

# THE BRITISH COLONIST.

Saturday Morning, May 4, 1872.

## Invitation to the Franchise.

In another column will be found an invitation to register, in order to be entitled to vote at any election that may take place. Like the Act under authority of which it is issued, there appears to be unnecessary ambiguity about the notice. In order to assist those concerned, we wish to explain that there are three classes invited to send in their applications. 1st Those who, being possessed of the necessary qualification, did not register last year. 2nd, Those who did register, but whose qualification may have changed. 3rd, Those who have registered upon any of the following qualifications, although still unchanged;—Lodger; Boarder; Free Miner. All persons who registered last year upon qualifications other than the last mentioned, and whose qualifications remain unchanged are exempt from the necessity of registering, during last session, by which changes were made in the Franchise,—changes which swept away all the absurd, complex and illiberal so-called qualifications of the old Act, throwing the Franchise open to all *bona fide* resident British subjects (other than those wearing red skirts or long tails) being male adults and taking sufficient interest in the matter to have their names placed upon the Register. It will also be recollected that the amended Act was not assented to by His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, but was reserved for the approval of the Governor-General. We must be allowed to ex-

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“Invitation to the Franchise”, *Daily Colonist*, May 4, 1872

press regret that the thing has not been so managed as that the new or amended Act might have come into operation in time for this year's registration, thereby, materially extending the basis of representation and bringing within the pale of the Franchise a large class of valuable subjects hitherto wrongly and most unwisely shut out, and, at the same time, so simplifying the process of qualifying as to induce very many persons to come forward who were deterred by the vexatiously complex and positively absurd provisions of the old Act. It is true that there is little probability of a general Provincial election taking place this year, as that could only be the result of a dissolution; although there will very likely be elections in one or two Districts, rendered necessary by resignation or acceptance of office. But it should not be forgotten that a general election for members to serve in the Federal Parliament must inevitably take place during the present year; and it is to that circumstance that this year's registration must owe its chief importance. And that election acquires accumulative importance from the consideration that it will be for five years, not for one, as the last was. The people of British Columbia are about to be called upon to elect representatives to Ottawa for the next five years,—representatives who will have to guard and promote the interests of the Pacific Province during the most critical period of its existence, representatives, too, upon whom will devolve the duty of sustaining an administration to whom British Columbia owes so much and the con-

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... essential to the successful consummation of the grand scheme of Empire so happily begun. The people of this portion of the Dominion are now invited to qualify themselves for the purpose of electing representatives to discharge these important functions; and, surely every consideration of patriotism and self-interest should urge them to respond with alacrity to that invitation. We have expressed regret that the amended Franchise Act has not come into operation in time, so that every *bona fide* resident British subject might have been placed in a position to participate in a work of such importance. But, so far from that circumstance presenting any excuse for supineness and dereliction of duty, the very restrictedness of the Franchise and consequent paucity of qualified voters constitutes an additional reason why no one embraced within its narrow folds should neglect to perform this important political act. Let every person, therefore, in a position to satisfy the requirements of the law give this matter due attention; and let it not be forgotten that, to neglect to register is to lose the right to vote. Many instances occurred last year of persons regretting, when too late, that they had neglected to register. Let there be no such instances this year; for, depend upon it, every vote will be wanted and sought for in the approaching Federal election—an election, be it remembered, which must, to a great extent, decide whether the affairs of the Dominion are to continue to be administered by the wise and the well-tryed statesman now in power, or whether the country is to be handed over to the tender mercies of the Grits!

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