The Reciprocity Treaty.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

It may be thought that the favor this measure is supposed to have received from the commercial and manufacturing interests has been too much taken for granted, and that no sufficient proof that the ratification of this treaty was mainly brought about by New York millers and merchants, and New England manufacturers, has been or can be produced.

The proof, however, is at hand, though some of the evidence, it must be confessed, is rather circumstantial than direct. The parties—particularly the New England manufacturers—did not care to commit themselves before the country to so open a betrayal of the agricultural interest, having pledged themselves in every shape and form, at every election involving the fate of the tariff, that the home markets which our farmers were thus to be taxed to create, should be exclusively theirs to possess and enjoy.

A short narrative of the order of events will show with whom this reciprocity measure originated, by whom, and by what arguments it was supported, by what votes it was finally carried, and also incidentally, by what means the vote of Southern Senators representing agricultural States was obtained for it.

General Dix, a Senator from New York, specially representing, as well understood at the time, the milling interest of Northern New York, and the commercial interest of the city of New York, and warmly sympathizing in the success and prosperity of New York internal improvements—her canals and railroads—prepared a bill embracing the substance of the present treaty, which was introduced by his friends into the House of Representatives during the early part of the session of 1849, and which bill, as Senator Pearce subsequently stated in his place in the Senate, was, "unaccompanied by any report, passed without discussion;" and as he, the Senator, "believed, without any knowledge of a majority of the members of that body."

It came before the Senate, we are informed on the same authority, "without any report, and no papers accompanying it." A brief explanation of the bill was now given by Senator Dix; but this so far from satisfying Senators, only sufficed to call their attention to the obnoxious, selfish and local character of the legislation sought.

Senator Pearce attacked it in a masterly speech of great ability, and showed the injustice that would be done to agriculture by thus throwing down all barriers, so far as this interest was concerned.

He said: "I think it is a very important measure, a departure from the general revenue policy of the country, involving in its consequences, direct and remote, a probable and serious injury to one of the greatest interests of the country—an interest as little or less protected than any other, and quite as much entitled to the benefit of direct or incidental protection as any. The bill proposes to allow the importation into the United States from Canada, free of duty, of wheat and breadstuffs generally, and other products of that colony, upon condition that similar articles, the product of the United States, may be imported into Canada free of duty. Now, sir, there is really no reciprocity in all this: the bill is delusive. If it pass, not a dollar's worth of all these products will be exported from the United States to Canada. * * Canada is not and cannot be a market for such products of the United States; while a direct effect of the bill is to give her a participation in our home market—so that there will be no equivalent afforded to us; certainly none to the great grain growing interest, which is mostly concerned in the legislation on this subject. * * This bill, therefore, may be considered as the first movement towards the withdrawal of all, even incidental, protection to the grain growers of the United States, while other great interests retain the protection which the tariff of 1846 gives them. I do not think the people interested in the agriculture of the country will be satisfied with this. If they are not to have an equality of benefits, they will insist upon an equality of another sort. Benefits not generally given must be generally withdrawn, and other interests must abandon the protection given to them. Certainly, there is no equivalent offered by this measure to the agricultural interest. Whatever benefit is to be derived from it, will enure to the millers of Northern New York, to Northern railroads and canals, and to Northern shippers and manufacturers, and to them the profits must be much smaller than the injury to the agricultural class. * * But surely, in a country like ours, that produces a surplus of twenty to twenty-five millions of bushels of wheat, beyond all the wants of our ordinary consumption, we have a right to ask that we may enjoy our home market without competition from other countries, on terms such as apply to no other great interest of the country."

The Senator also forcibly contended that our treaties with other countries, particularly with Russia, would compel us to admit their produce on the same terms we did the produce of Canada—a position in which he was subsequently sustained by Mr. Hunter.

But Mr. Hunter also ably opposed this bill on its merits, and which bill, be it remarked, is identical with the treaty, so far as the Senator's objections to it went. He asked: "Is it fair to take away all the protection afforded to the agricultural interest, while you retain that afforded to the manufacturing interest? * * It would seem as if the agricultural interest were considered a great beast of burden, doomed to bear all the loads to be imposed upon the productions of this country; and we tax it freely and without remorse.

"Now, sir, I am willing, so far as the agricultural interests are concerned, to place them on the footing of free trade, provided all other interests are placed on the same footing. But to allow the manufacturing interest to receive high protection, and to take from the agricultural interest all the protection that is afforded to them—and that much less than is afforded to others—is unfair and unjust."

Alluding to the act of 1846, by which the Canadians were allowed to send their produce through our ports subject to a drawback, and which law passed Congress, by the bye, as silently and hurriedly, if not as clandestinely, as the Reciprocity bill did the House of Representatives, "without a knowledge of the majority of the members of that body," Mr. Hunter said:—"We have thus done all that is necessary to give New York all the profits and advantages arising from the carrying trade between Canada and foreign ports. We have done all that it is legitimate for us to do—all that the commercial interest requires—and now they come here and ask that they may be allowed to receive the productions of Canada, free of duty, for home consumption. While the manufacturers of the North and East have the protection that is afforded them under the present tariff, they are to be allowed to receive breadstuffs free of duty from Canada, and probably the Baltic also. Now, sir, this is unequal in more than one point of view—unequal not only between the agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing interest, but also unequal between different sections of the country. * * * * The commercial and navigating interest have all they can rightfully demand in the act allowing a drawback on Canadian productions shipped from our ports. But they have no right to demand, and surely the manufacturing interest ought not to expect, us to injure the agricultural classes by the passage of such a law as this for their benefit. With these views I am opposed to this bill, and hope the Senate will not agree to its adoption."

Thus forcibly the Virginia Senator expressed himself—thus pledged himself before the country.

Hamlet—If he should break it now—
P. King—'Tis deeply sworn.

