was reported: and, when the Hon. the SPEAKER was about to put the question thereon,—

Mr. PALMER rose and said: In one part of the Resolution there is a censure of Mr. Haviland's conduct, and Earl Grey's words in the Resolution it is said, "that as respects the Fees on Tavern, Pedlar, and Ferry Licences, His Lordship considers Mr. Haviland's claim than much more doubtful than his claim to the Fees on Marriage Licences" but Hon Lordship says "*maybe subject to more doubt*;" and I move, that the exact words be inserted.

The motion met with no opposition, and the Resolution was amended accordingly.

Mr. PALMER then moved a further amendment to the said Resolution, by leaving out all after the words "*abuse*" at the end of the third paragraph, and substituting the following:

"*Resolved therefore*, That it is inexpedient for this House to take any further proceedings respecting the right to the Fees in question, unless it may be found necessary to obtain a judicial decision thereupon in the Supreme Court of Judicature in this Island."

The House divided on the motion of amendment:

Yeas: Messrs. Palmer M'Auley, Bernard, and Haviland.

Nays: Messrs. Warburton, Whelan, Jardine, Coles, Pope, and Warburton, Messrs. Fraser, Clark, Mooney, Beatson, M'Neill, and Laird.

So it passed in the negative.

The question being then put, that the said Resolution, as amended, be agreed to, the House again divided:

Yeas: Messrs. Palmer, Laird, and Fraser.

So it was carried in the affirmative, and Resolved accordingly.

The Hon Colonial Secretary, Mr. Fraser, and Mr. Laird were then appointed a Committee to prepare and report the draft of an Address to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, pursuant to the said Resolution.

"The Hon. COLONIAL SECRETARY, from the Committee appointed to prepare and report the draft of an Address to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, pursuant to the Resolution adopted by the House yesterday, on the subject of certain Despatches, presented to the House on the seventh February last, presented to the House the draft of an Address, as prepared by the Committee, which was agreed to by the House, and is as follows:

To His Excellency, Sir Alexander Bannerman, Knight, Lieutenant Governor, &c., &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY;

The House of Assembly having had under their consideration, a Despatch from the Right Honorable Earl Grey, Her Majesty's late Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated, Downing Street, 21st November, 1851, relative to certain Fees taken and retained by Mr. Haviland, the late Colonial Secretary, as Private Secretary's Fees—have, on mature deliberation, come to the conclusion, that the said Fees were illegally retained, and have, in consequence, felt it their duty to adopt a Resolution—a copy of which is hereunto annexed—desiring that the necessary proceedings be taken by your Excellency's Government, to recover from Mr. Haviland the sum of £127 4s. 9d., being the amount of a certain description of Fees mentioned in the said Resolution.

The House of Assembly, therefore, respectfully request, that Your Excellency will take the necessary steps to be given in compliance with the within mentioned Resolution.

Ordered, That the same Committee who prepared the Address, be a Committee to wait on His Excellency with the same.

ORANGE LODGE,

FRIDAY, April 2.

The Hon. the SPEAKER having asked whether any new business was to be brought before the House this Session,

Hon. Mr. COLES rose and said, he believed there were no new Bills to be introduced; but he had been applied to, to bring in a Bill to prevent the formation of *Secret Societies* in the Colony, on the ground that one such Society, under the name of an *Orange Lodge*, either was already organized in Charlottetown, or was about to be, and, in his and well-founded apprehension, that such a Society were permitted to organize itself, its operation would very materially affect the confidence which individual members of our community had hitherto reposed in each other; if it did not occasion a positive and very serious interruption to the social and friendly relations existing between them, and which every true friend to the general welfare of the Colony, would sincerely desire to see perpetuated. It was well known what serious evils had proceeded from the toleration of such societies in other countries; where, at first, operation had, in frequently, been at the very risk of all social order, peace, and confidence; where their proceedings had not only provoked feelings of determined hostility, but had occasioned collisions and outrages, which had frequently terminated in bloodshed and murder. The community of Prince Edward Island, however bad, hitherto, happily known nothing of the evils produced by the conflict which appear to be the natural consequence of the suspicions and hatred engendered and fostered in all communities in which the organization and operations of such societies are tolerated; and he hoped, such evils would never be known by actual experience among us. We now live happily together, under a representative constitution and form of government, the operations of which, make no offensive or unjust distinctions with respect to country, creed, or sect; but, in and under which, the interests of all are duly represented and cared for; and, concluded the honorable member, then, I, I trust, not much good sense and feeling amongst us, to allow this most desirable state of social harmony and confidence to be interrupted or disturbed, by the formation of such a Society as that to which I have particularly alluded; but, should it unfortunately be otherwise, and an *Orange Lodge* be proved to be actually in existence amongst us, I pledge myself as a member of the Government, to be prepared, against the opening of next Legislative Session, to bring in a Bill for the effectual suppression of all such Secret Societies, as may be in existence in the Colony, and for the prevention of their organization for the future.

