

THE INDIANS

We are indebted to the Baltimore Sun for the following highly interesting abstract of the report of the Commissioner on Indian Affairs:

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.—This document is contained in the Union of yesterday morning, and embraces an elaborate statement of the proceedings of the government in relation to Indian affairs, and various incidental matters pertaining thereto. The direct purpose of the report is like all other national official papers, for the immediate information of Congress, and as the subject matter of these papers but a limited interest elsewhere, we shall present as brief an abstract of its contents as is intelligibly made. The document is one, however, which reflects infinite credit upon its author Mr. Medill, both with reference to the graceful perspicuity of style and the amount and character of the information it imparts; and we yield with some reluctance to the necessity of its abridgement. There are passages which we shall endeavor, notwithstanding, to publish hereafter.

The report opens with a general sketch of the Indian character, and the difficulties in the way of its advancement in civilization. Means are steadily at work towards this end, and marked changes are apparent.—The object of the government has been to establish a judicious system of manual labor schools for the youth of both sexes—for the instruction of the males in agriculture, and the females in the duties of housewifery.

The progress that has been made in the settlement of the Indians, and the adjustment of boundaries, is detailed. There seems a hopeful prospect of the colonization of most of the tribes that have been removed, or affected by the extension of the white race upon the continent. The Sioux are the most untractable, and in the gratification of their passion for the chase, recede towards the Rocky mountains as civilization advances. The Pawnees are upon the direct route to Oregon, and have been the most troublesome Indians to the emigrants to that territory. These and the Sioux continue their hereditary hate, and a military force is necessary to preserve the well disposed of the Pawnees from extermination by the Sioux. The gentler and tractable tribes of the Omahas, the Otoes and Missourians, are circumscribed by both the wild tribes of Pawnees and Sioux, and suffer greatly from their incursions. It is proposed to remove them for security to the vicinity of the Osages and Kansas.

By the operation of measures in progress, there will be made eventually an opening of six degrees in the North and another in the South, for the expansion of our population West, which will prevent the colonized tribes from being injuriously pressed upon or swept away. The provision of lands for agricultural purposes for the use of prairie tribes when the resources of the chase shall be cut off, is recommended; it is suggested that this be done by the appropriation of lands obtained from the Sioux and Pawnees as they pass onward to the head of Platt river.

The report proceeds to a general outline of the organization of the Indian Department, in connection with the assignment and distribution of the various tribes over which it exercises supervision. A variety of modifications in the management, relative to agencies and sub agencies, are suggested, by which a more economical, convenient and efficient administration of the affairs of the department could be effected. The pernicious effects of large money annuities have been strikingly apparent, and it is earnestly urged that the funds to be given in payment for lands, be set apart for purposes which may be for the improvement and elevation of the race.

The accounts of the removals of sundry tribes are interesting, and show that the plans and purposes of the government are being gradually carried into execution, and with happy and successful results. From the Menomonees, a treaty was concluded in September last, by Mr. Medill, whereby 4,000,000 acres of their lands in Wisconsin are ceded to the United States. A treaty has also been concluded with the Pawnees, whereby Grand Island, in the Platte river, and a strip of land some sixty miles in length, has been secured for military purposes, and the Pawnees pledge themselves to friendship with the people of the United States. Treaties have been effected with various other tribes, whereby dissensions have been healed, friendship established, and land ceded to the United States to the extent of 18,500,000 acres, at a cost of \$1,812,000.

The general department of the civilized tribes is highly spoken of for itself, and as exerting a healthful influence upon the want of their less advanced brethren. A recent attack of the Iowas upon the Pawnees was punished by the withholding of their annuity until full reparation was made; and both parties bound themselves, hereafter, to submit their disputes to the decision of the President of the United States. Among the wilder tribes, the withholding of annuities is not efficient for good, and more vigorous measures must sometimes be resorted to, for their subordination.

The semi-annual and per capita mode of paying annuities is represented to have been attended with the happiest effects, and is regarded as incumbent upon the government rigidly to adhere to that policy.

The law restricting by penalty the introduction of spirituous liquors into the Indian country has been attended with the most salutary and beneficial results, though the evil exists to a frightful extent. "Some of the semi-civilized tribes," says the report, "perceiving its ruinous effects, and appreciating the anxiety of the Government to put a stop to it, have themselves, in the most commendable spirit, passed severe laws upon the subject; but it can never effectually be checked until the States adjoining the Indian country come forward and co-operate in the general effort against this unholy and iniquitous traffic, by passing stringent laws, restraining the evil disposed among their citizens on the frontier from engaging in it with the Indians. If this were done, and authority were given the department to punish the Indians themselves in the manner recommended in the report of the superintendent at St. Louis, for their participation in it, this moral pestilence would soon be driven from the confines of the Indian country, which would be followed by the dawn of a brighter day upon the condition and destiny of our civilized Indians."

