

The Carleton Sentinel.

WOODSTOCK, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1867.

CEREMONIES, MEN, & THINGS, CONNECTED WITH THE PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

It may be that many of our readers have not had an opportunity of witnessing the ceremony of opening the Session of our Assembly; of looking upon that Assembly while in Session; or of visiting the Legislative Halls, and their connections. For the special benefit of such, we may, during the Session, give a few pen and ink jottings; and first—THE OPENING.

This, as far as its attendant circumstances go, is quite an event even to the "Frederictonians," who have become quite familiarised to them. It is, certainly, a very pleasing, if not a very profitable or necessary display. It affords the Governor, and the military functionaries, a good opportunity to exhibit—and the citizens and thronging strangers to witness—a tolerable imitation of the pomp and circumstance of Royalty. The peals of martial music, the booming of cannon, the prancing of steeds, the clashing of arms, the waving of plumes,—all commingled, together with the gay uniforms of the officers and soldiers, and the pleasure beaming countenances of the assembled hundreds—have an exhilaration, begetting the wish that such pomp was never used or displayed; save as an attendant upon like peaceful demonstrations.

Amid such display, His Excellency is ushered into the "Legislative Council Chamber," the hall in which our Provincial "Lords" hold their grave Sessions. This is a very fine, spacious hall, finished, furnished, and appointed, in a style of elegant luxury. Here, being seated upon the Throne, the Governor commands the attendance of the Lower House, the "Commons." They, with the Speaker at their head, being come, and silence obtained, His Excellency reads the Speech. The Members retire; the crowd disperses; the Governor, in plain parlance, amid a repetition of the ceremonies which welcome him, "goes home." Before we leave this part of the subject, we must add that a very interesting feature of the scene in the Council Chamber, during the delivery of the Speech, consists of the display of "Beauty and Fashion" congregated.

We follow the Members of the Lower House to their apartment, which is one of tolerable dimensions, affording every convenience for the Members during their labors. It is, however, furnished in a less pretentious style than its aristocratic neighbor upstairs; still, its appointments are of such a character as to render the situation of the "assembled wisdom" extremely agreeable. Indeed, compared with some of the Halls of Legislation in the U. S., and, in some respects, with the English House of Commons, its fittings are rather extravagant. The accommodations provided for the public are very meager, and extremely uninviting; and especially does this apply to those for the reporters. It were difficult, however, under existing circumstances, to remedy this evil, as there is no chance in the present building to make room. A very nice gallery has, within a few years, been fitted up for the accommodation of the Ladies—many of whom avail themselves of it, and attend during interesting Debates. Connected with the Assembly Room is the Legislative Library, which comprises some 7,000 volumes of well selected works in the various departments of literature and science.

So much for the "Building" internally. In its external appearance, it is a disgrace to the City and its purposes. Standing on a beautiful site—in a very convenient position—it is an eyesore truly; and in pointing out to a stranger the localities and buildings of note, of which there are now many exceedingly creditable ones in Fredericton—one feels rather disposed to avoid making him acquainted with this uncouth pile of the "Provincial Buildings."

Let us now dwell a little upon the men who figure in our Halls of Legislature; and first our Governor, standing at the head of Provincial legislation, demands attention. It is not our wish or intention to say much respecting him, lest some sensitive persons should feel their loyalty insulted. On looking at him for the first time, we very naturally instituted a comparison between him as he appeared, and other Governors who have successively preceded him. What the result of our comparison was, we will not add: The *Freeman* said some time since that "He might make a good enough Chief of Governor," and perhaps he has.

FREDERICTON, February 17.

By the time this issue of our paper reaches its readers, we trust the Debate on Mr. Fisher's motion of "want of confidence," will have been satisfactorily concluded, although, while we write, the House have it under their consideration, and are warmly engaged in its discussion.

