

THE ZUID-AFRIKAAN.

Cape Town, March 10, 1855.

Parliament was opened at noon on Thursday last by His Excellency the Governor, in the state room at Government House.

Some readers probably expect that we should offer our opinions on the Governor's Speech at the opening of Parliament. We fully agree that it is about the most interesting subject now before the public, but we shall abstain on principle from any hasty comments on a document, which enters rather fully into some of the most important questions, that are about to occupy the collective wisdom of our legislators.

While we admit that every one is at liberty to express opinions on Sir George's opening speech, we would also caution those, who have been privileged with hearing it read, or have at most hastily perused it, against giving vent to crude criticisms on a piece of composition, which is evidently the result of deliberate reflection, founded on personal observation, and which is entitled to some respect, not only because it emanates from the highest functionary in the Colony, but also because it bears the stamp of candor and bespeaks an earnest desire of co-operating with our Parliament, in promoting the real interests of this portion of Her Majesty's dominions.

The friends of Dr. Tancred will be happy to learn that his sons, not many years ago pupils at Dr. Changuin's Establishment in this town, are very successful in their studies abroad. The junior brother is still at Boulogne, where he has obtained no less than seven prizes and eight distinctions, while the elder, Master Augustus, is about to take a bachelor's degree at Paris.

On Thursday last, the day on which Parliament was opened, the Speaker of the House of Assembly gave an entertainment to the members of Parliament at his residence in Kloof street. It was 11 o'clock before the company separated well satisfied with the evening's enjoyment.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, MARCH 15.—On the motion of Mr. Barry, the Governor's speech was read and entered on the minutes. The Mr. West then stated the expediency of fixing the time for the ordinary meetings of Council; upon which it was resolved by Mr. G. D. (London) and resolved, that the Council should sit every day, Saturdays excepted.

The standing committees of last session were re-appointed, as follows:—Committee on the Bill for the amendment of the laws relating to the duties of the various officers of the Revenue, Mr. Joubert, on account of his absence; Mr. G. D. (London) and Mr. G. D. (London) on the Bill for the amendment of the laws relating to the duties of the various officers of the Revenue.

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feel assured are so pregnant with importance as that they cannot fail to have their due weight upon the Councils of the Queen."

The draft was adopted, and it was resolved that it should be presented to the Governor by the whole Council on Monday (this day), at a quarter-past 10 o'clock.

A return of passes and contracts, registered in the office of the Clerk of the Peace of Colesberg to 31st Dec. 1854, was laid on the table.

The Secretary brought a message from the Governor conveying drafts of the following Bills, which were read a first time—the second reading being fixed for the 30th instant:—

- 1. For the better administration of Justice.
2. To amend the law relating to Aliens.
Copies of the reports and correspondence laid on the table in the House of Assembly, were also laid upon the table of the Council by command of the Governor.

Mr. Wicki gave notice that he would move on Monday for the re-appointment of the Committee of last Session for inquiring into the best means of introducing agricultural labor, suitable to the existing wants of the colony.

Council then adjourned till one o'clock on Monday (this day).

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, MARCH 15.—Mr. Speaker having read his commission to swear in members, Mr. Cawood took the oath as member for Graham's Town.

The Governor's speech was read, and ordered to be printed and distributed amongst the members.

Mr. Fairbairn gave notice that on Tuesday he would move the appointment of a committee on Standing Rules and Orders, to consist of Messrs. Jarvis, Ziervogel and the mover.

The House then adjourned till 2 o'clock on Friday.

FRIDAY, MARCH 16.—The House met pursuant to adjournment.

Mr. Meintjes presented two petitions from the inhabitants of the district of Hoogte, Somerset division, praying that the report of the select Committee on Crown Lands, of 8th Sept. last, may be adopted.

Mr. Pot presented a petition from the gaoler of Fort Peddie, for an increase of salary. The application being for a money grant, a debate ensued, when the motion that it be received was, upon a division, rejected by a majority.

A message was received from the Governor transmitting the three following Bills, which were read a first time:—

- 1. For the better organization and regulation of an armed and mounted Police Force upon the Eastern frontier of this Colony.
2. For granting compensation to certain persons in the Kat River, for the loss of even to which they were respectively entitled.
3. For the general management and regulation of the customs in the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope.

The Secretary to Government laid upon the table various papers—being reports on the Namaqualand copper mines and the bays and harbours of that coast; correspondence relative to the appointment of a Lieut. Governor and the creation of judicial and other establishments on the frontier; application of the President of the Orange Free State for an annual grant from the Cape Government; and conditions under which it is proposed to enrol pensioners for service in South Africa.

following letter from our London Correspondent will not be found uninteresting:—

London, January 5, 1855. You cannot fail to feel the present interruption to your postal communication with England, especially since there is no immediate prospect of any change for the better.

While the Colonies of Australia are thrown back upon sailing vessels for the conveyance of their mails it is scarcely to be hoped the Cape Colony will become once more a steam packet station.

