COLONIAL.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

The Labrador and Western shore herring fisheries are just now creating considerable attention; and this branch of industry promises to become important so far as Newfoundland is concerned. Not less than 80,000 barrels were taken at the Labrador last season, the whole of which, with the exception of a few thousand barrels retained for home consumption, were shipped to the States and Canada. During the past six weeks 60,000 barrels have been purchased at St. John's, and exported, chiefly in American vessels, the prices ranging from 5s. to 7s. per barrel. It is feared the codfishery at the West has been a failure.

Since the first of January the export of fish shows an excess of nearly 20,000 quintals, compared with that of the same period last year, while in seal oil an excess of about 40 tons is noted. In the export of coal, oil and salmon there are deficiencies, in the first of 250 tons, and the latter, nearly 700 tierces. At present the market is quiet, the state of the coast preventing the arrival of vessels, and thus tending to check operations in articles of export. It is stated that the large shipments of codfish since the beginning of the year have reduced the quantity now on hand considerably below that held at the same period last year. No sales of importance have been made since last mail. Recently a considerable increase in the imports of bread, flour and pork have taken place, but notwithstanding this, prices are firm, with an upward tendency. The very great scarcity of molasses enabled holders to obtain the high price of 3s. 6d. per gallon for small quantities. A cargo of the article arrived from Matamoras on the 21st ult., which, to some extent, dissipated the anxiety respecting extreme scarcity, and the price at once receded. The cargo sold at from 2s. 4d. to 2s 6d. per gallon. The Merlin from Halifax took to St John's 130 puncheons on her last trip.

In the House of Assembly a petition from merchants, and the inhabitants generally, of Harbour Grace and Carbonear, has been presented, praying the House to conserve the present Reciprocity Treaty with the United States.

A school-house, belonging to the Episcopalians at Long Pond, near Topsail, was destroyed by fire a short time since.

MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT AT SEA.—It is with great regret we have to report the untimely death, on board the R. M. S. *Canada*, of Charles D. Major, Esq., late of the house of Beckwith & Major, of this city, who died at sea on board that vessel while on her passage from Liverpool to Halifax, on Tuesday last, from the effects of an accident which occurred to him on the day previous. From what we can learn of the circumstances attending this truly distressing occurrence, it appears that the deceased gentleman, while playing with some other passengers on the saloon deck, missed his footing, and being thus violently precipitated to the main deck of the steamer, his arm was broken, and his head coming in contact with the bulwarks, sustained a severe fracture of the skull, which undoubtedly caused his death. He, of course, received every attention that the skill of the ship's surgeon could afford, as well as kind sympathy from his fellow passengers and all on board, but the injuries received were too severe to admit of his recovery. The remains of Mr. Major were brought hither for interment, and they were accordingly handed over to his friends shortly after the arrival of the *Canada* in port. We deeply sympathize with his bereaved widow and little family, and his numerous relatives and friends in this city.—*Halifax Reporter*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE PROPRIETORS' NEW BILL

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EXAMINER.

SIR;

Will you permit me to ask the Leaders of our Government what they mean by presenting the above Bill to the Tenantry of this Island? Do they imagine that we are all a pack of natural-born fools, whom they can insult with impunity at their own option? Why did they not quash the wretched thing at once, without allowing it to see the light of day? Have not the most of us been already sufficiently outraged with proprietary audacity to merit no such new infliction of wanton cruelty as this? Do the late Delegates to Britain suppose that any tenant among us can command enough natural patience to sit down and calmly read their reported correspondence through? What a blessing this new Bill would be to be sure! If once made the law of the land, it would give our poor tenants—what? A right to buy their farms at 16 years purchase, payable in 5 years,—and even this right could not be exercised until they had first promptly "forked over" the last six years' standing rent, which, to all owing it and holding 100 acres of land, would be £30. Now this, together with the yearly rent and present interest of money as each instalment would proceed, would just do about what—enable each poor tenant of this Province to buy out his 100 acres by paying down 30 odd pounds yearly for the next five years? We leave out the fact that no discrimination would be made even with these hard terms between the man who may have already paid in rent double the value of his farm and him who has never paid a cent. Now, how many of our poor farmers are prepared for this—how many of them are able, within any given five years, or five more to the back of it, to purchase 100 acres at the rate of £150, or £120, or even, if you like, £100? Is not the thing a well-known impossibility? Is it not absurd? But this is not all the blessing awaiting the tenantry, should our legislators be so crazy as to give the proposed new Bill effect. It would, besides, demand of them a voluntary surrender of all the little advantage which they now possess over their landlords, without so much as a struggle. The "quit rents" and "primary right of Escheat," which, after all, evidently constitute the only two rods which the proprietors are still afraid of, must be forever relinquished both by us and our children. This is but too clearly the only design of the Bill now in question. What a bargain, to be sure, we would have of it! This Bill once passed, and the Proprietors knew full well they would instantly have all they desire. They know that while some few dozen of their "better off" tenants might, at this sacrifice, buy themselves clear, the whole of our poorer peasantry would be utterly unable to comply with the conditions proposed, and so remain their bond-slaves, forever deprived of any further power to resist their tyrant will. And thus the poor, for whom we have been seeking some redress so long in vain, are to be forever "left in the lurch," enslaved completely in this new trap, while the only men whose despotic power over them has hitherto been tolerated by a kind of public sufferance are to get every thing at last their own way! What a boon for the tenantry of this Island!