Mr. Hunter was followed by Mr. Downs, Mr. Phelps, Mr. Metcalf, and others, all taking strong ground against Gen. Dix's bill. Its author at once saw that there was no possible chance for its passage, now that its true character and real objects were made known, and never even attempted to take a vote of the Senate upon it while he continued a member of that body. But by way of making a decent retreat, he called it up at a subsequent day, and made a speech in its favor, quoting from Oswego newspapers, and other sources of as veritable authority, and among other things he made the following statement and declaration:—

"If," said he, "the bill becomes a law, I have no hesitation in predicting that vessels will be ladened with wheat at Chicago, Green Bay, Detroit and Cleveland, and unloaded at Liverpool. Ship owners, producers, all, will be greatly benefitted by this free commerce, which will have an advantage in avoiding transhipment between the point of embarkation and the sea or the foreign market. If the result is to affect in any way the producers in the middle States, as Kentucky in the West, and Maryland and Virginia on the Atlantic, it will be to relieve them from competition in our own markets, with the wheat growers of Ohio, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin."

The New York Senator thus represents in effect that he had brought forward a measure to turn the grain trade of the West to Liverpool, via the St. Lawrence, instead of its coming as formerly to New York. He has enumerated all the great grain States of the West as being likely to take this direction with their exports, and suggests that they will do so to an extent to leave our Atlantic markets open to the middle States, "relieved" of the competition from the West they now meet there. Facilities were thus to be furnished Western producers, by this bill, introduced by a New York Senator and politician, to avoid New York canals and New York railroads, New York shipping ports and New York shippers, and even the citizens of the city of New York were to pay higher prices for flour to the producers of the middle States, the produce of the West being thus directed by Gen. Dix's new route to Europe, and no longer meeting in competition in our New York and other Atlantic markets. This is magnanimous.

One of Mr. Webster's eulogists has claimed for him that he dealt little in assertion or exaggeration. The New York Senator, at the very moment he made these declarations, knew that the Canadians themselves were actually taking our route in preference to their own, boasting that they could send a barrel of flour to Liverpool, by New York, fifty cents cheaper than they could by the St. Lawrence, and then as now were taking our route in preference to their own. Such assertions not only bear upon their face their own contradiction, but impeach in every line the sincerity of their author. Gen. Dix could not have believed that, to any considerable extent, Western produce would have taken the route he indicated, or he would have been the last man to have brought forward such a measure. It is but too evident, from his whole course and the character of his speech, that he was speaking as an advocate rather than as a statesman—speaking from a brief prepared to argue the cause of Rochester and Oswego millers, and New York shippers, instead of taking a statesmanlike, national view of the subject, or really caring one iota for the interest of those middle States whose opposition he sought to propitiate by such poor sophistry.

But it must be confessed that the New York Senator was ingenious and adroit in managing his case. This very speech had much to do in bringing about the ratification of the treaty; and this is my apology for noticing it at such length.

In the course of his remarks, the Senator threw out the following idea:—"Now, I venture to assert," said he, "that these impositions," (alluding to the operation of the tariffs of the two countries,) "will not long be submitted to on either side; and, if they are not removed by the two governments, the inhabitants of both countries will look to annexation as the only practical measure of relief."

Senator Hunter may not, at the time, have regarded these words as prophetic; but, alas! he soon received what he considered a confirmation of them, and from that moment saw only the danger, or fancied danger, to the "peculiar institution." The wheat fields of the farmer he had so well defended were at once abandoned; the unreasonable exactions of other interests he had so truthfully and forcibly pointed out and denounced, he was ready to yield to and freely comply with, so that those phantom forms of free men, multiplied on free territory, should not haunt him through the vista of a distant future.

Thus it was. On a certain day, some months after this, Sir Henry Bulwer entered the Senate chamber (it is well known that this British minister frequently resorted there to play the lobby member and to electioneer with Senators on this subject,) and taking Mr. Hunter out, a long conversation followed. When the Virginia Senator returned, a gentleman approached him and said:—"Well, sir, did Sir Henry make any impression on you?" The answer was, "Yes, he did; he represented that five-sixths of this provincial population were engaged in agriculture; that they had no markets; that markets they must have; that unless they could get them on other terms, they would annex themselves to the United States."

The trap so cunningly set by the New York Senator and so successfully sprung by the accomplished British courtier and dexterous diplomatist, caught not only the Virginia Senator, but nearly every Southern Senator, whig and democrat, except Mr. Badger, who, no doubt, believed it all a mere ruse, and who was certainly bitterly opposed to the treaty, but who was sick and did not vote upon it. On such "compulsion" the two Virginia Senators consented to sacrifice the great and paramount leading staple of Virginia—her wheat; the two whig Senators of Georgia submissively abandoned the great timber forests and the lumber of that State, and all went for reciprocity, or rather as they probably conceived, against annexation.

Supposing the fears and apprehensions of these gentlemen to have been really well founded, and that annexation in one event would have followed, and was desirable to the North for political or other reasons, or was desirable to the country, for the immense possessions it would have brought us, we have by seizing at the shadow lost the substance; in attempting to secure the navigation of a single river and a little trade, we have lost an empire—an immense territory, possessing vast resources, and rapidly settling with a good population—indeed already to a great extent covered by such a population.

And now for the evidence that New England manufacturers have deserted protection so far as agriculture is protected. It is to be found in the fact, that every New England Senator, except Mr. Foot, of Vt.,

——— faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he,

voted in secret session for the ratification of this treaty.

The remarks of Mr. Winthrop in the House of Representatives, on the occasion of his calling on Mr. McLane, as chairman of a committee, to report a bill on this subject, were at the time regarded as very significant, well known as it was, that Mr. Winthrop might be regarded as a fair exponent of the views of New England manufacturers. The movement of the Massachusetts representative seemed to anticipate and approve the result which the two Massachusetts Senators ratified in voting for the treaty.

Nor is this the only instance in which New England manufacturers have seemed to chuckle over and rejoice at the withdrawing of protection to agriculture. Mr. Rantoul's construction of Mr. Slade's bill or law protecting wool, by which the law was almost in effect repealed, and which compelled the farmers, in many instances, to cut the throats of their sheep, was announced by the press of our protection friends of New England with undissembled satisfaction.

Nor has the manufacturing interest failed to beset every whig Secretary of the Treasury to abolish the duty on the raw material generally, though this was confessedly not the old tariff doctrine of Henry Clay, Henry Baldwin, John Tod, and other friends of protection. And they succeeded with Mr. Corwin, against all his former acts and declarations. With Mr. Merideth, too, they succeeded, but without involving him, as I am aware, in any inconsistency.