The estimates for this Department for the next fiscal year exhibit a reduction in amount compared with those of last year; whilst both are considerably less than those for the four preceding years, which averaged \$1,218,501. The amount of those of last year was \$892,134 68. Those presented this year amount to \$574,473 45.

A highly favorable change is represented to have taken place in the character and condition of the Choctaws, in a great measure attributable to the system which has been pursued for some time of imparting a knowledge of agriculture and the mechanic arts, with that of letters, and the efficient co-operation of the different missionary societies in the efforts of the department.

The Chickasaws and Creeks have also made surprising highly gratifying advances in civilization, and have invested large amounts in institutions for the promotion of education and religion.

There are no, says the report, "in successful operation, among the different tribes, sixteen manual-labor institutions, at which are maintained and educated eight hundred and nine scholars, of which five hundred and seventy-seven are males, and two hundred and thirty-two females; and eighty-seven boarding at other schools, with 2,873 scholars—238 males and 800 females. These scholars are represented to be supplied with good and competent teachers, and to be otherwise in a prosperous and highly satisfactory condition.—With the efforts of the government and of the various religious and philanthropic societies of the United States, thus united, the blessings and advances of this great moral enterprise, worthy the age and of the country, may be extended to the whole of our aboriginal race."

In the support of the item of education, only \$10,000 are appropriated by the government, which, in the opinion of the commissioner should be raised to \$50,000. The report concludes in a statement of the new and peculiar institutions which now exist between Indiana, Texas, Oregon and California and government of this country, accompanied by suggestions in relation thereto, and manifest demand for legislative action the earliest possible day.

The New York Tribune expresses a preference for a direct road from our Atlantic coast to the Pacific. It says: "A direct Railroad from the point on the Mississippi River to Pacific, built entirely on our own territory, would save the long detour to Chagres up the coast to California, and make a venture of at least one half in time and cost for the passage. A very able officer of the Army is confident that with a service of one hundred dragoons, he will survey within a year a perfectly safe route for a rail road across the Rocky mountains, and he is willing to risk his reputation on the result of such a survey. A road must sooner or later be built, and it is more immediate communication with our Pacific possessions, and the position of this officer is well worthy of attention of Government. The survey could not cost over \$5,000, which is very sum compared with the end to be gained. A Road across the Mountains would be a work of immense labor, occupy a long time in its completion, and the necessity of rapid means of communication between the two basins of the continent, for merchandise as well as passengers, is imperative. In this view, the road across the Isthmus being a work of one year, becomes important and worthy of attention of the nation."

The cost of getting to San Francisco by the Chagres route, using the mule packers, is about \$375; say \$150 to the \$220 across the Isthmus, and \$200 from Panama to San Francisco. By the second cabin passage, however, the cost will be reduced about \$80; and by sailing vessels instead of steamers to Quez, the passage made for \$250. The route via Vera Cruz and Acapulco may be made in rather less time, but is a hazardous passage, and the cost will probably

average 36 days from New York. The distance from San Francisco is about 4,500 miles. The prices of passage in the U. S. ships, from Panama to the ports respectively named on the Pacific coast are as follows: Panama to Dealjo, 700 miles, in state rooms \$61. Do Acapulco, 1500 miles do. 125. Do San Blas, 2000 do do. 175. Do Mazatlan, 3000 do do. 225. Do San Diego, 3000 do do. 225. Do San Francisco, 3500 do do. 250. Passage in the lower cabin at a deduction of one fifth from the above rates. Passage in the forward cabin from Panama to either of the above named ports, \$100. Pay in advance in all cases.

