

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

On the petition of John Ross, praying aid as a ferryman at the Boularderie, in the Island of Cape Breton, your Committee do not recommend any grant.

On the petition of James Munn, praying aid for running a Packet Boat between Sydney and the Mines at Cape Breton, your Committee do not recommend any grant.

On Tuesday after hearing several reports from Committees, Mr Dickey moved the second reading of his Railway Bill. The Hon Attorney General opposed this on the ground that the Provincial Secretary was now on his way home, and another week would certainly determine the success of his mission. On the division, the members for deferring until the 27th, the day named by the Attorney General, were 29. And for proceeding with the Private Bill 15.

NAVIGATION OF THE ST LAWRENCE AND ST. JOHN RIVERS.—The following resolution was recently passed in the United States Senate.—

Resolved, That the President be requested, if not incompatible with the public interest, to inform Congress at the earliest date, whether any arrangements are in progress, or likely to be made with Great Britain and the British Provinces of North America for securing to the citizens of the United States the free Navigation of the St Lawrence, St John, and other large rivers, and the right to enjoy freely, in common with British subjects, the sea and coast fisheries of the British North American Colonies.

ARREST OF GAMBLERS.—The police court of Boston exhibited a novel sight last Monday morning, it appears that on Saturday night, the Police made a sweep of all the gambling dens in the city, arresting no less than 86 victims of mischance. They were kept locked up until Monday, when they were brought into court and fined \$4 each, with a portion of the costs, and then discharged. The Morning Post says:—As each detachment arrived, they were received with cheers about a thousand of Belzebub's unwashed and uncombed recruits.

Communications.

FOR THE CAPE BRETON NEWS.

BRIDGING THE STRAIT.

MR. EDITOR,

In your number of the 15th inst. mention is made of a proposal for bridging, and at the same time blocking up, the Strait of Canso; thus constituting the annexation of our Island, to the neighboring Peninsula a physical as well as legislative fact.

At first view the project may appear too gigantic to be seriously entertained; yet have there been both ancient and modern examples. Aided by the willing hands of thirty thousand men, and after a perseverance of seven months' duration, the Macedonian flung a mole, of less than half these proportions, across the sea, and sealed the walls of the proudest city of Phœnicia. In later times the breakwaters of Plymouth and of Cherbourg are instances of works even more vast, in extent if not in effect; but on those labors were brought to bear the resources of the two richest and most powerful nations on the globe.

If the waters of the Strait were quiescent, undisturbed by tide or current, as in a lake; or even like the open sea, where the general level is always preserved; it is possible that the proposed work might be constructed at less cost than a breakwater on an exposed coast, and with less delay and difficulty; inasmuch as progress would be made from both ends, each shore affording a solid foundation and the requisite materials, which could be obtained and employed without the charge of transporting them by water. But, as tide and currents of great velocity do prevail, it is to be apprehended that when their course should become nearly dammed up, by the near approach of the work to its completion, that commutation would be assayed in vain against the overpowering rush of the waters.

Supposing the completion practicable, and the structure actually built from shore

to shore, there remain grave considerations to be satisfied respecting its durability. It is affirmed of the dikes that protect the cities and fields of Holland from being deluged by the sea, that if the water make an entry thro' even the smallest aperture, the whole ponderous embankment is blown up with an explosion equal to thunder. When therefore, by the setting in of tide or current on one side of the mole, the body of water should be elevated above the level of the opposite surface, it is to be expected, that a similar destruction would ensue. The winter season would also bring new dangers from accumulating drifts of ice, urged on by tides, currents, and gales of wind until piled up and overtopping the mole, the descending mass would overwhelm it in ruins.

If failure from these or other causes should take place, the waste of labor and of means would not be the sole loss. There would remain the enduring and hopeless grievance of having destroyed the beautiful natural channel of navigation and of gaining nothing whatever in exchange.

Thus far, only the feasibility of the project has been questioned. It remains to weigh the advantage against the loss, if it could be effected as proposed.