From late English Papers.

(*From the London Times, April 7.*)

PARTICULARS OF THE WRECK OF THE BRITISH STEAMSHIP BIRKENHEAD.—LOSS OF 454 LIVES!

Another terrible disaster has happened at sea. At 2 o'clock, in the morning of the 26th February, Her Majesty's steamer, the Birkenhead, was wrecked between two and three miles from the shore of Southern Africa. The exact spot at which the disaster happened, was Point Danger. Off this point she struck upon a reef of sunken rocks. The ship was steaming eight and a half knots at the time. The weather was perfectly calm and the sea, for the speed at which the vessel was passing through the water proved her destruction. The rock penetrated through her bottom just aft the foremast, and in twenty minutes' time, there were a few floating spars and a few miserable creatures clinging to them, and this was all that remained of the Birkenhead—*Of 638 person who had left Simon's Bay in the gallant ship but a few hours before, only 184 reached to tell the tale. No less than 454 Englishmen have come to so lamentable an end.*

There is no mystery about the calamity. We are not left, as in the case of the Amazon, to conjecture the origin of disaster. Just what happened to the Orion off the Scottish coast, or to the Great Liverpool off Finisterre, has happened now. Captain Salmond, the officer in command, anxious to shorten the run to Algoa Bay as much as possible, and more than was prudent, hugged the shore too closely. Four hundred and fifty-four persons have lost their lives in consequence of his temerity. As soon as the vessel struck upon the rocks, the cry of safety was given, and the men in the lower troop deck were drowned in their hammocks. Theirs was the happier fate; at least, they were spared the terrible agony of the next twenty minutes. At least, the manner of their death was painful than with the others, who were first crushed beneath the falling spars and funnel, and then swept away to be devoured by the sharks, who were prowling round the wreck. From the moment the ship struck, all appears to have been done that human courage or coolness could effect. The soldiers were mustered on the after-deck. The instinct of discipline was stronger even than the instinct of life. They men fell into place as coolly as on the parade ground. They were told off into reliefs, and sent—some to the chain-pumps, some to the paddle-box boats.—Capt. Wright, of the ninety-first regiment, who survives to relate the dreadful scene, tells us:—

"Every man did as he was directed, and there was not a cry or murmur among them, until the vessel made her final plunge. I could not name any individual officer, who did more than another. *All received their orders, and had then carried out, as if the men were embarking instead of going to the bottom; there was only this difference—that I never saw any embarkation conducted with so little noise or confusion.*"

Poor fellows! Had they died in battle-field, and in their country's cause, *little* fate would have mattered. *It is terrible*, *indeed*, that there is something inexpressibly touching in the quiet, undinching resolution of so many brave hearts, struggling manfully to the last, against an inevitable fate. *It is terrible*, *also*, *to add*, that *the women and children were all saved.* They had been quietly collected under the poop awning, and were as quietly got over the ship's side, and dressed into the boats. Four boats had off about 150 yards from the ill-fated Birkenhead, and all were saved. There is not the name of a single woman or child upon the list of persons who perished. One gig and two cutters were all that could be conveyed available.

In one account, we find that when the men were ordered to get the paddle-box boats out, the pin of the davits was rusted in, and could not be got out. Captain Wright, who was on board, says, that when the funnel went over the side, it carried away the starboard paddle-box and boat, and that the other paddle-box boat capsized as it was lowered, and fell in the sea. Of the 184 persons who were saved, 116 made their escape in the three boats which succeeded in getting clear of the wreck.

Annexed are the names of the military officers drowned:—

Lieut. Col. Seaton, 74th Regiment; Lieuts. G. W. Robinson, A. H. Booth, Ensign Boyland, 73d Regt.; Ensign Metford, 6 Regt. Ensign Russell, and Cornet Rolt.

The following are the names of the naval officers lost:—

Mr. R. Salmond, master commanding; Mr. W. Brodie, master; Mr. R. D. Speer, second master; Mr. J. O. D. Davies, second master; Mr. W. Whyham, chief engineer; Mr. C. Ward, assistant-engineer; Mr. James H. Clymont, assistant engineer; Mr. Deeley, assistant engineer; Mr. T. Harris, Boatswain; Mr. James Robers, carpenter.