Railroad across the Isthmus of Panama. Messrs. Aspinwall, J. L. Stevens, and other capitalists of New York, it is stated, have a charter from the Government of New Grenada, for a right of way across the Isthmus of Darien, and books of subscription have been opened in the city of New York for a limited period; Gen. Winfield Scott, Cornelius W. Lawrence, Matthew Morgan, Sadriel Jaudon, C. Augustus Davis, and Judge Wm. Kent, as trustees. The travelling across the Isthmus, some eighty miles from Chagres to Panama, on the Pacific, is done on mules, and is very difficult, the region being rocky and the roads almost impassable at certain seasons. A road can be constructed at an estimated cost of \$10,000,000, and is expected to be completed in about two years, if the necessary arrangements can be effected. The territories of the United States lying on the Pacific coast could thus be reached with expedition, and vast national benefits would accrue. A bill we perceive, has been introduced into the Senate authorizing the U. S. Government to contract with the contemplated Rail Road Company, for the transportation of naval and military supplies, troops, munitions of war, the mails, &c.—A line of steamers has already been established from New York to Chagres, and from Panama to San Francisco, in California. The importance of the construction of the Panama Rail Road will no doubt be fully appreciated by our enlightened statesmen. The voyage around Cape Horn, or by caravans from St. Louis, Missouri, or by the Arkansas and Fort Smith routes, are the principal routes to New Mexico and California. It is five months' sea voyage to the El Dorado of the Pacific where the visions of the old, adventurous Spanish navigators are now realized by our enterprising countrymen.

phers render it necessary to take every precaution; for though healthier than Chagres, it is by no means a safe place for unacclimated strangers from the North.

And now, having taken the traveller for California across the Isthmus, let me conclude by giving a word of advice.

If he has a passage engaged through to San Francisco, the Isthmus route is, decidedly the quickest, and, all things considered, the least weary. But—and I speak now more particularly to those who have but a limited amount of funds—just sufficient to carry them through to San Francisco without any stoppages—let these travellers beware how they try the Isthmus, if they have only engaged passage as far as Chagres; after their toilsome journey to Panama, (if they escape delay and fever at Chagres,) they may have to wait weeks for a passage to San Francisco, and when the long wished for opportunity occurs, they will find themselves unable to take it, as their expenses in Panama will have exhausted their means.

THE CHOLERA CURED BY CHLOROFORM.—Chloroform has been used with success in England against the cholera. Mr. Hill, a surgeon attached to the Perkins Hospital, says he used it in ten cases of epidemic cholera with complete success, six of the patients being perfectly cured, and the four others in a state of convalescence. Two patients sunk, but these were already in the last agony when it was applied. He says: "Our habitual mode of treatment is to put the patient in bed between very warm blankets; to give him a glass of brandy in hot water, with sugar and spices; to rub him with warm flannel dipped in a mixture of soap, camphor, tincture of opium, and extract of belladonna; to apply to the whole surface of the body bags filled with hot bran, to put the patient under the influence of chloroform by inhalation, and to keep him under the gentle influence of it as long as the bad symptoms continue to reappear, which often happens when the effect of the chloroform ceases, and the patient recovers his consciousness. It is necessary to give, at short intervals, small quantities of brandy and water for nourishment, arrow-root, clear, or with milk, and for drink milk and water, or soda water with a little brandy, to abstain from every thing else in the form of medicine, and trust to the efforts of nature to escape the infection of the disease.

In reference to the present excited state of the public mind on the subject of the events which are now transpiring in California, the following extracts from a letter, dated at San Francisco, 12th October 1848, from JOHN M. FINLEY, Esq., a gentleman well known in this city, to his relative, SAM'L K. GEORGE, Esq., will no doubt prove interesting to his numerous friends. Mr. Finley refers to two previous letters, dated 19th September and 6th October 1848, neither of which has yet come to hand, and proceeds to say—

"I have little to add to my last, containing a full note of sales to date. I am selling off slowly the heavy part of my cargo, viz: Brown Shirting, Ticks, Kromlins, Stripes, Ducks, Russia Sheetting, Hardware &c.—All these articles are wanted. The attention of the whole population is entirely devoted to the gold region. They are going to and fro continually, taking up goods and bringing down gold dust in payment for their purchases. Much sickness prevails, and many die—as much from want of medical attention and good nursing, as from disease, but the truth is they are so entirely absorbed by the mania for gold that they care nothing for comfort and submit to every privation. You may believe the most extravagant reports of the abundance of gold on the Sacramento—it is to be had for digging.—Some dig in the water, others in what is called 'dry diggings'—but all are successful, and value money but little. Packages of goods are exposed for days; for want of room and laborers to store them, but this is attended with but little if any risk, owing to the general good conduct of the people. Since I have been here I have not heard of a single breach of the peace. I hope to close my business in a month, and by that time the rainy season will probably drive sailors down to the port,—at present they are not to be had. I do not think much chance will take place in prices for articles particularly wanted, unless the supply should be very heavy. The emigration will be large, and their wants must be supplied. Pork has been sold to arrive from Columbia river at \$60 per lb. After I despatch the ship from Valparaiso, I shall return here and establish myself in a general Commission business, in connection with the two young gentlemen, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Austin, who were passengers with me in the 'Rhode' from Baltimore." Balt. Amer.