We have yet to see whether they are going to be tamely caught in such a vile gin or not. As to the late Delegates, they are now suspended on their own gibbet. I, like too many others, may have been inclined to place too much confidence in their sincerity. Mr. Palmer went home as a Delegate, professing to seek redress for our poor tenantry. At the same time he appended his name to the new Proprietors' Bill, offering such hard terms. Wherein his consistency may lie, I leave himself to explain. And then his pretended title to half of Lot 1, forming the ground, I presume, on which his name thus appears in the list of proprietary names attached to this new Bill! The people of this Island are done of him. We shall yet see how much land he shall succeed in squeezing out of the people of this Province. The other Delegate's conduct does not appear much better; it looks in fact even worse. Look at Sir Samuel Cunard's last letter, and other propositions submitted to the Duke of Newcastle, as reported by Mr. Pope himself. This proprietor rejoices, in the first place, to believe that our local Government will be fools enough to give legal effect to that clause of the late Commissioners "Report," which would forever set aside the Escheat and Quit Rent questions, and then almost in the same breath he glories in the fact that those Commissioners, having exceeded their proper authority, (which every person with any brains knows as well as he), by taking on themselves, without the Queen's permission, to arbitrate in the case, and dictate an Award, virtually stultified the whole Report, and necessarily rendered it unbinding on all parties alike. He will thus have this illicit Report, in so far as it favors his own interests, made the permanent law of this Island, but whatever does not suit himself he will utterly repudiate. Lovely man! What a disingenuous creature he is! Now, why did Master W. H. Pope allow this glaring piece of inconsistent audacity to pass unreproved? Had he just "bearded the lion in his den," and come home at once, as any honest man would have done, the people of this Island might have thought something of him. Possibly Sir Samuel felt his dignity a little impeached, as our wise Delegate appears by his own story to have refused consulting with him personally from the first. He would only see *the Duke*, but the Duke showed very little inclination to "*return his visits*." Now all this is perfect twaddle. How often Mr. Pope may have been consulting with Sir Samuel it is not for us to tell. Two heads are generally better than one to concoct any new scheme in the world, and if Mr. Pope did not consult with Sir Samuel Cunard, or any body else he had a mind to, when home in England, we all know as well as himself it must have been his own fault. We rather doubt that the consulting part of it was not both too long and too reciprocal on both sides for the special benefit of the people of this Island. Perhaps Messrs. Pope, Palmer, Sir Samuel Cunard, &c. &c. &c., may be a fine sample of boys to consult together on the land questions of this Island, but for our part we should greatly prefer trusting such matters in less portentous hands. Time will tell whether we are right or wrong. If such gentlemen are not all *identical*, they are naturally in danger of playing into each other's hands. And if this new Proprietors' Bill does not reflect the combined skill of those very gamesters, I should like to know what else it can possibly be discovered to indicate? But the tenantry are beginning to take the hint at long last, and this new Bill is likely ere long to fulfill some people's destiny. Pass it, gentlemen, if you like, but you need not do it with your eyes shut. Sign your own "death warrant," if you please. We have heard of kings and queens doing so before now. Our country members had better vote for it too. We shall like to catch them try it.

The *Monitor* of last week is very considerate about the matter. It expects that the new Bill will not be passed by Government with all its rigorous terms intact, but that it will be melted and smelted, and run over again by our untiring Legislators, until it is ready like a huge snow-ball to be once more cast in the teeth of the Duke of Newcastle, and thus kick up another *whirlwind* to divert the attention of the people of Prince Edward Island a little while longer. The *Monitor* complacently enough assumes, on the back of this piece of *popular* information, that the people will never get tired of their present rulers, no matter how long they may thus persist in provoking their patience and good temper. We fully agree with our self-complacent periodical in this assumption, since we can honestly assure him that the vast majority of our people have got tired of their present rulers already, and hence never expect to have to do it again. Possibly if he and some of his contemporaries keep ranting about *Religion* in the disgusting manner they have been doing for some time past, the most of our people will get even a few degrees *tireder* of both him and our present rulers than he shall like to discover when too late for them and him to retrace their steps. Such low bred artifice, he may depend upon it, will not much longer divert the people's attention from their own proper reciprocal interests. As for the new Bill, the Government may save themselves the trouble of entering seriously upon any new farce in relation to it. They had better lay it aside, and set themselves to work at once to do something for the local benefit of the people. If they don't do something good precious soon, neither they nor the *Monitor* need ever expect to humbug the country into the open folly of tolerating them a great while longer. Such an act of generosity on the part of the people would be worse than suicide.

It is very probable, Mr. Editor, that the people of this Province will yet be forced to *repudiate the proprietors' claims altogether*. Perhaps the sooner they do so the better. For taking such a step they have both ample and just grounds. But if they ever take this step, it must be done solemnly, and concertedly, and without any tumult, and without any flinching. The tenantry must all, without exception, act together, and act as one man. They have hitherto consented to do anything and everything but what is for their own interests. They have always suffered themselves to become split up into adverse parties by designing politicians. Whether they are ever going to unite and do something for themselves, remains yet to be seen. "Union, Union," must henceforth be their watchword, and all ranting partyists to the dogs! There is one thing, at least, which they should now do, and do at once without any further delay. They should meet among themselves in every section of the Island, and appoint some delegates of their own to hold a Congress in some central locality—to draw up a set of conditions between themselves and the proprietors. These conditions should embody just what the people themselves want—what they will be all willing to subscribe, and what they will be forthcoming to perform. They would, in a word, just comprise the *people's own terms*. These terms they should sign, publish and conscientiously adhere to. There would then be no further danger of any Government concocting of their own accord any maladministrative Bill, or carrying any positive measure to the detriment of the tenantry. Every local Government would have the people's as well as the proprietors' terms before them, and woe be to the party who should undertake to set them aside. The Government would thus be placed in the right position "between two fires," and might indulge in any amount of comfort they might deem proper.