Never was destruction more sudden or more complete. Within fifteen minutes after the vessel struck, the bow broke short off. Five minutes more elapsed, and the hull of the vessel went in two, sideways, just aft the engines. The stern part of the vessel immediately surged, filled, and went down. The only hope of the survivors lay in the main-topsail yard, which still showed above water. There were some fragments of the forecastle deck still floating about; there were a few spars, and drift wood. About forty-five people clung to the yard, and after remaining there, until 2 o'clock the following afternoon, were picked off by the Lioness, a pilot-boat which was providential sent by Captain Wright, asserts, that of the 200 persons, more or less, who were clinging to the drift wood, when he got away, nearly every man might have been saved, but one of the ship's boats done her duty. This the boat, the assistant surgeon had got, with eight men. They immediately pulled away, and landed about 15 miles from the vessel.

The fact appears to have been, that the poor creatures who were clinging to the drift wood, had been carried by the swell in the direction of Point Danger. There they got entangled among the seaweed, which at this point of the coast is thick and of immense length. Captain Wright asserts, that he, and the other assistant-surgeon carried off the boat, or even, had the boat pulled back to the scene of the disaster, after landing the medical gentleman in safety, the majority of these poor wretches might have picked off the sea-weed. It only remains for us to to mention here, that Captain Salmond, who appears to have done his duty after the vessel struck, has not survived the calamity. When last seen alive, he was swimming from the stern-post of the ship, which had just gone down, to a portion of the forecastle-deck, which was floating about 20 yards from the main body of the wreck; something struck him on the back of the head, and he never rose again.

SHOCK OF AN EARTHQUAKE.—A few minutes before six o'clock, A. M., on Saturday, April 3, a slight shock of an earthquake was felt in this locality. Many residents of Clifton, Cotham, and Kingsdown, as well as in the city, (Bristol,) were surprised at the shaking of their houses in so unusual a manner, and its consequences were felt in some instances among timid persons, but as there was no recurrence of the shock, all fear was speedily dissipated. The shock was felt not only at Bristol and vicinity, but at Wells and Cheddar, and I have no doubt at many other places in Somersetshire and adjoining counties.

THE NATIONAL DEBT.—The commissioners for the reduction of the national debt, have given notice, that the sum of £681,509 1s. 2d., being one-fourth part of the net surplus revenue, of the year ending 5th January, of £2,726,396 1s. 10d., will be applied, between the 7th of April and the 5th of July, to the following purposes, namely, to be applied to the purchase of stock, £681,509 1s. 2d.; interest on account of donations, &c., £2,287 8s. 5d.

AUSTRALIA.

THE AUSTRALIAN DIGGINGS.—*Melbourne, Dec. 4, 1851.* The whole frame-work of society, as far as labor is concerned, is quite broken up, the whole mass of the working classes having forsaken their ordinary occupations for gold digging, and any that are are obtaining wages more than sufficient to cover the earnings of the diggers, although by many they are made, the success of the latter has certainly been most extraordinary, and such as the whole history of the gold digging could not produce the like of, since the world began. I am under the mark, when I say that the weekly yield of Mount Alexander is 100,000 pounds; the Himalaya is fixed to sail about the 14th, and she will take a quantity of gold that will astonish Old England. There is great doubt about the possibility of securing the harvest. One man—a ship captain—brought down £880 in three weeks' work.

December 22nd.—A few of the ships have a quarter of their crews on board—some not a single hand. Cartage, which was a 1s. per load last year, is now 8s. and 5s., and labor of all description has advanced at the same rate. This all arises from the discovery of gold in large quantities almost all over the district. It is coming in at two or three tons per week. The Melbourne, sailing this evening, takes £300,000. In the opinion of most people here, the quantity is inexhaustible. The price we are now giving is £2 17s. per ounce for what we consider almost pure gold. At present we cannot get lighters to convey the goods from the bay to the town. We trust you will send as large numbers of emigrants.—*London Times.*

Among the lumps found is one weighing 341 ounces, and estimated to contain thirty-three ounces of pure gold. Another piece of ore weighed 90 ounces, and another 82. The precious metal is found mostly near the surface.—The largest lumps are jammed in the crevices of rocks. The total yield of the diggings in the first three months was $3,500,000. The nominal price of gold at Melbourne has varied from £3 to £3 3s per ounce; the banks, however, will advance but a small proportion on deposits, until instructions be received from England. Government has raised the price of miners' licenses from 30 shillings to £3 per month. There is no scarcity of provisions or goods. A considerable number of vessels are lying at Hobson's Bay without crews, although $200 are offered for the run to England. Society at the mines appears, from accounts received, to be less disorganized, than was the case in California during its earlier days. Meanwhile numerous refining "tributary" and mining companies have sprung up in England, and flourish on the excitement. Emigration is active, and the papers abound with the advertisements of speculators all anxious to come in for a share of the ore.