CITY OF PANAMA.

He will find, however, that with this as with most of the other South American cities.

"The distance lends enchantment to the view And elches the mountain with an azure hue." The city of Panama is situated on the shores of the Bay of that name, and a most beautiful bay it is, too. What is the number of the present population, I cannot say, as it is doubtless filled with strangers—it formerly contained from 5,000 to 7,000 inhabitants, and was a quite, still city, where, during the day, might be the sounds of the convent and church bells disturbed the horses of the citizens in their grazings in the public squares which were all overgrown with grass. The trade carried on consisted in importing dry goods from Jamaica, for the supply of the Isthemians, the neighboring produce of Veragua, the pearl islands, the towns of Chiriqui, David and their vicinities, and the various little inland towns. Goods also were sent down to the ports of Payta, in Peru, and Guayaquil in the Ecuador. The returns made for these goods consisted in the province of the Isthmus, such as gold dust, hides, India rubber, pearl oyster shells (from which the mother of pearl of commerce is made), sarsaparilla, &c.

Agriculture is at a low point on the isthmus, as not enough sugar was raised to supply the city of Panama, and they depended for their wheat, flour, salt, sugar and groceries, on Peru, or Jamaica, on the Atlantic side. The climate is warm, say 80 to 85 deg. all the year round—the rainy season long and severe. The nights in Panama, however, are much cooler than usual in tropical climates.

ITS MARKET AND ACCOMMODATIONS are poor on account of the extreme heat, fish that are caught in the morning are soft by the afternoon.—Beef, pig's flesh and pork must also be eaten immediately after killing, or else they will spoil. Fowls and chickens are dear; vegetables, such as yams, ukas, and the various fruits of the tropics, are scarce and dear. Tea and coffee, as well as chocolate are expensive; and wines and liquors, on account of the expense of transportation across the Isthmus are likewise dear and of inferior quality. Regarding accommodations for travellers, I am unable to say what they are at present. In former times they were very scanty. It is only within a few years that a public hotel has been established; previous to that, travellers had to depend on the hospitality of those to whom they carried letters of introduction. If there is any extraordinary influx of strangers to Panama, of course prices of accommodation will rise.

THE HEALTHINESS OF PANAMA is far greater than that of Chagres. With due care, avoiding all excesses, and the night air, a person can preserve his health; still the heavy rains and continual damp almost

render it necessary to take every precaution; for though healthier than Chagres, it is by no means a safe place for unacclimated strangers from the North. And now, having taken the traveller for California across the Isthmus, let me conclude by giving a word of advice.

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Mr. Aspinwall and his associates are contractors with the Government, already, in the matter of the Pacific mail steamer. They have constructed three steamers of the first class, at a cost of six hundred thousand dollars, and these vessels are to pass around Cape Horn, to run between Panama and our Oregon and California coast. The road across the Isthmus will be connected with this line of steamers, and will make the communication complete. Proposed route of the road across the isthmus of Panama has been surveyed in person by Mr. STEPHENS, one of Mr. ASPINWALL'S associates, accompanied by two engineers, so that the project is based upon knowledge.

The monopoly, whatever it may be, which this road may enjoy will not, in all probability, last very long. There will be a communication no doubt across the isthmus of Tehuantepec—a route which the British are examining, with a view to the construction of a ship canal. Then, again, there must be a communication, sooner or later, between California and the valley of Rio Grande, by the route of the Gila—a route which will be probably more direct and advantageous than any other that nature admits of. Another route, indeed, presents itself, with the promise of great facilities also. We refer to that which leads from Upper California, by the South Pass, to the valley of the Platte, or the Great Mississippi basin.

Mr. Douglas introduced a bill, granting the right of way and a donation of lands, for the construction of a railroad to connect the waters of the Upper and Lower Mississippi with the chain of Lakes, at Chicago.

Mr. Douglas called up his bill for the admission of California and New Mexico, as a State into the Union, with a view to its reference, with its amendment, to the Committee on Territories.

After debate, it was referred to the Judiciary committee.