But this is all a short-sighted policy on the part of the manufacturing interest. They are fast losing both the confidence and the sympathy of the rural districts. Their demands seem to be for the exclusive advantages of protection. They are for protection when they themselves are to be protected—against it when agriculture is to be protected. They claim a monopoly in fabricating, that they may sell high; they refuse a monopoly or any protection to others, that they may buy low. Their plan seems to be to have one set of customers to sell to, another to buy from—selling dear and buying cheap is the substance of the political economy of our manufacturing friends. Then go ahead, and the devil take the hindmost.

A MIDDLE STATE FARMER.

The Proposed Bill for the Organization of the United States Army Professionally Examined.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

The bill for the reorganization of the army, now before Congress, is certainly a magnificent conception. It covers, as with a huge cloak, all the various recommendations of the "Honorable Secretary of War," in his last report. These come to us under the sanction of high authority, and it is with due respect that we purpose to notice some of the features of the bill, which, if passed, will in their action, tend to subvert all that is commendable in the existing organization, and lay the army open to favoritism, and to the vile machinations of every sycophantic demagogue.

Ours is a peculiar organization—and it is absolutely necessary that it should be so. A French *corps d'armée*, with its splendid staff, and all its paraphernalia, ready to embark for the Crimea—or an English division with its guards—the heroes of Waterloo, and destined to be heroes under the walls of Sebastopol—either of which would equal the entire American army—is not organized in a manner suited to a country like ours. With a frontier, foreign, Indian, &c., of 24,000 miles, and with an army of 11,000 effectives to protect it, common sense must admit that a very peculiar organization of such a handful of men, who are to perform the duties of an army of ten times the number, is not only necessary, but imperative.

The bill strikes at the staff and staff corps, and with one fell blow demolishes a system which it has taken long years of experience to perfect. For our service is a system—and we say it with pride—that has served its purpose fully and satisfactorily. In peace, it has satisfied every demand upon it; and in war, when the energies of the entire nation were exerted, it did its work so well that none—not even the pet systems of Europe—could have done better. It protected millions of public property, and disbursed millions of public money, faithfully and honestly; it brought talent and science into the field, of to common order, and which can well bear comparison with what is now being exhibited to a gazing world, on a small peninsula 'mid the waters of the Black Sea.

If, then, it has been, and is accomplishing its end, and that, too, to the satisfaction of all—if the requirements of such a frontier as ours, with small garrisons scattered over it at long intervals, and amid deserts and wildernesses where few but the much abused white-kid gloved army officers have penetrated, have been fully met—if its skill and acquirements are such as to receive the eulogiums of foreign masters in the art—if war, with all its terrors, has drawn largely on its energies, its science, its probity, and has not uttered a murmur of disapprobation, why should it be cut down and shorn of the glory it has acquired in its entirety, in order to attempt a new system that has nothing to recommend it but its novelty, and part of which was tried in former years and found wanting? Our staff is a large one, disproportionately so for so small an army; but it must be borne in mind that the same staff duty is required for a garrison of ten men as for one of ten companies. The quartermasters furnishing barracks, clothing, transportation, &c., the commissary food, and the ordnance officer all the munitions of war, must all cater to the wants of every soldier; and where the garrisons are small and scattered, as is the case with us, it would be absurd to institute a comparison between the size of the staff and the size of the army. The ordnance corps, besides its duties to the army proper, furnishes arms and equipments of every description to our militia, numbering over two millions of men. Is the number of officers in the staff and staff corps too large, furnishing idlers and fancy men? There is nothing in the Secretary's report that would lead us to the belief that such is his opinion. Then the objection is not to the number employed, but to the method of selecting and appointing. The question then arises—and this is the principle involved in every feature of the bill—will an organization requiring staff duties to be performed by officers detailed, be preferable to the present organization of permanent staff corps and departments? We will confine our remarks to the workings of the two systems in the Ordnance corps and the Quartermaster's department, as those two are particularly affected by it: but the same remarks will apply equally to the others.

The Ordnance corps is at present composed of thirty six officers, with a colonel at the head. There are eighteen arsenals and several depots under its charge and superintendence. The duties of these officers require "continued study and experience of a special kind." Some of them require the study and experience of a lifetime, as, for instance, in the casting of heavy ordnance to acquire that thorough knowledge of metals, their mixture and certain qualities and characteristics, which will insure perfect safety in the use of guns by the soldier. The present corps, with slight increments, has been in existence over twenty years. It was in existence on a small scale when Mr. Calhoun administered the War department. On his recommendation and under his influence it was merged into the artillery, the ordnance duties to be performed by details from that arm; in substance the very system shadowed forth in the bill, which reduces the corps to eleven officers—the subordinate duties to be performed by subalterns detailed from the line. After the trial of several years, it resulted in a signal failure, and Mr. Calhoun, who had been the mover of the change, now strongly advocated the return to the former system, that of a permanent corps.

Since that period it has continued to be a separate department. And with what result? We leave it to the judgment of the entire army. Under its superintendence, our material of war is equal to anything in the world—our artillery is a model—our small arms superior to the best of English or French manufacture. Were these improvements due to the organization of a separate department? It is but reasonable to suppose that officers whose attention is specially directed to a particular branch, are apt to attain a proficiency unattained by others. 'Tis the effect of mere division of labor. The younger officers of the corps who play a subordinate part at the different stations, are daily fitting themselves for command; and to those who are best informed, the necessity of having constant access to the workshops is considered absolute in the formation and education of an ordnance officer. If no separate corps is necessary, on the same principle why distinguish between infantry, artillery and cavalry?—why not merge them into each other, and let every soldier be perfectly skilled in the duties of the several arms? Let every private in the ranks have the intuitive military skill of a Clive, and every captain and lieutenant be endowed with the splendid intellect of a Napoleon—that is all. Let this bill pass, and what will be the effect? A lieutenant who has been with his regiment for the last ten years is assigned to duty at one of the arsenals. The supposition will naturally be, that he will not be retained on that duty more than two or three years, whatever may be the desire of the War Department respecting him, and for this very cogent reason: that every influential politician, whose earnest recommendation cannot be slighted even by the most independent in power, desires that some kinsman or the son of some political supporter should have the benefit of the system of details; and further, because it is against human nature, for we may as well attempt to promote as to detail according to merit. It will lead to favoritism, which is a curse to any service, and to what is a curse of a darker stamp—political intrigue and influence.