This, I imagine, would form a first rate "rear guard" to Responsible Government in this Island. It would very materially relieve our representatives of the most of their non-responsibility, and render them about as harmless a set of animals as the country could produce. It would, besides, render the people masters of their own future destiny in some desirable degree, and precipitate a settlement of the Land Question on much more favourable terms than they need ever expect to secure by any other method. The confederation of the people, too, would be in itself not only perfectly legal but also quite harmless, and in every way salutary. They need not be slaves to any other class of men unless by their own voluntary choice. Their fate is very much in their own hands, and I shall therefore leave them as the proper parties "to cast the die."

ONE OF THE PEOPLE.

March 4th, 1864.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EXAMINER.

SIR;—Not content with his scribbling upon "Presidential Election," which I referred to in my communication of the 22nd ult., the *Weekly* in his last issue enlarges upon the theme. In commenting upon my letter he says: "S. shows such a want of knowledge upon American affairs that we feel compelled to post him up a little." Now, with his boasted knowledge let us review the manner in which he does it. After denying my statement, that Kentucky went Democratic at its last election, he says it gave a large majority for one Bramlett. The official returns show that Mr. Bramlett—a life-long Democrat—was elected by the snug little majority of 50,917. He is not a Lincoln man, far from it. In proof of this I will quote a few sentences from his inaugural address, he says: "No one can fail to see the weakness of the present administration in the management of the war. Totally ignoring the constitution, the President has issued a proclamation declaring the slaves free in a majority of the slave-holding States." Refering to the arming of negroes, a pet scheme of the administration, he adds: "And has it come to this? have we become so void of those higher principles that we are forced to resort to these? Must the white man of the North be arrayed with the runaway negro slave of the South? Where is the parent that will not recoil at the idea of having a son placed in the rank and file with the black man?"

So much for Kentucky and Gov. Bramlett. Of Delaware, after denying my assertion that it elected a Democrat, he says: "Cannon, Union candidate, was elected;" he is quite right. Mr. Cannon, war or Union Democrat, (the terms are synonymous) was elected by 110 majority. In speaking of the elections, I stated distinctly, elections for Governor; the last election held in New York was not for Governor; there was no political issue, save in a few counties; it was for *men not measures*. Seymour, a staunch Democrat, is the present Governor, and was elected by over 10,000 majority. And thus I might proceed, taking in turn each State spoken of in my first communication, (as I have a list of their official returns), showing my statements to be true, to the unbiassed and unprejudiced, beyond the shadow of a doubt, not after the manner of the *Weekly*, offering assertion for proof, and conjecture for certainty. The first principle of the Democratic party is the abolition of slavery, but not as the Republicans would do it, by issuing proclamations, regardless of law and order, inciting insurrections, encouraging the slave to rebel against his lawful owner, but rather by compensated emancipation; to give to the slave owner something in return for the property taken from him. To give you an idea of the sentiment of the Republican party, I will quote from a speech made in the U. S. Senate by the Hon. Joshua Giddens, of Ohio, a very prominent member and leader of the party. He said: "I hail the dawn of a political millenium, when the negroes of the South, armed with British bayonets and officered by Northern men, shall be led on against their masters, and drive them even into the Gulf of Mexico."

The *Weekly*, if we give credence to what he says, has "closely watched the course of American events, civil as well as military," and finds that Mr Lincoln's popularity is "greatly on the increase." I have also had an eye to "American affairs, military as well as civil," not from a point in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but at the scene of military operations, at the capitol at Washington, and in some of the principal Northern cities, and in my observations it has been shown me, and most conclusively, that Lincoln's popularity is on the wane. But a few days ago he was furiously attacked in Congress on his scheme of reconstruction, by two of his party and former supporters, the Hon. Henry W. Davis and Gov. Boutwell, men that wield as much influence as any two to be found in the ranks of Republicanism. Mr. Davis on the reconstruction scheme said: "It is a grave usurpation upon the legislative authority of the people of the United States." This he boldly said in Congress, and no one was found to reply to his grave inculpation, reiterated in a variety of forms. A New York journalist "who stands at the head of his class," says of reconstruction: "It is bringing out in bold relief the growing dissatisfaction with Lincoln's plan, in his own party, received at first by that party with acclamation and eulogy; it has provoked dissent in proportion as it has been examined, until the body of its defenders grow small by degrees and beautifully less." Not satisfied with his misrepresentation of McClellan in his first article, the *Weekly* in his second, places himself on his audacity and calls him "in favour of Southern independence." The idea is preposterous. Does he or any one else suppose McClellan could hold the commission he now holds—Maj. General in the regular army—and favor Southern independence? The 1st Regt. N. Y. cavalry, at the expiration of their term of service, returned to New York, and having re-enlisted, were officially reviewed by the city authorities, on Thursday the 18th ult. A collation was prepared for them at Jefferson market, and after refreshing themselves at the tables, speeches were made by distinguished persons present. A. T. McReynold, Col. of the Regiment, and in U. S. service, was interrupted in his remarks by a private, who jumped upon a table and in a stentorian voice called out, "Gen. McClellan is coming in, boys," the Col. continued with: "I have the, honor the great pleasure to announce to you that the noble, the matchless chieftain, George B. McClellan, has honored you with his presence." The tumult of cheers, repeated and re-repeated, subsided as Gen. McClellan rose. He spoke as follows: "My friends and comrades; I came here not to make a speech to you, but to welcome you home and express to you the pride I have always felt in watching your career, not only when you were with me, but since I left the army of the Potomac, while you have been fighting battles under others and your old commander. I congratulate you on the patriotism so many of you have evinced in your desire to re-enter the service. I hope, I pray, and I know your future career will be as glorious as your past. I have one other hope, it is that we may yet serve together some day again." At the conclusion of his remarks he was cheered in the most enthusiastic manner; officers and men cried out "we will follow you anywhere." When he left the hall they followed him into the street, and their cheers re-echoed again and again.

