

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

On Thursday last, at 3 o'clock, His Honor the Lieutenant Governor appeared attended in the Council Chamber surrounded by a large company of ladies and gentlemen, Civil and Military, for the purpose of opening the Session of the Local Legislature.

The Members of the House of Assembly having been summoned, Lieutenant Governor Archibald read the following

SPEECH.

Mr. President and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly:

1. I have called you together at this early period of the year, in the belief that it is the season you can best spare, from ordinary pursuits, for the discharge of legislative duties.

2. I regret to be obliged to inform you that some of the principal industries of the Province have, during the past year, shared in the depression which has prevailed in business everywhere.

3. The shipping and lumbering interests, which depend for support largely on the condition of other countries, have felt, very severely, the effects of the prostration which has befallen every species of industry in the countries with which our commercial relations the most closely connect us, while the consumption of coal, a very prominent article in the list of Provincial exports, has been largely abridged by the decline of manufactures, and the general financial stringency in the neighboring States.

I entertain the hope, however, that with the opening of the spring there will be a revival of the industries thus depressed by circumstances beyond control; but I willingly believe only temporary in duration.

4. I am glad to be able to inform you that a fair measure of success has attended other main branches of business in which the people of this Province are engaged.

5. A very abundant crop has rewarded the labors of the agriculturist. The fisherman, from an average catch, has derived more than an average return, and at this moment these two large classes, comprising the great bulk of the population, have reason to rejoice in the comforts which the blessing of Providence on his labors enables them to enjoy.

6. Though the depression of the Coal trade, and in the business of shipping and lumbering affects seriously the interests and prosperity of a large body of persons engaged in these industries, the people of the Province, as a whole may be congratulated on their exemption from any such distress as prevails in countries whose industries are less happily diversified.

7. I am glad to be enabled to announce to you as the result of the wise liberality of the Legislature in giving additional encouragement to the construction of the Western Counties Railway, that arrangements have been made which will insure the opening of the road from Yarmouth to Digby before the close of the present year, and for completing the end of the following year the link between Digby and Annapolis, when the western sea-board will enjoy the benefits of an unbroken railway communication with the other railways of the Province, and of the rest of the Continent.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly:

8. The public Accounts for the past year, together with the estimates of the current year, which have been framed with due regard to economy, will be submitted for your consideration at an early day.

Mr. President and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly:

9. No Company having availed itself of the provisions secured by the legislation of the last Session for the extension of our Railway system Eastward, the subject has occupied the earnest attention of my Government; and they have taken steps by correspondence and otherwise, with a view to promote the realization of that important undertaking; and a measure will be submitted during the Session which I may venture to hope will result in its accomplishment.

10. The subject of the Printing required for the public service has received the most careful consideration of my Government; and with a view to securing still further economy in this branch, a measure will be submitted to you, which I hope will meet your approval.

11. The uncertainty which prevails as to the extent of the powers possessed by Local Assemblies in the regulation of order in their deliberations, has led in the two larger Provinces of the Dominion to some legislation with a view of defining these powers; a measure of a similar kind will be submitted to you, which I recommend to your favorable consideration.

12. Your attention will be invited to several measures calculated to promote the public welfare; all of which I commend to your consideration, with

the confident assurance that your best exertions will be used to promote the prosperity of the Province.

The Hon. Thomas F. Morrison, late member for Colchester, had previously been sworn in a Member of the Council. After the speech had been read, Hon. Mr. Morrison read the Address in reply to the Speech and the Council adjourned.

On the return of the members to the House of Assembly the Speaker announced that he had received a copy of the opening Speech, which was read by the Clerk.

Hon. Provincial Secretary laid on the table the returns of the Guysboro election, and the Hon. O. S. Weeks was introduced by the Hon. D. McDonald and Mr. Franchville. The usual oaths were administered, and Mr. Weeks took his seat.

After the bill pro forma had been read Mr. Gayton introduced the Address in reply to the Opening Speech. In doing so, Mr. G. alluded to the various points on which it touched, especially that having reference to the progress of the Western Counties Railway. He stated that such rapid progress had been made that the line between Digby and Yarmouth would be entirely completed during the coming season. He also spoke of the proposals to improve the mode of doing the Public Printing as likely to give entire satisfaction to the public in the future.

Mr. McCurdy from Victoria County seconded the Address and referred to the need of railway extension eastward. He expressed the hope that measures would be taken before long for having this work extended to the Strait of Canso. He thought the prospect was at present rather gloomy for anything beyond that.