With the fact staring him in the face, that this is but a temporary appointment, will the lieutenant take any particular interest in his new duties, especially when he is well aware that no new acquirement will add to his rank or position in the service, and that in so short a time he can at best learn but a bare smattering of what takes men a lifetime of strict application to master? No. The knowledge of ordnance duties will be more widely disseminated through the army, but there will not remain in the service an ordnance officer worthy the name, after those who now compose the corps shall have died away or resigned. As well abolish the West Point Academy because its students are not taught the classics—this being by some considered necessary to finish the educated officer and gentleman—as to abolish the ordnance, because, forsooth, each of its officers, besides the knowledge of his own duties, cannot lay claim to the genius of a Vauban. Yet this seems to be the knotty point. Staff officers must understand all line duties—the manœuvring of a regiment, the drilling of a battery, the leading of a squadron, &c.—and every line officer must be *au fait* at all staff duties. A gallant light artilleryman must be able to take charge of a cannon foundry, and a dashing dragoon be equal to all the varied minutiæ of arsenal duties. Bad guns and munitions, worse artillery and worse dragoons, would be the result. And who can doubt it? Yet this is the system set forth in the bill, and which is to be a shining light to the European students of military polity.

Take the quartermaster department. It is now composed of thirty-eight officers, with a brigadier general at the head. Its duties comprise the furnishing of an army with barracks, hospitals, transportation, clothing, forage, &c., &c.; in fact, with everything required by an army, except food and munitions of war, which are furnished by the commissary department and the ordnance respectively. Without such a department, properly organized and perfectly efficient, by whatever name it may be known, no army can ever take the field. Those who supplied our few regiments, called an army, in the Mexican campaign can be appealed to in confirmation of the fact that without their permanent organization, with officers thorough masters of the thousand little details of duty, and without the careful, thorough and intelligent supervision of their distinguished chief, the army might have found itself in the face of a more terrible foe than the Mexicans.

A department on which an army in the field must depend solely and exclusively, not only for its efficiency but for its very existence, should be kept, in peace or in war, equal to the greatest trials and emergencies. And how is this to be effected, but by entrusting the duties to officers bred and educated in that particular branch? men whose faculties are ever concentrated on the best and most certain means of performing a service, which, in every army in the world, or that ever took the field, is considered of paramount importance? The system of appointing to vacancies is, at present, perfect. What new lights have been lately thrown upon the subject, to render a change desirable, we are unable to say. Vacancies are filled by selections from the line; and the appointing power has every opportunity of making the best selections. Officers are willing to qualify themselves for their new duties, because of the permanent character of their new position. As far as human justice, impartiality and foresight can reach, this seems as perfect a method of filling vacancies as can be devised. You have the entire army to select from, and then the permanency of the new position ensures you the best energies of all. With the new system, the same evil effects will result as in the case of the ordnance. A subaltern, though a thorough soldier in every respect, but without a mechanical idea, or a commercial thought, or the least experience, is detailed for duty in this department: What will be the consequence? The services of a fine officer will be lost to the army, and the department will labor under the disadvantage and inconvenience of entrusting duties to one totally unequal to the task. But, it is urged, we will retain all those who are found most competent. If so, then but a few are to receive the benefits of the detail system, and the argument that this new organization will diffuse through the army knowledge now confined to a few, falls to the ground. It, in fact, brings the service exactly to what it is at present, though on paper it stands a beautiful system of details, and to the uninitiated makes every officer a very "factotum," with all military sciences at his fingers' ends. We cannot but agree with "Brown," that it will make officers "jacks of all trades, but masters of none," and we may add, very poor "jacks" at that.

We cannot close these remarks without expressing, with all respect, our utter dissatisfaction, in view of the grand scheme of forming a brigade of engineers, with a brigadier general to cap the two columns. Are the wants of our country to be compared to the wants of any other country under the sun? With our hostile Indian tribes in the very heart of our broad domain—with a world of wilderness 'mid the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains—with roads to be opened, rivers to be explored, deserts to be crossed, secrets of the West to be divulged, the resources of our Western wilds to be known—whom do we look to but to our topographical engineers—men who, by education and training, are admirably fitted for such high and important duties? Perhaps the topographical engineers have little objection to be merged into the engineers proper; but how will it work? You will have a corps of engineers, some of the members able to build a fortress, and some who have no more idea of fortifications than that they seem to the visual organ to be a compound of stone, cement and earth, with finely sodded slopes and well-watered ditches. Another, who can construct a demilune or throw up a trench-cavalier, will have some indistinct recollection that in his West Point days, he, on some very few occasions, peeped through a tube called a telescope at a something that twinkled very prettily, called a star. The different duties will be performed by the self-same officers who perform them now, and, *de facto*, there will be a double set of officers under one name—"*Multum in parvo.*"

If in these remarks we have indulged in any degree of levity, it was to bring out as strikingly as possible the defects of the bill now before Congress. It is taking us back to effete systems, that served their time badly heretofore, and were discharged dishonorably. To those whose lives have been spent in the service, whose bodies are scarred with the blows of battle, and whose heads are bowed with the load of honors, this seems to be a retrograde movement; and to those now young, whose every hope is centred in a soldier's life, those hopes are dimmed by the uncertainty of a future that is to depend on new military systems, springing, armed *cap à pie*, from some political head.

A. N. Z.

The New Croton Reservoir—Reasons Why its Projected Site is not as yet in the Possession of the City.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK HERALD.

Your journal of Thursday last contains an article purporting to be the reasons assigned by the Croton Aqueduct Board for delaying the prosecution of the work for the new reservoir, in a manner which would prove available, for the purpose of furnishing employment to the thousand unoccupied workingmen of the city. The objections raised are two-fold, though, to my mind, neither of them appear satisfactory.