I mention this ovation to McClellan to show how highly he is esteemed by the soldiers, the real machines of the Government. And call this man in favor of "Southern independence?" He who congratulates soldiers on their patriotism in re-enlisting, and expresses a desire to serve with them in the field again, call him traitor? It is in vain for the *Weekly* thus to attempt to blind people to the real merit and vast extent of the military service of General McClellan. Had his policy been adopted by the administration the war would not be dragging along as it is to-day, without any prospect of settlement—a war made against populations, against the people of the South, a war for conquest and subjugation, in which plunder and pillage have not only been allowed but encouraged and enjoined. Every possible means have been employed to embitter the people of the South against the Government of the North. The reconstruction of the Union is now probably an impossibility, unless McClellan or Grant should be elected President in the fall of the present year. The *Weekly* regrets that he has "to devote so much space" to me. No more than I does he regret that he should occupy a column of his valuable (?) paper with his trashy, empty article, crowding out a *Prize Rebus* and a full quota of enigmas.

S.

THE "LUGUBRIOUS GRUMBLER" OF THE *ISLANDER*.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EXAMINER

SIR,—The communication of the "Lugubrious Grumbler" on "our Volunteers," in the last No. of the *Islander*, convinces me of the truth of the views of the *Examiner* on the Volunteer Movement in this Colony. The old soldier who gives *his* ideas in the *Islander*, asserts that some of the public Journals "have given their ideas on the subject, some in irony, some in the spirit of crope(i)y mischief, and some with a laudable desire of benefitting the country." Now, we will charitably assume that the motives which prompted him to publish his "crude" language, such as "keeping up the spirit of *Esprit du corp*," and that the men of this Island....*has* as much of the spirit of the *militare* as can be found anywhere in the Empire," were not selfish, and that he has only the welfare of the colony at heart.

He admits what has been persistently denied, that the Volunteer Movement is nearly defunct. His words are:—"At present it is suffering from the reaction which invariably follows on all public movements of importance; and, unfortunately, our Government, not having seen, or at all events quite neglecting to take measures to counteract this reflux, the movement has for some time gone backwards." He further adds "that several other untoward events.... have put quite a damper on many Companies, and notwithstanding the wars and rumors of wars so near us, it might be difficult to revive the same enthusiasm again." He should explain the "untoward events" which have "put a damper" on the movement; but instead of doing so he proposes several "expensive" plans to give the torpid thing a "resuscitation."

He states that the "drain on their pockets and time" is making the Volunteers "feel a certain amount of coolness towards the movement," and he feels assured that unless his propositions are adopted, "many of them would prefer a swinging militia regulation to the present system." I trust the Volunteers are not becoming such desperate fellows as their champion would lead the public to suppose. But let us turn to his proposals, which are to give "resuscitation" to the "spirit of *Esprit du corp*." He proposes that the Government shall pay the clerk of each company, and provide the company with stationary; that the Government shall assist to clothe the volunteers; that inspectors who have seen actual service shall be employed; that the Government shall defray the expenses of drill rooms, lights, &c.; that there shall be country shooting matches, more prizes, &c.; that the Adjutant General shall be allowed a sufficient sum for a clerk; all of which proposals, together with the expenses of Drill Instructors, would cost the Colony about £1500 or £2,000 annually.

Your readers, Sir, will doubtless consider that if the correspondent of the *Islander* does not use "irony" in his composition, he at least exhibits an inordinate share of brass, more especially when they learn that he has the effrontery to sign his reckless advocacy for squandering the public money, "Pro Bono Publico."

I may say in conclusion that the relations of the United States with Great Britain (to which he alludes) are quite friendly, and will in all probability continue so. I have no fears of American invasion, but if I had they would subside on reflecting that, from the manner in which he murders French and English with his pen, he would be invincible by himself against all or any invaders of our virgin soil.

CIVIS.

March 12, 1864.

MR EDITOR—SIR:

Much has been said lately respecting tendering for Government work, which has tended to open the eyes of persons residing out of the city. I perceive by the last *Royal Gazette*, and former numbers of that paper, that tenders have been called for by the Government for a variety of purposes; and it would appear that some few persons would like to monopolise the greater portion for themselves or their friends. I am led to suppose this on reading the notices, particularly as regards the publicity given to them. For instance, a new bridge is required across Crabb's Mill Dam; the advertisement is dated the 5th., but the *Royal Gazette* does not appear until the afternoon of the 9th., and the day appointed for receiving tenders is the 12th at noon, not giving time for the paper to reach any of the country districts. Again, there is the notice for steamers on the Hillsborough and Elliot Rivers, hurried through in the shortest possible time—a ten years monopoly bartered away at the short notice of five days. Who will say, after this, the calling for tenders, as far as the general public are concerned, is not a huge humbug?