Six weeks have elapsed since I had an opportunity of writing you and though it is true, no very important event has occurred during that time, it is annoying not to be able to keep you better advised of what is going on in European affairs.

The whole circle of news may be compressed in the following:—Parliament has been hastily summoned for the despatch of urgent business and adjourned over Christmas. The siege of Sebastopol progresses slowly. The Emperor of Austria has signed a treaty with France and England against Russia.

Her Majesty opened Parliament on the 12th Dec., in a speech of the usual brevity, making no more allusion to passing or coming events than was absolutely necessary and indeed casting no new light upon any political topic whatever.

Some allusion was necessarily made to the emergency which had called the houses together at that unusual period. A proper tribute was paid to the valour of the allied armies in the Crimea, and a spirited determination was expressed this there was to prosecute the war with energy and unanimity.

It was to be expected that on such a subject there would not be much difference of opinion even between Lord John and Mr. Disraeli, any more than between the Earls of Aberdeen and Derby. We were, however, scarcely prepared for the perfect accord which was exhibited between all parties and sections of politicians in both houses.

There was indeed a spice of argumentative dissent dropped in here and there by a Derby or Ellenborough, but not more than sufficed to impart a pleasant poignancy to the debate in question.

If, as is commonly reported, the Czar reads the Times with daily regularity, he will hardly fail to be somewhat disgusted at the one common expression of determined hostility to his rule and power, in the debate of the 12th December. It cannot fail to make a sensible impression in more than one country.

Already the French people are highly gratified and delighted with the Parliamentary "vote of thanks" gracefully accorded their army and navy in the Crimea, a proceeding quite novel and therefore the more pleasing to them.

While we were congratulating ourselves on the happy admission of Lord Derby and his party to power, and whilst the Commons were engaged in discussing very placidly the clauses of the unobjectionable Militia Bill, the public was staggered out of its propriety by the introduction into the House of Lords of a measure as novel as it is repugnant to the national feelings.

This is termed a "Foreign Enlistment Bill,"—to enable the authorities to beat up for recruits in foreign countries to the extent of 150,000 men, bring them into this country, and keep them here until trained and required abroad in active service.

The Lords disapproved of the principle of the measure and failed to see its necessity. Nevertheless they allowed it to come down to the Commons who received it with the utmost disgust, whilst outside but one deep and long shout of contempt is raised for its promoters.

Ministers simply maintain, that it is both necessary and needful to former practice and declare that if the Bill be turned out they will follow it,—an old whig threat that is once more successful.

their heads towards the harbour and managed to get safe inside, secure from further attack. It is thought that this is only the prelude to a general sally of the Russian fleet, emboldened as they are, by the absence of all our sailing ships of war who are in winter quarters.

In addition to General Cathcart who fell at the Battle of Inkermann, we have to lament the loss of another officer from your colony. Lieutenant-Colonel Beekwith of the Rifle Brigade, who has since fallen in the siege operations at Sebastopol, commanded the infantry of the force employed against the Dutch Boers, north-east of the Orange River in August, 1848, and was present in the action with and defeat of the rebel Boers at Boom Plains, in which action he succeeded to the command of the troops on Lieutenant-Colonel Buller being seriously wounded.

He belonged to the 1st Battalion, and had been in the army 26 years. No regiment has distinguished itself in the Crimea more completely than the Rifle Brigade, whether in the field or against the fortifications.

Several of our papers, both political and literary, have severely criticized the recent enactment of your Legislature, in reference to the admission into your Colony of foreign reprints of British Authors. They exclaim against the illiberal principle which is thus exercised against our writers, as emanating with a peculiar ill grace from a colony which has just received a new and more liberal constitution.

It certainly does not augur favorably for the future career of your Legislative chambers that one of its first enactments should have been so tinged with narrow-minded ungenerous selfishness, and though the Secretary of State is not likely to advise Her Majesty to give her royal sanction to the measure, the stigma will nevertheless attach to those who would have passed the law of the colony.

If you look for sympathy on this side the Ocean you must do something more deserving of it, than enacting laws that are worthy only of a Penal Settlement or Yankee Republican Republic.

There is no special movement in our Colonial Produce market. With a few exceptions, dulness characterises our entire trade, whilst amongst East India merchants considerable uneasiness prevails and some apprehension as to the results of the last years operations.

Amongst your articles of Produce, Aloes have been selling by auction at 60s. @ 4s. for good clean quality. Of the Argol offered for public sale the sound and good was withdrawn at 90s., whilst the damaged were placed at prices ranging from 68s. @ 82s.

There have been some transactions in Horns since my last comprising about 29,000. Of these the 31 to 35 oz. were placed at 84s. @ 90s. per 120, the 26 to 28 oz. at 71s. to 75s.

In Feathers and Bees Wax nothing doing, and quotations difficult to be had. Elephant and Sea Horse Teeth are in pretty fair demand.

State and defective Tunks are worth from 50s a 80s per cwt. less. Recent imports, 5 tons, sold readily at auction, at quite the previous average currency for large and medium Teeth, Billiard Ball, and common hollow Serivellos.