First, then, it is alleged, "that section 12 of the amended charter prohibits the expenditure of money exceeding $250, unless by contract;" and hence the employment would be by contractors, and not by the city. This is a technical objection, and does not affect the question; for whether the work is prosecuted by contractors or by the city, it involves the employment of a large number of men, which is the object sought at this time to be attained. The second objection is the chief one, upon which the first mainly depends. The Croton Board say, "that the site proposed for the new reservoir is not yet in possession of the city." Let us inquire, then, whose fault it is that the city is not in possession of the site, so that the work could be contracted for at once, and the improvement proceeded with.

The act authorizing the construction of the reservoir passed the Legislature on the 30th day of June, 1853. The Commissioners under the act received their appointment on the 17th day of April, 1854. Their duties, by the seventh section of the act, are defined as follows:—"The Commissioners shall proceed with all reasonable diligence to estimate in favor of the several owners, lessees, parties or persons interested in the land to be taken, a just and equitable compensation for his, her, or their land comprised therein, and to report to the court, without necessary delay, the amount of such compensation to be paid to the respective owners, lessees, parties and persons respectively." The Croton Board report that the Commissioners have investigated the titles of about eight hundred lots, which is a very unnecessary labor for them to perform, except so far as may be required to ascertain to whom their awards are to be made. This is apparent by the 8th section of the act, which vests the entire fee of the land in the city, immediately upon the confirmation of the report. Even where the names of the owners are not ascertained, the fact occasions no impediment to a perfect title, because in such cases the Commissioners make their awards for the benefit of "unknown owners"—the title to the land vesting in the city, not by purchase, but by legislative enactment. The 8th section provides "that the Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonalty shall become seized in fee for all the land embraced in the act, as soon as the report of the Commissioners receives the confirmation of the court."

Now, we ask, in sober seriousness, can it be possible that it should require these commissioners two hundred and twenty days to estimate the value of 1,360 vacant lots? Here, then, lies the error. Appointments upon these various commissions are based, not upon fitness or capacity, but upon party and political affinities. Look at the names of those who are acting as commissioners for the opening of most of our streets, and what do you find? Why, simply, that in a large majority of cases they are professional politicians, men whose activity and trickery at the polls, and in political committees and conventions, are too frequently their sole recommendation. This furnishes the explanation why these matters are prolonged beyond all reasonable time, and accounts likewise for the large sum annually drawn from the city treasury for these purposes. The system is a corrupt one, and our Judges should refuse to lend themselves to its continuance, by declining, in every instance, to appoint persons selected from that class of the community. On one occasion we were personally solicited to request the appointment of an individual on one of these commissions, on the ground "that he had expended a large sum of money in a recent canvass, and wanted to get some of it back." We injured his feelings not a little, owing to our inability to discover in this act of self sacrificing patriotism a sufficient recommendation for the office.

The persons acting as the commission in the matter of the new reservoir, are respectable gentlemen, and our objection to their appointment rests solely on the ground that their business avocations are such as not to allow them time to attend to the duties of the commission. The delay of nine months abundantly proves the correctness of this assertion. It would be a very easy matter to find in this city ten thousand men who could have performed the same labor within the space of six weeks or two months. Of course, it would be expected that their whole time would be given to the subject; and failing to do that, be too conscientious either to accept the trust, or to charge $4 for services occupying the fractional part of a day. Let the experiment be tried, and allow the commission their pay for a given number of days, and our word for it, the work will be completed within the paying period. Come, gentlemen commissioners, you have had your $4 per day since the 17th of April; hurry up your report, and let the hungry and the needy have employment.

LAICUS.

NEW YORK, January 12, 1855.

The Lagoon and Province of Chiriqui.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.

Permit me, in accordance with the universal cosmical spirit which has always characterized your valuable progressive paper, to offer for your acceptance a few remarks on the condition and future prospects of the Province of Chiriqui. While we find notices of man and his doings converging from all parts of the known world into your columns, nothing has ever, I believe, appeared in them tending to do justice to the many internal advantages and important external relations which the course of events and tendency of the age must sooner or later develope. It might be said, that since Columbus gave his name to Admiral's Bay, and saw for the first time the Lagoon of Chiriqui, the world had almost forgotten the fact. Like that part of the Isthmus styled then "Castille de Oro," all was absorbed in the golden blaze of the conquest of Peru, while now it requires no very prophetic eye to see that, after all, the Isthmus shall become to be of more use to the world at large, than the gold and treasures of the murdered Incas.

But, after all, many will ask, where is Chiriqui? Is it the land of the Cherokee Indians?

By no means. Chiriqui is the ancient and modern name of one of the finest provinces which form the geographical isthmus of Panama. The great Lagoon of Chiriqui, on the Atlantic, forms its northern border. Costa Rica and Golfo Dulce its western. The Pacific ocean washes its southern coast, and the neighboring province of Veraguas bounds it on the east. A continuation of the Cordilleras of the Andes, running from southeast to northwest, divides it into two unequal portions, following rather the Atlantic side. The high, sharply cut ridges, clothed with trees of never-ceasing verdure, bearing on their trunks parasitic forests of gigantic mosses and splendid orchidese, go on night and day condensing moisture, which in the deep ravines and valleys form on each side numerous rivers, running respectively to the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, both of which, in a clear day, can be seen from their crests by the adventurous traveller. The northern crest is characterized by forest and mountain spurs, while the Pacific side is no less so by extensive pasture plains and gentle undulations. On a clear night, when the polar star just makes out to peep over the volcano of Chiriqui, and sees wheeling below it alternately the Russian empire and the almighty republic, we stand on the bridge between North and South America, listening to the shouts of Europe and the sighs of Africa on our right, while lands of "barbaric pearl and gold" beckon to us on our left.