I am, yours respectfully,
A VOICE FROM THE COUNTRY.

The Examiner.

Charlottetown, March 14th, 1864.

THE DELEGATION CORRESPONDENCE.

SOME friends of the Government, evidently ashamed of the barren results of the Delegation scheme, and desirous of shielding the Delegates as much as possible from the odium which the failure of their mission has generally evoked, pretend to attach considerable importance to the communications which were made to the Colonial Minister by Mr. W. H. Pope. We are told that these communications are very severe upon Sir Samuel Cunard, and that they shew up his conduct to be that of a very oppressive landlord. Mr. Pope himself seems to be under the impression (see *Islander*, March 4,) that his communications will have a wonderful effect on the mind of the Colonial Minister, and be the means of "inducing him to urge the granting, by proprietors, to the tenantry, more extensive concessions than he would deem reasonable to ask for, assuming them to be in the position which Sir Samuel Cunard has hitherto represented." There are only two communications from Mr. Pope in which he attempts to combat statements made by Sir Samuel Cunard, and alleged to be erroneous. One is dated (pompously enough,) "Athenæum Club, Pall Mall, 18th December, 1863," and the other at the same place, "January 13, 1864." The first is made up chiefly of bits and scraps extracted from the Journals of the House of Assembly and from the Spy's Report. Regarded in a literary point of view, it is about the most loosely constructed thing we have ever read—there is not one telling point in it, nor one really good sentence of composition. It gives us a few dry titles of the several Acts that were passed levying an assessment on lands to provide a fund for the erection of the Colonial Building and for the encouragement of education; it recounts the old story how Sir Samuel and his brother proprietors evaded paying their full share of expense towards making new roads in the Colony; it tells us what important indulgences were granted to those proprietors in the matter of the Quit Rents, an allusion to which by any of the Liberal party heretofore only provoked laughter from such persons as W. H. Pope; then we have the history of the One-Ninth Bill—a measure which originated with the Liberal Government, but the credit of which is assumed by Pope on behalf of the party in power; and as regards the long extracts foom the Spy's Report, they appear to be intended for no other object than to shew that Sir Samuel Cunard's tenants are miserably poor—are, in fact, in a starving condition,—and yet these are the people who, Mr. Pope says, would be willing to purchase their farms at 16 years' rent, and pay cash down. But we shall touch upon this point more fully presently.

Now, as to the influence which this communication has had, or is likely to have on the mind of the Colonial Minister, we have a proof of it in the significant fact, that his Grace the Duke of Newcastle did not even acknowledge the receipt of it, nor did he allow one of his clerks in the Colonial Office to do so. The whole thing seems to have been treated with the most sovereign contempt by the Colonial Minister.

As for Mr. Pope's peevish remarks on the conduct of Sir Samuel Cunard, they are worse than useless. The Baronet treats them with contempt, as the Duke treated the letter which contains them. We have no admiration for Sir Samuel Cunard in this business. That he is a close and exacting landlord, we have no doubt; but in this respect we do not suppose that he is worse than his fellows. And if anything has served, more than another, to make him close and exacting, it is the proprietary policy of our Government, from which he could learn that proprietary demands, no matter how extravagant, would be readily conceded, so far as it was in the power of our Government to make the concession. If the landlords have been unduly favoured in the matter of the Quit Rents, or in their contributions to the making of new roads, or in any other way, they should be *required* or *coerced* to make the most liberal concessions to their tenantry in consideration thereof, otherwise it is perfectly useless to talk of those favours. The Delegates proposed 15 and 16 years purchase—Cunard asked 16 years for all—there appears to be a slight difference between them as to the modes of payment; but it is quite evident that the proprietors asked very little more than the Delegates were willing to give, before a word was written about the remission of Quit Rents or other favours to the proprietors.

Now, we shall make three short extracts from Mr. Pope's letter to the Duke of Newcastle, of the 18th December, to see how they will contrast with the proposals contained in the joint letter of the Delegates of the 13th October. Our readers will remember that the "proposals" suggested that the tenantry should be allowed to buy their farms at 15 and 16 years' purchase—that is, those who were in arrears for rent only one year should have the privilege of purchasing at 15 years, and those who were in arrears for a longer period should pay the 16 years; but not one word was said as to "differences" in quality and value of land. But this appears to have been an afterthought with Mr. Pope. He says in the letter of the 18th December:—

"I respectfully submit, my Lord Duke, that if the leasehold tenures of Prince Edward Island are ever to be converted into freeholds, this end will not be accomplished by any Act which fixes an uniform rate of purchase, without recognizing the differences which exist in the quality and value of the lands."

Now, as to the ability of the tenantry to pay 15, 16, or any amount of purchase money for their farms, let us see what Mr. Pope says on that subject. In the same letter, at page 29, we find the following paragraph:—

"The report of the Commissioners also further shews that, on Sir Samuel Cunard's estates, on Townships 44, 45 and 46, the majority of his tenants do not raise from their farms more than barely sufficient to keep them from starvation, and this, too, on the assumption that six and a half persons can be supported on seven shillings sterling a week; and also that, taking the tenants throughout the Island, forty per cent do not procure from their farms a sufficiency of food."

Again, at page 30, we have the picture of the tenant's distressed condition more pathetically drawn in the following paragraph:—

"My Lord Duke, wholesale evictions cannot, I presume, be resorted to. In Prince Edward Island many poor people, in various parts of the colony, have expended their youth and strength in clearing the forest, and are now, in old age, deserted by their grown up sons, who naturally refuse to improve land which is charged with arrears of rent, in many cases quite equal to its freehold value. These persons, with wives and helpless children, are dragging out a miserable existence in a country where snow covers the ground for six months in the year, and where the cow, that supplies milk to the poor family, must be housed and fed for seven months of the 12; and they cannot be thrust out into the highways to perish or become dependent upon public charity."