No doubt a permanent bridge, or causeway could not fail to prove a very great convenience—yet, as respects the transit of the railway trains, that convenience would be less than for travellers and passengers in the ordinary way. The railway trains would be transferred from shore to shore as surely by the intended ferry steamers. The delay would probably be five minutes. The interruption none whatever. No passenger would move from his seat, nor a bale of merchandise be disturbed; the trains being unhooked from the locomotive on one shore, and attached to another in waiting on the opposite side. Such is the simple operation as practised at the crossings of the large rivers in the neighbouring States.

The advantage to be afforded, to the railway from such a track would scarcely counterbalance the detriment resulting to navigation; but a prospect is held out of warding off the visitations of the drift ice. This would indeed be a gain of the highest importance, could it be looked for with certainty. Were there no other passage by which the floating masses could find exit and spread abroad upon our coasts, but only thro' the Strait of Canso, it were well,

but how if they should come sailing round Cape North, as they but too surely do, and would continue to do, at the annual breaking up in the recesses of the Gulf?

The current issuing from the River and Gulf of St Lawrence, annually sweeping out the drifting ice between Cape North and Cape Ray, subsequently comes in contact with the Arctic current, that after bringing down the icebergs and fields of ice from the regions of Baffin's Bay to the eastern shores of Newfoundland, inclines to the westward, round its southern promontory. The direction of the two currents, being partly opposed, is altered by the collision, and with diminished force turned toward the coast of Cape Breton, blocking up the harbors, during many weeks, with floating ice, in pieces of not much height above water, but of great depth below, and therefore acted on by the currents much more than by the wind. If, by filling up the Strait, the current which now passes thro' it could be directed round the coast toward Cape North, with sufficient force to oppose, and keep at a distance from the shores, the ice drifts from the Gulf, then indeed, a greatly improved condition of these seas would be obtained in the months of March, April and May. The Harbors of Cape Breton, and the coasts of Nova Scotia to the westward of this Island, would be relieved from the heaviest drawback, of their position and climate; and by the introduction of steam vessels proper y constructed for breaking a passage thro' the harbor ice, these ports could be kept open throughout the year. Steamers for this purpose have been in use many years in the harbors of the Chesapeake; flat bottomed, sloping upwards to the projecting and overhanging bows; and made not to cut thro', but to slide over, and as it were mount upon the ice, which thus offering comparatively little resistance to the steamer's progress, is pressed under and broken by her weight without injury to the vessel, and a large open way is left in her wake.—This operation repeated dai-

ly, suffices to preserve a free passage for the arrival and departure of shipping during the winter months.

Unfortunately there is no security for so desirable a result. No Hydrographer would venture to predict that a constant current of sufficient force could be established by closing the Strait; or that there would be any current at all taking the desired course. It may be even expected that any current so produced would more probably join the prevailing stream, and go to the westward.

There exists not a constant current into the Strait from the Atlantic. It runs at times in the contrary direction; and is often observed to reverse its course several times in the same day. It is affected apparently by the tides, and also by the winds.

In short nearly all the advantages of the scheme are wrapped in uncertainty. But the loss!—that is too clear and inevitable. The destruction of the ocean thoroughfare would be a source not only of national, but of universal regret; and to the ports of Pictou and Arichat especially a sore grievance. In Prince Edward Island, and throughout the Gulf, the change would be for the worse; and it would oppose an obstacle to fishing, coasting and trading enterprise, in all the coasts to the westward.

By filling up the Strait would also be made to vanish the prospective value of this Island to the British nation; whose hold on her continental possessions being in time relinquished, Cape Breton if insulated, might become the future Gibraltar of these seas, the Key of the St Lawrence and of the Canadas.

But it would be tedious to dilate further. Suffice it to repeat that the advantages of the project appear to be nearly all uncertain; the cost, and the changes for the worse, but too evident and too sure, and indeed, a bridge of any description will be found open to serious objections*. It may be safely predicted that only the steam ferry will prove available.

CAUTUS.

March, 1851.

* A suspension bridge, or a tubular bridge, of such length, is believed to be without precedent.

AGENTS.

E. G. FULLER, Esq. for Halifax.
W. G. BALLAM, Esq. for Arichat.
MR. J. G. McDONALD for Baddeck, Middle River.
MR. J. G. McDONALD for Baddeck, Middle River.
ALD. of Baddeck for River and Margaree.
ROBERT ROSS, Esq. for Saint Ann's.
MR. H. VERNER, for Main-dieu.
MR. RIGBY, for Sydney Mines.
MR. McKENNA, North Bar.