From a peculiar law in the distribution of gold, we find it to abound more on the northern and eastern slopes of the Cordilleras. Experience has exemplified this in the "mineral de Veragua," the Oural chain of mountains, and those gold bearing ranges in Australia which extend from south to north. Under the Spanish government the mineral region of Veragua gave gold abundantly, and affords strong proof in favor of the gold yielding celebrity of the mines of Tisinyal, which were situated on the Atlantic side of the Cordilleras, near the Chiriqui Lagoon. From the certainty of this, added to the fact of Flandin and Merrel having discovered veins of excellent coal, it is to be hoped that Chiriqui and her Lagoon will be dragged out from among the forgotten corners of the earth, and be brought into the line of steamboat traffic and active industry. Mr. Flandin, in a late visit he made here to obtain a privilege to construct a road across, was very much pleased with the truly virgin freshness and tranquility of the Chiriqui landscape; he saw how easy the necessities of life could be produced by very little labor, and sighed to think how many moral and industrious families could be happy amid the smiling valleys that are as yet only pasture grounds for a few cattle. The people repose in the hope that he will be enabled to interest the United States people and government towards them, and succeed in throwing the light of the age over their almost unknown valleys, rivers, lakes, and harbors. The Province is divided into two divisions; all the land on the Atlantic side of the Cordilleras, constituting the canton of Bocas del Toro, and that on the Pacific being called the canton of Alange. David, the capital, is situated on a magnificent plain, about ten miles from the ocean, on the western bank of the river of the same name, in latitude 8 deg. 23 min. north, and longitude 82 deg. 27 min. west, according to the surveys of H. B. M. steamer the Herald. At distances of from three to four leagues lay the villages of Dolega, Gualaca, Bogneron and Bugara, upon the same plain, which gradually rises until it is lost at the foot of the Cordilleras. Besides the plain, the two most prominent objects, as well as the blue mountains of the chain of the Andes, are two remarkable isolated mountains, the volcano of Chiriqui, some 11,000 feet nigh, to the north by west of David, and the table mountain of Chercha, over whose flat surface rises the sun in the east, with a very pretty waterfall of 300 feet, which at noon reflects back the sun's rays like a ribbon of polished silver, and which, along with the bearings of the volcano, serve the navigators as a landmark in making Boca Chica, the seaport of David. The distance to Panama is about 300 miles by sea, the trade being at present carried on in four or five small schooners. The population of the town is about 5,000, and number of houses 500, of which twelve are two story houses, costing from $400 to $600 to construct; and as a very active Italian has just succeeded in putting up a saw mill, house building will become more general and more satisfactory. Close to the town Mr. James Agnew, a native of the United States, and the present Governor of the province, has had a large coffee plantation for many years back, yielding annually from two to three hundred quintals of coffee; but he has been obliged to abandon it, and turn his attention more to cattle, owing to the great increase of wages for day laborers, while they work as little as possible and eat as much as they can. At present all the produce that will pay has to be sent to Panama, but we still look forward to the completion of the road to Bocas del Toro, by which means a direct communication being opened up with the United States and Europe, a great many natural productions now useless would be made valuable. For instance, we have abundance of the caoutchouc trees, a species of plant from which could be extracted fibres useful for ropes, clothing and paper; four classes of indigenous, and five or more of exogenous trees, producing fine oils; nine species of trees producing gums and balsams, and an immense variety of wood for construction and furniture. But above all, the great superiority of Chiriqui over almost any other country similarly situated, is its superior healthiness to European constitutions.

The principal produce of Chiriqui hitherto has been cattle, horses and hogs, as is found to be the case in the plains wherever inhabited by Spanish South Americans—these branches of industry being most suitable for an indolent life and a warm climate. Since the California excitement in Panama, the production of grain has augmented. Formerly the cattle were killed, dried and sent off to the mines of Choco; and hence there were a considerable number of hides exported, which has in a great measure ceased, as the cattle are driven on foot to Panama. The exports may be calculated as follows:

LIVE STOCK.

Kind.	No. in the Province.	Annual Increase.	Average Prices in the Province.	No. Exported.	Value at Selling Prices in Panama.
Cattle,.	109,000	15 per ct.	$10 a $15	2,000	$50,000
Horses,	10,000	do.	do.	—	—
Hogs...	7,500	—	10 a 20	3,000	60,000
	126,500			5,000	110,000

GRAIN.

Kind.	No. of Quintals Produced.	No. Exported.	Provincial Value.	Sold in Panama.
Indian Corn,.	15,000	10,000	$2½ per q'l	22,000
Rice....	2,500	5,000	3 do.	15,000

Chickens, turkeys, beans, &c., are excepted; horses are not now sent to Panama. Boards, also, are occasionally exported; with well placed saw mills the whole Pacific could be supplied. The soil is admirably adapted for sugar and tobacco. The former, brought from Panama, is selling here at 40 cents a pound, the quantity of raw sugar and molasses made by the imperfect machines of the country not being even enough to supply domestic consumption and the distilleries of spirits. Very common tobacco, even Virginia, sells at 40 cents a pound. Children from four years and upward know how to smoke, nor do young ladies think their charms lessened by openly indulging in the "filthy weed," which powerfully assists them in the *dolce far niente*—tempering at once the arrows of the sun and the imagination.

The people, voting under the new constitution, have elected Mr. Agnew, a native born American, to be Governor, but many years a resident in the Province—showing at once their liberal feelings and desire to be governed by a man who had the good luck to be born in the most go-a-head nation in the world; a fact that cannot fail to inspire confidence in any one who would by his capital or industry, be inclined to "come over and help us." Neither revolutions nor cholera morbus have as yet visited Chiriqui, nor any epidemic, save smallpox now and then. The only thing that is likely to trouble the tranquillity of our tranquil citizens, is the long vexed question of limits between us and Costa Rica. The latter, impelled by French and English company influence, demand a boundary line which would take away one-half of the province and sadly disfigure the integrity of the Isthmus. The people are averse to unite with Costa Rica, were it possible; for having obtained free ports, freedom from tithes and custom-houses, they do not wish again the same yoke, besides, having a natural love of peace and aversion to civil wars, so common in the neighboring republics. The Isthmus for her future destiny requires the fine harbor of Golfo Dulce, but nevertheless is willing to halve it with Costa Rica. The line insisted on by us is that of the law of the 20th of November, 1803, given by the King of Spain to the vice royalty of New Granada, giving her jurisdiction along the coast as far as Cape Gratio a Dios. Abandoning this mere sea coast line, we take that which affects the terra firma, viz.:—from the centre of Golfo Dulce to Punta Careta. We hope the United States will see justice done in all such questions between the American families, without bias of fear or favor from European politics. The people only desire peace, liberty and order, and feel that their union with Bogota brings them no substantial good, but that the aimless revolutions which every now and then take place in the capitals throw upon them the necessity of paying forced loans, &c., retard the progress of the Isthmus, endangers the peace and morality of its people, by party feeling embittered by civil war and bloodshed, at the head of the republic. Which is better, already whispers rumor, annexation or independence.