Mr. Holmes said he supposed the usual course would be taken of allowing the Address to lie on the table, as the Opposition would have something to say upon the subjects to which it alluded.

The Hon. Prov. Secretary said he would with the permission of the House ask attention to what had been done to carry out the resolution passed by the House at its last session for the purpose of perpetuating the memory of the two distinguished men Hon. Judge Johnston and the Hon. Joseph Howe. Those portraits were now before them. It would be familiar to many who retain a recollection of their classics that one of the most profound thinkers of antiquity directed those who were desirous of completing any great intellectual undertaking to summon before themselves a court of the spirits of the great departed and work as if in their presence and in expectation of their verdict. He did not know whether Mr. Howe was familiar with Longinus but by a singular coincidence he had produced in the exquisite poem, entitled "Room for the Dead," precisely the same thought. Mr. Howe was now gone, and it was for those who remained to endeavour to catch the spirit that animated him.

Mr. H. had gone into public life at a time when the public affairs of the Province were administered on principles very different from those that now prevail. A system of things had grown up which had been called the family compact. Mr. Howe had emancipated the country from that system, and he did not think there was one member who would be willing to go back, for however well it might have been suited to the infancy of the country, it was not suited to those who knew the blessings of constitutional freedom. Mr. Howe possessed a combination of powers rarely found in union, the power of inciting to action and of restraining from excess the passions he had raised. The only great man of modern times that he could recall, who possessed this faculty in an eminent degree was Daniel O'Connell. After the long agitation, lasting throughout the whole of his life, and which accomplished results that amounted to a great revolution, he was able to say that he had not shed one drop of blood, or infringed any law of the realm. This mighty power though on a smaller scale was possessed by Mr. Howe. After a long and what some might consider a stormy career, he rose to the highest position that he could occupy in this country, and having reached that position he died. His spirit had departed, but his memory remained, and the Government had endeavoured in obedience to the wishes of the house to retain and perpetuate it by some tangible emblem.

Mr. Johnston had by many persons been regarded as an embodiment of the fossil spirit of opposition to every progressive measure. There never was a more grievous error in regard to his character. He first emerged into public life as an advocate of religious freedom. Breaking away from the church of his forefathers gave the movement a power and consequence which it never could have obtained otherwise. He had a powerful judgment, and he advocated those measures which, according to his judgment, were for the true interests of the people. His intellect was of a most commanding character, and always won the respect of his great antagonist, Mr. Howe. It was under him that the criminal law became such a civilized country might well be content to live under. His regard for popular rights was practically embodied in the measure which he introduced providing for simultaneous polling, a Conservative mea-

sure, but in its ultimate tendency of a most thoroughly popular character, and in this respect illustrated in a peculiar manner the marked characteristics of its author's mind. It was passed in order to preserve the people of this country from the disgraceful scenes of riot that used to prevail when the polling lasted a fortnight and the polling-place shifted from place to place. The Legislature had done well to provide a permanent memorial to two such men as these, diverse as they were in many respects, yet animated by a common desire to promote the welfare of the country. It was well that the members of this House could in imagination see them looking down upon them and witnessing their endeavors to promote the welfare of the country for which they lived and labored.

Mr. Holmes said that the proceedings had taken a somewhat unexpected turn. He was certain that there was no member of the Legislature who could be indifferent to the subject alluded to by the hon. Provincial Secretary. The names of Johnston and Howe were familiar to the people of Nova Scotia. They had long occupied leading positions as the two great statesmen who had assisted more in moulding the institutions of the country than any other men who had taken part in the deliberations of our Legislature. The House, he was sure, would be glad to see any testimony whatever of respect paid to the memory of those men. He regretted very much that the testimonial was not of a more distinguished character than it was. When the resolution was moved in reference to the object, it was provided that statues should be erected to the memory of Howe and Johnston. That resolution was adopted unanimously, without one dissenting voice. He did not know for what reason the directions of the House had not been carried out. The House was very glad to see the portraits of those gentlemen here, but they would be much better gratified if the original intention had been carried out, and they had not only the paintings of those two men adorning the walls, but their statues erected, in order that members might be inspired by their example. He had very much pleasure on the present occasion in accepting, small and insufficient as it was, the tribute to which the attention of the House had been drawn.