The same story of distress is repeated in Mr. Pope's second letter of the 13th January. That and the preceding one were addressed to the Colonial Office while Mr. Pope was in England. He got no answer to either one while there. After he returned to the Island, the Governor's Private Secretary wrote to Mr. Pope to say that the Duke of Newcastle had received his (Mr. Pope's) letter, but his Grace remarked that the letter did not appear to be one which "called for any comment." This was beautifully cool. And this, forsooth, is one of the communications which are expected by Mr. Pope to make a great impression on the mind of the Colonial Minister. But let us see what he says in his letter about the wide-spread and "abject poverty" of the Island tenantry. We read as follows at page 32:—

"I have already, in my letter to his Grace the Duke of Newcastle, of the 18th of December, referred to the evidence afforded by the 'Synopsis of the estate of Sir Samuel Cunard in Prince Edward Island,' laid before the Commissioners, and by them attached to their report to his Grace, from which it appears, beyond all question, that on some of Sir Samuel Cunard's estates the arrears of rent due are equivalent to upwards of seven shillings an acre, for every acre leased, assuming that the tenants are equally indebted; and from the report of the Commissioners it further appears that the majority of these tenants are in abject poverty—that they do not produce from their farms sufficient to procure them food and clothing; and from the same report, it also appears that, taking the whole tenantry of the Colony, there are forty per cent who do not raise from their lands a sufficiency of food."

With these extracts we must close our review of the Correspondence. If Mr. Pope has not libelled the tenantry of the Island in saying that 40 per cent. of them, or nearly one half, are sunk in "abject poverty," and that they are not able to procure a sufficiency of food and clothing—then, we must say, it is a huge mockery to propose that people in such a woe-begone condition should purchase the freehold of their farms at 16 years rent, pay the cash down, and pay the arrears since 1858 besides.

Mr. Pope is a sad bungler in diplomacy. There is no doubt that he and Mr. Palmer tried to curry favour with the Proprietors by making extravagant offers to them; but then they were very foolish in shewing that these offers were totally impracticable by reason of the impoverished condition of the tenantry, as attested to by themselves.

THE LAND QUESTION.

No. 11.

HAVING now, we trust, accomplished the object we had in view when we commenced our articles on the Land Question, which was the proving, on indisputable constitutional grounds, the non-validity of the proprietary titles, and shewing that a full measure of justice cannot be accorded to the people, unless by a reconversion of the township or proprietary lands into *a public domain*, such as they at once became on the Island's being ceded to Great Britain by France; we shall, in our present number, endeavour to sum up our statements, proofs, and arguments in such a manner as shall afford our readers at once a full and fair view of the question in all its bearings; and shall then conclude by indicating what we think would now be the most advisable course for the people to pursue for the effecting of their complete emancipation from the proprietary yoke.

First, as respects the original grants: We have asserted and proved that the lands of this Island, being a territory acquired by Great Britain, in right of conquest, were a *public domain*, held in trust by the Crown for the people; that the alienation of them from the people, by the Crown Grants made of them, in 1767, was a direct breach of trust on the part of the Crown, and a positive robbery of the people.

In the second place, as respects the source whence redress for the wrong inflicted upon the people of this Colony by a breach of trust on the part of the Crown should be derived, we have shewn that that redress ought to be afforded by the power or authority whence it proceeded—that is, by the Crown or the Imperial Government; or rather, more correctly speaking, by the Imperial Parliament, since the power of the Government lies wholly in the Parliament.

In the third place, as to the mode of affording the redress due to the Colony, and the likelihood of the Imperial Parliament's being willing to grant it: We have shewn that the only *perfectly just* mode of affording redress to the Colony, and of freeing the people from proprietary bondage, would be the extinguishment of the proprietary claims by a grant of the Imperial Parliament, to be apportioned among the proprietary claimants, in the same manner as, for the emancipation of the slaves in the British West India Islands, the grant made by the Imperial Parliament was apportioned amongst their masters; and then constituting the whole of the township lands, so redeemed from the proprietary grasp, *the state* or *public domain*. And, as to the likelihood of the Imperial Parliament's consenting to make such a grant for the emancipation of the leaseholders of this Colony, we have argued, upon what we believe to be only reasonable assumptions, that, as the Imperial Parliament, in 1833, did not hold themselves exonerated from the duty of redressing the wrongs of the negroes, either on account of the great lapse of time—217 years—during which they had been sanctioned by Imperial authority; or on account of the immense sacrifice of money required to effect it, so neither would the Imperial Parliament of 1864, were the wrongs of the people of this Colony to be fairly brought before them, refuse to entertain them and make provision for their redress in a manner less generous and magnanimous than that adopted by their predecessors for the emancipation of the slaves in the British West Indies. The conclusion at which we have arrived on this head is, that, with respect to the tenantry of Prince Edward Island, a responsibility, on the part of the Imperial Parliament and Government exists similar to that acknowledged by them, in 1833, with respect to the negro slaves in the British West Indies; and that, if it be properly urged upon them, they will honorably acquit themselves of it. Such an appeal, however, need not be expected from a *proprietary* Government, such as that which now rules this Colony. Even were they to undertake it, it would never, in their hands, be prosecuted to a happy issue: if directed by them it would prove nothing but "a delusion, a mockery, and a snare."