Tallow continues firm at 64-6 for Y. C. Stocks are much below those at this time last year, but there are still more heavy parcels on their way from neutral ports.

Nothing fresh to report in Wools, though there is generally a favorable feeling with regard to the trade with firm prices.

Postscript.—Telegraphic advices received this day, bring the following amongst other items:—According to the latest news from the Crimea, the siege works had been advanced so far that direct communications had become impossible between the garrison of Sebastopol and the division of the Russian army in the vicinity of Balaklava.

That division was in want of provisions, and was with difficulty supplied by the town, which could only send by roundabout paths along the coast. General Osten-Sacken is at against Eupatoria with 45,000 men and 80 guns.

artillery and some battalions of infantry, appeared on the flanks of the reconnaissance, but did not attempt to interrupt its operations, which were happily accomplished.

"At the same time, 1000 infantry, Highlanders and Zouaves, left Balaklava on the right of our position, and explored the heights which extend towards the valley of Baladar. They only met a post of Cossacks.

"To resume, I am of opinion that on the left bank of the Tchernaya there are only pickets of the enemy observing our positions from a distance. A movement has evidently taken place in the Russian army, caused probably by the landing of the Turkish troops, which continues at Eupatoria. I shall soon know the real state of the case.

"Although the number of the sick has somewhat increased in consequence of the perpetual wet in which we live, the salutary condition of the army is satisfactory, and its moral condition perfect.

"If the troops have suffered much from the rain, it has not yet been cold: the snow, which for some time has covered the tops of the mountains inland, has not yet fallen upon the plain which we occupy, and the thermometer, not yet in a single instance been below zero. These general conditions are rendered better by the care taken of our men; and, thanks to the wise foresight of the Emperor and his Government, the army enjoys relative comforts, which make it gaily support the fatigues it has to undergo.

"The number of sick in our military hospitals at Constantinople is 3994, of whom 1387 are wounded. I have established in the Crimea, near the Bay of Karatchak, a depot of convalescents, where the men who leave the army ambulances, and who only require rest, will regain their strength, and be enabled to return to their duty. This measure will diminish the number sent to Constantinople.

"His Imperial Highness Prince Napoleon, still retained at Constantinople by the malady which forced him to leave the Crimea, wished to rejoin us. I opposed his return, which might compromise the health of the Prince.

"I am, &c. CANROBERT, General-in-Chief. Shoals of letters from officers and privates of the British army continue to appear in the journals; but they are mostly of an old date, and speak of the period of depression in the days of December. The letters of the men are hearty and full of spirit, in spite of the wretched state of the camp. The "cooking" is chiefly to be found in the published letters of officers.—Spectator, Jan. 6.

The correspondent of the Times at Scutari, intrusted with the distribution of the Sick and Wounded Fund, reports another illustration of military carelessness, down to so late a day as the 25th December.

"I had yesterday a strange application made to me, as trustee of the fund. It was to provide flannel shirts and drawers for an entire regiment now in the Golden Horn, and on its way to the seat of war." I reminded my applicant that the fund was raised for the benefit of the sick and wounded; but he answered, that prevention was better than cure, that the regiment had just returned from service in the Crimea, and that the men were going to the Crimea from Gibraltar without any protection whatever against the climate in the shape of under-clothing.

"He said that on their arrival they would be sent into the trenches as they stood, and he left me to conjecture the result." I did not feel myself justified in resisting such an application; nor do I think that the subscribers to the fund will object to it, even though a good supply of the things which the regiment stands most in need of may be forthcoming at Balaklava. I will, however, endeavour to make some arrangement by which, in that event taking place, the special interests of the sick and wounded in the usufruct of the fund may not suffer.

Lieutenant and Adjutant Warran, of the Fifty-fifth Regiment, Captain Campbell, Fifth Dragoon Guards, and 108 non-commissioned officers and privates, died at Scutari between the 18th and 24th December, both inclusive.

Number in Hospitals on the 24th December. Non-commissioned officers and men 3625 Sick officers 78 Total 3703

RUSSIA.—When the Allied fleets left the Gulf of Finland the Civil Governor and Generals left Helsinki for St. Petersburg, to give an account of the administration; and while in the capital, it is said, plans were agreed to at councils of war for the defence of the coast and harbours next year. There is to be an entrenched camp close to each fortress, sufficiently spacious to hold the number of troops deemed necessary. The pilots who fled rather than guide our ships among the Aland Islands have been rewarded with an order and silver medals.

"I can assure you," says a letter from St. Petersburg, "that people about the Court affirm that neither the Imperial family nor the great officers of state have the least desire to accept the conditions of the Western Powers. As to Austria, the Court is furious against her since the receipt of Prince Gortschakoff's last despatch.—Spectator, Dec. 23.

RUSSIA.—The Emperor has issued an ukase ordaining that any soldier who commits acts of cruelty on a wounded or resisting enemy shall suffer death.