The resolution was first introduced by Mr. McRae, "That a sum be placed in the estimates for the purpose of erecting suitable monuments or statues to the memory of the late Governor Howe and the late Judge Johnston." A day or two afterwards the late Mr. Blanchard moved a resolution in exactly the same terms with only the insertion of the amount, and in that form it was finally adopted. If any alteration was made in the resolution it was made without the sanction of the House.

Hon. Prov. Secretary said the only authority under which the Government had acted was that of the resolution passed by the House and recorded in the Journals, which simply directed the Government to procure some suitable memorial.

Mr. Woodworth said that the present discussion was quite unexpected to him. It would have been better, perhaps, to have had a full afternoon appropriated to the subject. He very well recollected the day on which the resolution was moved for a memorial of the great statesmen. He did feel then, when the Government sat still, with the hon. William Vail at their head, that the House had sunk to a pretty position when there was not one spark of patriotism or enthusiasm in the Government, and they allowed the members of the House to conduct the whole discussion and carry the resolution without their aid. (Applause.) Why the Government should congratulate themselves upon possessing the pictures of these men to look down upon them was more than he could understand. How it was possible that they could look at the faces of Howe and Johnston and congratulate themselves that they were snugly ensconced in their positions, and that the people could not move them he did not see. Did not everybody know that the last act of the late Mr. Howe was to write those letters to the people in which he gave his view of the Local Government of Nova Scotia. Everybody knew with what supercilious contempt he treated them. Everybody knew that when the election of 1869 was run in the county of Hants, they ransacked Webster's Dictionary to find opprobrious epithets to put upon his head. When he, Mr. W., found cant and sham whether on the first day of the session or on the last day, he would attack it. Suppose the Chronicle for 1869 was taken, and the extracts placed opposite that picture in which they told Mr. Howe "to go home to the bosom of his family and weep,"—when the man was sick unto death,—what kind of a picture would that make. They told him then to go home to his family and shed crocodile tears. How can they offer him a panegyric now. The Government by their organs and their speeches then did all they could to degrade him, and could they now congratulate themselves that they had his face to look at. If hypocrisy can go any further I would like to see it. (Applause.) Let them first get up and make their recantation. Let them do their first works of repentance and then let them make their panegyrics, but to

make them without the slightest offer of apology is the height of hypocrisy.

Every one knows how the Government followed the late Judge in Equity. He could not address a Grand Jury without their applying to him in terms that it would be unparliamentary for him (M. W.) to repeat. But they have got his picture here. Who got the pictures? The members of this House got them—not the Opposition but the whole House. The Government thought they would do the next best thing. They had now a new Provincial Secretary, and they had put him forward to pronounce a panegyric. Let the Hon. Commissioner of Mines make a speech, and the ex-Attorney-General, or even the Hon. Commissioner of Crown Lands. He would like also to hear the new Attorney-General make a speech about the old man Howe, but even he himself would have some, and would have to make a preface resembling a lady's postscript, which is the biggest part of the letter. He (M. W.) felt that as the head of the Government that had done all they could to deride the gentlemen whose pictures hung on the walls, a little more truth, a little less hypocrisy, a little more patriotism and a little more enthusiasm would be much more in place.

Hon. Atty. Gen. said he had not intended to offer any observations to the House were it not for the remarks of the hon. member for Kings. The learned member never rose to address the Legislature, but somebody was lacking in truth—a hypocrite—or something else equally debased and improper. Was that hon. and learned member an epitome of all the honor, a concentration of all the propriety, the embodiment of everything that was good, just, honorable and parliamentary? He regarded the tribute that the Provincial Secretary had paid to the memory of the departed statesman as a fitting panegyric upon a noble theme and only hoped that the members of this House would come to the discussion of the subjects that would be submitted to the Legislature this session animated by something of the patriotism, and desire to do their duty to their country that inspired those men in their public career.

On Friday the House continued the debate on the address. But little remark was made on any of the clauses until the one referring to Railway extension. On this clause being read several speeches were made. The matter of a more honest course being taken with the Public Printing too came in for some consideration. After Mr. Holmes had spoken for some time Mr. Mosely informed the House of the dissatisfaction of himself and his constituents with the course of the government, and his intention of acting with the Opposition.

After speeches from Messrs McKinnon, Woodworth, Hon. Atty. General, and Prov. Secretary the Address was adopted without a division.

On Monday the standing Committees were appointed and a number of questions asked and applications made for papers.

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