In the fourth place, with respect to the admission made by the Royal Land Commission, "that the grants were, at one time, liable to forfeiture for breach of the conditions with respect to settlement, and might have been practically annulled by the enforcement of quit rents," and also with respect to their assertion, coupled with the above admission, "that the lands," had the grants been so annulled, "could have been *seized* and *sold* by the Crown, at various times, without the slightest impeachment of its honor": We have, on good and sufficient authority, asserted that "this valuable Island, won by the valor and enterprise of British soldiers," ought, from the first, to have been considered as *absolutely fixed in the people*; and that the grants made of it by the Crown were an unwarranted and direct violation of the people's rights; and, further still, that—supposing that the grants had been practically annulled by the enforcement of quit rents, and that thereon the lands had been seized and sold by the Crown—*such act of sale* would have been an abuse of the trusteeship vested in the Crown quite as unwarrantable and indefensible as that of which the Crown was originally guilty, when it unconstitutionally granted away the whole Island, in a single day, "in huge blocks of 20,000 acres each." Had the grants been so annulled, the only constitutional disposal of the lands which could have been made would have been by commencing a distribution of them, *as public lands*, in small lots, among the people, subject to a small tax or tribute, payable to the State, but not to rent.

In the fifth place, with respect to the QUESTION OF ESCHEAT, and the opinion thereanent enunciated by the Royal Land Commission, in the following words: "If it were believed that such a principle existed in Prince Edward Island, or could be enforced, it would be utterly ruinous to its prosperity. Titles would be insecure, because, with few exceptions, the forfeiture would apply to every township and every subdivision of a township in the Island. No particular lot, no particular proprietor could be selected: the law would be general in its application, and must fall on all alike—not solely on the representative of the original grantee of 1767, if any such there be, but on the purchaser of yesterday, or the orphan whose inheritance fell to him the day before. The destruction of the primary title would carry with it the titles of the small freeholders, who hold under it, as well as the improvements of the tenants":

We have shewn—sustained by indisputable legal and constitutional authority—that, "*constitutionally* a Court of Escheat has *always* existed—that escheat is incident to the power of the Crown in the administration of the public domain—that it required no particular legislation to put the machinery of escheat in operation; and that none is required now": and, further, that Escheat, as incident to the power of the Crown in the administration of the public domain, became incident to the power of our local Government in 1851, when the transfer of the casual and territorial rights and revenues of the Crown was made to it; and that, should they at any time put in operation the machinery of a Court of Escheat, the evils which might arise from its general and uncontrolled workings could easily and effectually be guarded against by specific legislation.

In the sixth place, with respect to Lord Grey's Despatch to Sir Alexander Bannerman of the 12th July, 1851, and all similar despatches of Colonial Secretaries, setting forth "the determination of the Imperial Government to adhere to the decision so repeatedly adopted by Colonial Secretaries with respect to the question of Escheat, based on the belief that, both on the grounds of justice to the landed proprietors and of the permanent interests of the community of Prince Edward Island, they regard the measure of Escheat as impracticable":

We have—in order to *denude* such Despatches of the power claimed for them, and which the Royal Land Commissioners have admitted them to possess—clearly proved, on the authority of Blackstone, that if a Secretary of State, even with the sanction of the Crown, should, *by any despatch*, grant any franchise or privilege to a subject or subjects, contrary to reason, or in any way prejudicial to the commonwealth, or a private person, the law will not suppose the king to have meant either an unwise or an injudicious action, but declares that the king was deceived in the grant; *and thereupon such grant is rendered void*, merely upon the foundation of fraud and deception, either by or upon those agents whom the Crown has thought proper to employ.

If the authority of Blackstone be admitted on this head, as we doubt not it will be, it follows not only that all the indulgences which have, from time to time, been extended to the Proprietors by successive Secretaries of State for the Colonies, even although with the full knowledge and consent of the Crown, but the grants themselves must be set aside; because, as respects both, *the granting of them must be attributed to fraud and deception, practised either by or upon those agents whom the Crown thought proper to employ; and, therefore, on that ground, they are to be accounted void.*