THE NEWS.

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SYDNEY, C. B., MARCH 29, 1851.

WILFUL MURDER.

An Inquest was held on Wednesday the 19th instant, at Baddeck, before C. J. Campbell Esquire, Coroner, on view of the body of John McRae, of Middle River, who had met with a violent death at the hands of one Donald Beaton. The Jury found a verdict of wilful murder against Donald Beaton, who up to the present time has eluded the officers of the law, who are in pursuit of him. It is conjectured that he is endeavouring to make his escape into the Province of New Brunswick.—We give below the substance of the testimony taken before Mr. Campbell and the Coroner's Jury:

KENNETH McLELLAN, sworn—was in company with deceased, Donald Beaton, John Beaton, and Alexander McRae, (brother to deceased) in Beaton's store, about noon yesterday; we had a gill of rum: Donald Beaton drank the greater part of it; this was at Baddeck; left that for Middle River soon after; when on the road our horses commenced running, when Donald Beaton fell off his horse; deceased and I lifted him up and placed him in his brother's sleigh,—the latter requested deceased to go into his sleigh, which he did; they then drove off leaving

Alexander McRae and me behind; we had reached Munroe's landing, where I was repairing my sleigh and whilst so engaged heard a noise on the road leading from Munro's house; Munro's son came up and requested Alexander McRae to go where the parties were; heard deceased call him to go where he was; saw deceased and John Beaton take hold of each other, when deceased threw the latter down on the snow; when on my way to the parties met Donald Beaton with a carpenter's adze; requested him to put away the adze, stating that it was not a proper implement in such a place; deceased said to me—"What reward I got from the dogs, after taking them to my sister's house for meat, they drew Ions to me,"—John Beaton answered, "you liar; we did not draw Ions to you, neither did we go for meat; we took meat before we left Baddeck," after some disputing they struck each other—John Beaton fell several times; when he said "stop until I put off my clothes," deceased replied—"that he would try them both." Donald Beaton and deceased stood opposite each other in the act of striking, and as they did so, Donald Beaton fell, and deceased called out, that Beaton had put a knife into him; looked at Beaton to see if he had a knife, but could not see one. I got bewildered. Deceased said that Beaton had killed him—that he had put a knife into him—and desired me to go home and tell them and that Sandy would stay with him; saw Beaton running back as if to hide himself; saw the blood running from deceased's belly immediately after his saying that Beaton had put the knife into him; this took place about 4 or 5 o'clock yesterday afternoon; on my way home I saw the Beaton's in the sleigh near McKenzie's new vessel.

Alexander McRae sworn, corroborate the foregoing statement. Deceased said I witness when he came up to where they were disputing, "Surely I will take it from John Beaton before he will

commit harm with it," which deceased did do, and threw it into the woods; saw Donald Beaton with a knife in his right hand the blade of which was 5 or 6 inches long; deceased called out that Beaton had put a knife into him; opened the clothes of deceased and saw the blood; started for home and left deceased at Munro's house; overtook John and Donald Beaton on the way, and told them they had killed my brother.

John McKay, deposed to having seen Beaton with a pistol and a sheath knife in the morning in question. Ann Munro confirmed the testimony of the two first witnesses in so far as it related to the stabbing; deceased cried out Donald has murdered me; Donald was in liquor; he did not walk as if he were sober.

John Munro saw the quarrel—saw Donald Beaton make a rush upon deceased who was wrestling with John Beaton and heard deceased cry out he was killed; Beaton ran off into the woods with his hand under his coat; in a moment he returned got into the sleigh and drove off.

WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

We attended the meeting of this Society, by invitation, on Monday evening the 18th, instant. At seven o'clock the meeting was opened. Hugh Munro, Esq. was called to the chair. Prayer was made by the Rev H McLeod, Minister of St Andrew's Free Church.

Rev Mr Jost, addressed the meeting, and read a very interesting report, drawn up by him, in which he took a lengthened review of the progress of the cause of