R. W. D.

DAVID, Nov. 20, 1854.

P. S.—Since writing the above, the following list of articles exported by land and sea, has been furnished me from the government office, with the value in New Granadian money, when sold in the province:—

ARTICLES EXPORTED FROM THE PROVINCE OF CHIRIQUI IN THE YEAR 1853.

Article	Value
7,500 hogs, average price $10	$75,000
120,000 quintals of rice, at $4	48,000
12,000 do. Indian corn, at $2 04	30,000
10 000 fowls at $5 per doz	4,166
4,500 cattle, at $12	54,000
*300 quintals of sarsaparilla, at $30	9,000
300 logs of mispero wood, at $5	1,500
Pearls of all sizes	2,000
200,000 pearl shells, at $3 per 1,000	600
500 doz. of cedar planks, at $10	5,000
Raw sugar	1,000
70 quintals of native tobacco, at $16	1,120
30,000 cedron beans, at $1 per 100	300
500 turkeys, at $2 each	1,000
1 quintal of vanilla	500
800 gallons cocoanut oil	1,000
Total	$234,186

* The principal part of the sarsaparilla was carried over to Bocas del Toro.

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL.

MONEY MARKET.

SATURDAY, Jan. 20—6 P. M.

The stock market continues unsettled. This morning an advance was realized on State securities and railroad bonds, while railroad stocks and other fancies fell off a fraction. Considering the inflation prices have already reached, there is much more firmness than we supposed possible so soon after such a serious depression. It appears more extraordinary, when it is borne in mind that all speculation thus far has been confined to the brokers of Wall street; that not a single share of any fancy stock has been taken out of the street, where one hundred have been bought in, and that the market is better supplied now than it has been for months. Notwithstanding these adverse circumstances, prices have moved pretty steadily upward, and are apparently firmly sustained. At the first board to-day, Missouri advanced ⅜ per cent; Indiana, ½; Virginia, ¼; Erie bonds, 1871, ½; Illinois Central bonds, ¼; New York Central bonds, ½; Reading Railroad, ½; Illinois Central Railroad, ½. Pennsylvania Coal declined ½ per cent; Cumberland, ½; New York Central Railroad, ¼; Erie Railroad, ¼; Harlem, ¼; Galena and Chicago Railroad, 1. The movement to-day was most active in Illinois Central bonds and in Cumberland Coal stock. Gold Hill Mining stock sold at ⅝ per cent.

Between the boards sales of $10,000 Hudson River Railroad third bonds, at 72½ a 75, interest added, and 22 shares Atlantic Dock Company, at 32 per cent, were made at auction.

At the second board the market was without material change. Harlem declined ¼ per cent. Erie Bonds, 1875, advanced 1 per cent.; Michigan Southern Railroad, 1; Missouri 6's, ½; Virginia 6's, ¼.

The transactions at the office of the Assistant Treasurer to-day, were as follows:—

Received	$76,331 90
Payments	80,530 04
Paid for Assay Office	986 53
Balance	2,738,466 55

The Erie Railroad Company earned $454,431 55 in December, 1854, against $381,203 40 for the same month in 1853. Increase, $73,228 15.

The warrants entered at the Treasury Department, Washington, on the 17th inst., were:—

For the redemption of stock	$37,099 15
For paying other Treasury debts	15,510 92
For the interior Department	3,147 09
For the Customs	5,579 22
For the War Department	1,048 66
For repaying in the War Department	1,218 66
For the Navy Department	187,360 15
For covering into the Treasury from Customs	66,466 88
Covering into Treasury from misc. sources	408 00

The return from the Bank of England for the week ending the 30th of December gives the following results, when compared with the previous week:—

Public deposits	£6,695,436	Increase	£135,022
Other deposits	10,558,387	Increase	548 330
Rest	3,152,753	Increase	12,101

On the other side of the account:—

Government securities	£11,611,553	Increase	£1,970
Other securities	15,866,634	Increase	1,325,231
Notes unemployed	7,779,685	Decrease	573,056

The amount of notes in circulation is £19,481,150, being an increase of £275,605, and the stock of bullion in both departments is £13,834,657, showing a decrease of £302,447 when compared with the preceding return.

Baring's circular of the 5th inst. says:—

There has been a large sale of United States 6 per cent bonds of 1868, at 103 a 104; the quotation is now 105 a 106; Indiana State 5's, 70; Massachusetts sterling 5's, inquired for at 102; Pennsylvania 5's, inscriptions, 73 a 75; some inquiry for the bonds at 80, at which price there are no more sellers. Sellers of Virginia 6's, dollar bonds, at 83, and of 5's Sterling bonds, at 85; Maryland, 88 a 90; New Orleans 6's, dollar bonds, nominal, at 78 a 80; Canada 6's, sterling, 107, sellers. Small sales of Illinois Central Railroad 7's have been made at 60; of the Pennsylvania Central 6's, dollar, 1st mortgage, 86 a 87, ex. div.; and of the 6's, sterling bonds, 2d mortgage, with interest from September, at 90. Our quotations are without the January dividends.

Stock Exchange.

SATURDAY, Jan. 20, 1855.