On motion of Mr. Benton, the Senate then proceeded to the consideration of the special order, being the bill authorizing the government to contract with Messrs. Aspinwall and others, for the transportation, for twenty years, of the mails, military supplies, &c., by steam across the Isthmus of Panama, across the proposed Railroad of the latter, when that Isthmus shall have been completed.

Mr. Benton then rose and remarked, that before proceeding to the consideration of the special order—the bill authorizing the contract with Messrs. Aspinwall and others for transporting the mails, &c. across the Isthmus of Panama—he desired to lay before the Senate certain papers in Spanish, relating to the previous contract by the Government of New Grenada, for the construction of a road across the Isthmus, which he moved to have translated and printed, under the direction of the Secretary of the Senate.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. On motion of Mr. Vinton, the House went into committee of the whole on the state of the Union, (Mr. Thompson, of Indiana, in the chair,) for the purpose of considering the resolutions introduced by Mr. V., on the subject of the reference of the subjects alluded to in the President's annual message—to the appropriate standing committees of the House.

Mr. Ramsey moved to amend the fourth resolution so as to provide for the reference of so much of the message as relates to the tariffs of 1840 and 1842 to the Committee on Manufactures, instead of the committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. Cobb of Georgia, moved to amend the amendment so that it should read, to the Committee on Manufactures, Agriculture, and Commerce, sitting jointly.

On these proposed amendments a protracted debate ensued, in which Messrs. C. J. Ingersoll, Homes of South Carolina, Gentry of Tennessee, Thompson of Pennsylvania, Vinton, Green, of Missouri, Greeley and Marvin of New York, and Fisher of Ohio, participated—in the course of which the relative merits of the tariffs of '42 and of '46 were discussed at considerable length, and with much ability. Without coming to any conclusion, the committee rose, and the House adjourned.

SENATE. Washington, Dec. 20, 1848. On motion of Mr. Weston, the Senate took up the bill of last session, to authorize the draining of the Everglades in Florida, and to grant the same to that State for that purpose on certain conditions. After considerable debate, the bill was informally passed over.

On motion, the Senate proceeded to the consideration of Executive business. Adjourned.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. Mr. Vin on, from the committee of ways and means, reported a bill to carry into effect the 12th article of the treaty with Mexico. [It appropriates for the payment of the instalment, with interest, which falls due to Mexico on the 31st May next \$3,000,000—of the instalment, with interest, which falls due on the 31st of May, 1850, \$3,400,000.] The bill was read, referred to the committee of the whole on the state of the Union, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. Calhoun, South from the committee on territories, reported, in conformity with the instructions of the House, a bill of twenty sections, organizing the territorial government of California, embracing also the principles of the ordinance of 1787, in regard to slavery. The bill includes, with the boundaries of the new territory, all of Upper California for the present, but authorizes its future division into two territories—provides for the election of a delegate to Congress, a territorial council and House of Representatives—for the appointment by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, of Governor, Secretary, Attorney and Judges—and that all the ports on the Pacific, within the boundaries of the territories, shall constitute one collection district, with a salary of \$1,000 per annum.

The bill was read, referred to the Committee of the whole on the state of the Union, and ordered to be printed.

URGENT IN CALIFORNIA.—Value of Gold.—A public meeting at San Francisco, the 12th September, fixed the value of the gold dust, in the absence of coin, at \$16 per ounce as the medium for doing business. It appears that the value of the gold in June was \$14 per ounce in cash, in July \$12, and at a later date \$10 for cash. In exchange for goods it was somewhat more. The gold could be had of many poor holders of fifty pounds of gold, at the rate of \$7 per ounce cash. Gold was taken by Gov. Mason in pledge for duties at \$10 per ounce.

WEATHER AND THE FARMERS. In regard to the long continued mild weather, the Frederick (Md.) Examiner says: "Our farmers have fully secured their crops. Nor does it stop here; many we are informed have also finished their fall ploughing, which will facilitate their work in the spring."

The "Boonboro" (Md.) Odd Fellow says: "A friend of ours plucked several heads of clover in full bloom from a lot a few days ago. This is something rarely heard of in December."

Our Treaty with New Grenada, which grants to the United States the free and uninterrupted right of way over the Isthmus of Panama, binds us also to guarantee the neutrality of that important strait, as well as the authority of New Grenada over it.

SENATE. Washington, Dec. 19. Mr. Miller's resolution calling on the President for any correspondence with the Spanish Government in relation to the purchase of Cuba, was taken up. It was laid over.