TERRIBLE FIRE AT ST. BARTHOLOMEW, WEST INDIES.—On the 2nd March, at about two o'clock in the Morning, the people of Bartholomew were awakened by the thunder of cannon, and by the tocsin ringing the alarm, to learn that their little town was the prey of flames, the wind blowing at the time with such violence, that notwithstanding all endeavours, 39 houses or stores were in the space of four hours laid into ashes, by which a great number of people are now without shelter, and deprived of the means of support. It is impossible to give an exact account of the losses, but an idea may easily be formed, considering the number of houses and stores destroyed, and the fact that most of the unfortunates saved themselves with nothing but the dress they had on, some only half clad. St. Barthlomew is one of the Caribbean Isles, belonging to Sweden. It is fifteen miles in circumference, and fertile in sugar and tobacco. Its population is about two thousand. Its commerce with of the United States is considerable. It is sometimes called St. Barts.

A committee of citizens of Chilicothe, Ohio, have addressed a letter to the Mayor of Boston, stating the fact that on the 1st inst., one fourth of the city of Chilicothe was laid in ashes, and that fourth embraced nearly all the important business houses, of every order, in that city, together with many valuable dwellings. The committee call upon Boston to contribute to their relief.

The New York *Herald* says of the spiritual knockers:

"We understand that some of the spirit-rappers, or knockers, who first made their appearance in Rochester, in this State, have taken up their residence, somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Fifth avenue in this city and are coining money at the rate of a hundred dollars a day, by receiving money from the people, to enable them to communicate with the spirit world. One or more of the learned judges of this metropolis have, it seems, been giving lectures on the spirit rappers in Connecticut, and forming snug circles in some country towns in this State, for the purpose of conversing with all the spirits of the dead men made perfect, from Solomon and Socrates, down to Tom Paine and Fourier. How long will this business last? We live fast in this country. We use up a mania, or a humbug, in six months. In former times, and in other countries, humbugs used to last half a century, and some of them a whole century."

WEATHER SIGNS FROM PLANTS.

Some one has said, that not only the coming weather may be foretold by an acquaintance with flowers, but also the time of the day and the time of the year; and, in fact, Linæus possessed such a knowledge of them that he needed neither watch, nor calendar, nor weather glass. Lord Bacon observed, that when the flower of the chick-weed expanded fully and boldly, no rain will succeed for hours or days. If the flower of the Siberian saxe-thistle keep open during the night, it is said, a serene day will follow the night. The leaves of the trefoil are always contracted at the approach of a storm. If the African marigold does not open its flowers by seven o'clock in the morning, rain may be expected with certainty on that day. An uncommon quantity of seeds is produced by white thorns and dogrose bushes in wet summers, and this is considered a sign of a serene winter. Many plants with compound flowers direct them towards the sun in the morning, carefully following the direction of the sun, and appearing towards west in the evening; but before rain they are punctually closed, as with the tulip. A species of wood sorrel closes its leaves before a storm, but unfolds them under a clear sky; Cassia and the sensitive plant do the same. The flowers of the pimpernel, appearing widely open in the morning, indicate a fair day, and, if the petals are drawn together, a cloudy sky succeeds. Nettles appearing abundantly in winter indicate a mild season.

The Brockville Recorder says that there are those who have spent fifty years in Canada consider the past winter the severest in their experience.

OBITUARY.

DEATH OF THE HON. ALEXANDER RANKIN.—We regret to announce the death of the Hon. Alexander Rankin, of Bromborough, member of the Provincial Legislature of New Brunswick, on Saturday last, while on a visit to his brother, Mr. Robert Rankin, at Bromborough Hall. Although, from his retiring disposition, he was comparatively little known here, they is a man among us, for he was, in truth, the essence of a Christian and a gentleman—*Liverpool Standard.*

We have the melancholy duty to announce the demise of Mrs. Owen, the lady of Rear-Admiral the Hon. W. R. Owen; which took place at the family residence, at Campo-Bello, on Thursday last, after a brief illness, deeply and deservedly regretted by her relatives and numerous circle of acquaintance.—*St. Andrew's Standard.*