$20000 U S cp 6's '68	116¼	500 shs Cum C Co.s3	33½
5000 Missouri 6's....	89	300 do	33½
5000 Ill In Im s of '47	90	300 do......b60	33¼
5000 Ind State 5's...	81	200 do......b30	33⅜
6000 do.........	81¼	200 do......b60	33¼
32000 Virginia 6's...	96⅛	600 do.......s3	33¼
5000 do....b15.	96⅜	200 do......s30	33¼
1000 Louisiana 6's...	79	100 do.....at10	33½
1000 Erie 2d M bs..s3	95	100 do......b10	33¼
3000 Erie Inc bds..s3	103	1000 Gold H Mine.s60	⅝
2000 do s3	103½	100 N Y Cen RR..s60	88½
4000 Erie C bd '71.s3	76	100 do.... .s30	88½
32000 Erie bds....'75	80	8 do.........	88⅛
5000 do......b60	80½	15 do.........	88⅜
10000 do.....b60	81	150 Erie RR........c	46½
10000 Ill Cen RR b.b3	73	50 do.........	46⅜
10000 do.....b30	73	200 do......s30	46¼
3000 do.......c	73	100 do.......s3	46½
37000 do........c	72¾	100 do.........	46½
5000 do...... b3	72¾	310 do........c	46½
3500 do.........	72¾	100 do......b30	46¾
2000 do........c	72⅞	50 do.....b30	47
5000 do... ..b10	72¾	50 do......s30	46½
2000 N Y C RR Bds.s3	87	150 do.......s3	46¾
20 shs Mech Bank..	110	100 do......b30	47
20 Bowery Bank....	100	330 Harlem RR....s3	32
10 Am Ex Bank....	103½	200 do.....b60	32½
23 Metropo'n Bank.	100	100 do......b60	32⅜
20 Ohio Life & T Co.	75	400 do......s60	32
5 do.........	77	50 do.......s3	32¼
350 Canton Co.....s3	22½	120 Reading RR.....	72¾
100 do......b60	23	100 do......b30	73
50 do.........	22¾	225 do.......s3	73
50 N J Zinc Co.....	4	650 do......b60	73¼
100 do......b15	4	300 do b3	73½
50 Nic Transit Co..c	15⅞	500 do.......s3	73⅜
400 do........c	15¾	100 do.....s6m	73
100 do......b60	16	100 do...... b4	72¾
100 do......b30	16	300 do......b30	74
100 do......b30	15⅞	5 Mich South RR..	84
33 Penn Coal Co...	104¾	150 Ill Cen RR......	95½
50 do......b10	104¾	50 do.........	96
10 do.........	104½	50 do.........	96½
300 Cumb Coal Co.s3	33¼	40 Gal & Chic RR..	87
900 do.......s3	33	10 Chic & R I R....	81
100 do......b60	33½	13 do	80¾

SECOND BOARD.

$3000 Virg'a 6's.....	96¼	100 shs NY C RR.opg	88½
13000 Missouri 6's...	89	50 do.....b60	88¾
4000 do.........	89½	65 do .....opg	88¾
5000 Erie B, '75..b30	81	100 Ill Cent RR.....	96
10000 do.....b60	81	50 do.........	95¾
10000 do s60	81¼	100 Erie RR........	46½
10500 Ill Cen RR Bds	72¾	500 do b3	46⅜
6500 do	72¾	100 do......b3	46¾
3000 Ch & Rk Is bds.	89½	200 do.....b10	46¾
5 shs Bnk of Com.	105	300 do	46¾
10 Market Bank....	100	250 Harlem RR..b15	32⅛
50 Nic Transit..b30	15¾	400 do	32
500 Canton Co...b60	23	200 Reading RR...b3	74
25 do.....b30	23	100 do.....b30	74
500 Cumb Coal Co...	33¼	100 do.........	73⅞
100 do.....b30	33¼	200 Hud R Railroad.	38
200 do s3	33¼	5 Mich South'n RR	85
100 do......b30	33⅜	30 Mich Cent RR...	74½
5 Mich South'n C'n	79		

CITY TRADE REPORT.

SATURDAY, Jan. 20—6 P. M.

ASHES.—The market was quiet, and sales unimportant, without change in prices.

BREADSTUFFS.—The market was dull for all descriptions, with sales of about 5,000 bbls., including common State brands at $8 37½ a $8 50, and good straight do. $8 50 a $8 62½; favorite State at $8 62 a $10; common to good Western at $8 75 a $9 25, and extra Genesee at $10 25 a $11 50. Southern brands were heavy; sales of 500 a 600 bbls. were made, at $8 75 a $9 25 for common to good and $9 37½ a $10. Small sales of Canadian were made at $9 a $9 12, in bond, and at $9 75 a $9 87 and $10, duty paid. Wheat—Sales of 2,000 bushels Southern white were reported at $2 30. Corn—The market was dull and lower; about 30,000 bushels of Southern yellow and white were sold at 93c. a 94c., and closed dull. Western mixed was quiet and nominal, being held above the views of buyers. Rye was dull and nominal. Oats were unchanged. Barley was measurably out of market.

COFFEE.—The market was rather more active, with sales of about 860 bags of Rio, at 9c. a 9¾c. for common, and 9⅞c. a 10⅛c. for good; 300 mats Java at 13c., and 40 bags extra brown do. at 15c., and 205 Maracaibo at 10¾c.

COTTON.—The market continued firm, with sales of about 1,500 bales on the spot, leaving a very light stock on sale.

FRUIT.—The market was dull and nominal at previous rates.

HAY.—Small sales for shipping were made at 95c. a $1.

IRON.—The market was quiet, and sales moderate.

MOLASSES.—Sales of 200 bbls. New Orleans were made at 28c.; Cuba was scarce, and would sell at 28c. for good quality.

NAVAL STORES.—Spirits were dull at 40c. cash; rosin and raw turpentine were without change in prices, and dull.

OIL.—Linseed was steady at 82c.; other descriptions were unchanged.

PROVISIONS.—Mess pork was steady, with sales since our last report of about 1,000 bbls. old mess, at $12 25; old mess was nominal; 400 do. prime mess were sold at $14 37 a $14 50; and 300 do. new prime were sold at $13 25; 200 pieces uninspected prime mess sold at $14. Beef—100 bbls. Chicago repacked sold at 12½c. per bbl. less than $15; and 250 bbls. prime mess were sold at $23. Cut meats.—Sales of 25,000 lbs. shoulders were made at 9¼c. Lard—The market was easier, and sales of 100 a 500 bbls. good to prime were made at 10c.; and 500 bbls. grease lard sold at 8½c. a 8¾c.

RICE.—Sales of about 300 tierces were made at $3 75 a $4 75, the latter for prime quality.

SUGAR.—The transactions embraced about 400 a 500 hhds.; New Orleans was sold at 4⅜c. 5⅛c., part for refining.

TALLOW.—The market was dull, and no sales of moment were made.