In connexion with this part of the question, and briefly in reply to those who argue, not only that "the indulgences" gave a constitutional confirmation to the otherwise forfeited titles, but that the tenantry, by having taken leases of their lands from the proprietary claimants, have further confirmed the proprietary titles, and that, therefore, neither they nor any on their behalf have any right to interfere with the written agreements existing between them and the proprietary claimants, we repeat the assertion made by us a few weeks ago, that "the inhabitants of this Colony have been delivered over, bound hand and foot, to the tender mercy of a few large landholders;" and that this has been done not only once but thrice; first, by the original grants; and twice afterwards by indulgences, on the grantees having twice forfeited their lands through the non-fulfilment of the covenants entered into by them. The "curse" which still rests upon the Colony was pronounced when the grants were issued. By that act landlordism was established in the Island; and so long as it shall be allowed to exist will it be felt as a curse by the people. As to "the solemn acknowledgment," said to have been "made by tenant Legislatures and individual tenants," being "sufficient to account for the situation of those who are tenants and the entailment of the payment of rent upon them and their posterity, without charging the proprietors with any blame, on that account, since the acts of their forefathers and themselves have caused it"—the assertion is most extravagantly absurd. The facts of the case are, indeed, far otherwise. The *serfdom* of the great mass of the people is directly attributable to "*the vicious system*" of landlordism, which had its origin in, or rather which *was instituted* by the unconstitutional grants made by the lands of the Crown; and which has hitherto been sustained and supplied with victims to its grinding tyranny through the opportunities which the most culpable laxity of the Imperial Government has afforded proprietary claimants—first to deceive and practise upon the credulity of intending emigrants in the old country, by highly colored and most inviting misrepresentations as to superior advantages and great and peculiar privileges enjoyed by settlers in Prince Edward Island; and then on the arrival in the Colony of the parties so previously deceived, to take advantage of their necessities, and impose upon them as tenants whatever terms and conditions they have thought proper to prescribe. That persons signing leases, paying rent, or by any other act attorning to another as their landlords, cannot dispute his title, we know very well: and that leases, even such as those now in question, although based on usurpation and fraud, on the one hand, and entered into and accepted through the pressure of dire necessity, on the other—are completely binding in law, we also know. But although no process in a court of law would enable any one to escape from the bondage so imposed upon him, but would rather tend to its confirmation, yet escape from it is by no means to be despaired of. In a court of equity no agreement which it could be proved had been effected by means of false or fraudulent representations, or the agency of constraint, would be pronounced binding on the party aggrieved; and even in a court of common law, in such cases generally, we believe, the decision would be in favor of the party aggrieved. However, it is neither to a court of common law, nor yet to a court of equity, that we advise the people to appeal for their emancipation from the bondage imposed upon them by unjustifiable landlordism; but to that power from which alone they can expect to receive it, on such free conditions as they have a right to demand it—*to that* power which not only owes it to them, but is able fully and freely to grant it to them, *the Imperial Parliament.*

In the seventh place, with respect to the terms or conditions of emancipation offered to the tenantry by the proprietors and our proprietary Government:—We have clearly shown that "*the boon*," as they presume to call it, and which they so boastfully proffer, would be no greater than that which is frequently conferred upon negro slaves by their masters, when they concede to them the privilege of purchasing their freedom by the fruits of their extra labour—the privilege of purchasing that to which they had an inherent right; and their title to which they could lose only either by voluntary sacrifice of it, or as a forfeit for crimes committed against the rights and well being of their fellow-men. Our local Government may pretend to oppose the views of the proprietors; but who can give them credit for sincerity in doing so? Are they not a *proprietary* Government? And as such must not their views be coincident with those of the proprietors in general? There may, indeed, be some little seeming difference or cavilling between them and the proprietors as to the precise terms to be offered *to the tenantry*, but the views of both must of necessity tend to the same end—the holding, in a spirit of rapacity, the tenant to his bond, or else agreeing to cancel it only on the payment of the largest amount of money which can be wrung from him by means of chicanery, cajolery, or threat.

The terms and conditions of emancipation or *self-redemption* offered to the tenantry by Sir Samuel Cunard's Bill are, as we have stated them in a previous number:—

1st—The right of tenants holding leases *over* 40 years to purchase at 16 years rent. The whole purchase money to be paid at once. No rents to the value of one farthing to be left unpaid since 1858; nor can the tenant purchase for any amount of money unless the landlord shall be willing to sell.

2nd—Rents due previous to 1858 to be forgiven. *But*, if those rents, or any portion of them, have been secured by judgments or other legal instruments, such as bonds and warrants, they are to stand good against the tenant, and may be recovered by the proprietor. The tenant is not to be credited for any payments that may have been made since 1858 on account of rents due previous to that year; and a tenant who is in possession of a mill site cannot claim exemption from rent due for such property *previous* to 1858.

3rd—All leaseholders *under* 40 *years* to be excluded from the provisions of the Act; and leaseholders who may rent farms at longer periods than 40 years—say 999 years—after the Act goes into operation, not to be allowed to purchase at the exorbitant rate of 16 years rental, or at any rate, unless the landlord pleases.

4th—The 16 years purchase to be calculated in every case at the highest figure reserved in the leases as the annual rent of an acre of land. Thus, for example, where the rent begins at sixpence or ninepence an acre, and ends at one shilling and six pence or two shillings, the highest figure is the one at which the purchase money of the land is to be reckoned.

By means of this Bill, or by one slightly modified to the same end by our Government, who well know how to play into the hands of the proprietors, whilst *seemingly* resisting them, the proprietors hope to have their defective titles confirmed—to be quieted in their unjust occupation of the Fishery Reserves—and to have a declaratory law to the effect that they neither do now, nor ever did owe any quit rents: and, unless the people shall unanimously, and in the most determined manner, express their disapprobation of such a measure, and lay the strongest injunctions upon their representatives to oppose its adoption by the Legislature—it will undoubtedly become law; the proprietors will thereby accomplish all their ends, and the tenants be forever shut out from every prospect of relief from the heavy load of subjection by which they have been so long crushed to the earth, except by such means of *self-redemption* as the slave-holder sometimes affords to his slaves—a means of which, however, but few of them can avail themselves, if it be true, as there is but too good reason to believe it is, that "*forty per cent of the tenants throughout the Island do not procure from their farms a sufficiency of food.*"

If it were possible to hold one general meeting throughout the Island, and to submit to them such a Bill as that now under our consideration, for their adoption or rejection, we do not believe that one *honest* voice among them would be raised in favor of it; but, on the contrary, that they would be unanimous in their condemnation and rejection of it.

Well satisfied, however, as we are as to what must be the general feeling of the tenantry with respect to the contemplated measure, we are, we must confess, not so with respect to the reception it may meet with in the Legislature, where, we much fear, *unless prevented by pressure from without*, means may be found to procure its full acceptance.