We give to-day, as much of the hon. members' speeches as possible. Mr. Fisher's Speech was a very plain statement of facts and logical deductions; and that of Mr. Macpherson was characteristic. This latter proved very conclusively that the Government have had no settled policy upon which they have agreed; that they have transacted the business of the country in a manner which has not been approved of by the practical men of their own body,—and if they cannot trust each other and themselves, can or ought the country to trust them? Mr. Macpherson's speech was a mass of truths—and it was a blighting one for the Government; there has been and there will be no more blighting speech against them than was that. But while Mr. Macpherson has condemned the Government, he has condemned himself; for his constituents can never forgive him for remaining with and bolstering up the present rotten Administration.

All the gentlemen who have spoken on the amendment have done themselves and their party all the justice which under the circumstances could be expected.

Mr. Allan did all that could be done for the Government, and proved himself a very clever pleader, and his address, and the desire he evinced to avoid any unpleasant difference were very creditable.

Mr. Hatheway's speech, for effectiveness, will scarcely be exceeded during the debate. It was mainly, eloquent, and powerful—strengthening the opposition, and making the Government tremble.

But next week we hope to lay these speeches before our readers, that they may judge for themselves. Meantime, the Government seem doomed.

MR. FISHER'S SPEECH.

Mr. FISHER moved the amendment to the first paragraph of the Address in answer to the Speech, and said that the Address had been introduced in the most extraordinary manner. It was the first time he had ever heard an Address proposed or the speech from the throne considered without some exposition of its principles. No reason had been offered to induce the House to agree to the Address. The hon. mover had thrown it upon the table and left it to its fate. It was, to say the least of it, a most undignified proceeding to leave it to be kicked about the table. The Speech itself was an extraordinary production, and the House were entitled to hear and ought to have been informed of its contents. He admired boldness in legislation and politics, but disliked recklessness. Many parts were conceived in a spirit of such cool nonchalance that proved one of two things, that the government were all powerful and as such utterly indifferent to the consequence of any of their acts, or were in the last throes of dissolution, reckless of consequences either way. The House and the country fully understood which horn of the dilemma to fix them upon. It referred to the Election law; reports had been received of the state of some of the constituencies—the information had just reached the government. Whose fault was it that the law had not been carried out? The government were to blame. They had not only treated it with indifference but hostility. Whether the law was good or bad they were bound to give it effect. The argument last spring was that it was the special duty of Government to carry out the law. Surely there could be no worse system than the one under which the Elections in June had been held. The registration had been completed in York and several adjoining Counties, without any difficulty. The expense in York was some £60, and the Warden informed him it could be done next year for less than thirty. In England, the Government adopted measures to carry out the Reform Bill. Here, had they directed the Clerks of the Peace and other Ministerial Officers in the Counties to assist in giving it effect, there would have been no complaint. He knew of persons in the employ, and holding offices under the Government, who neglected their duty. The Act itself, in pamphlet form, was not printed and distributed in this part of the Province till about the first of September, one month after the Assessors should have furnished the lists, and when the registration had commenced. As soon as the first of January arrived, the Secretary sent abroad a series of inquiries, and he supposed that they were surprised to find that the law had been carried out in so many counties; and these are the reports—the natural and legitimate consequence of their own act. The Government were blameable for the state of things which existed. They could not defeat it in the Legislature, but were determined to render it inoperative if possible. In his opinion, the most important feature was the registration.

He would direct their attention to the next sentiment in the Speech and Address, with reference to Railroads. He was not as wild as some were on this subject; still, he was satisfied that unless we advanced as our means would admit, with railroads, the country must lag behind the other neighboring Provinces. He charged the members of the Government with inconsistency; they had proscribed the scheme proposed by the late Government. One hon. member had declared that he was appalled at its magnitude; that it would bring upon the country, lamentation, mourning and woe,—and other members had declared their righteous horror at the scheme which in their fancy was destined to destroy the country; yet those same men are now engaged in endeavoring to prove that scheme an abortion by pretending to carry it out. His hon. colleague, the Solicitor General, had sat on the hustings, that the Survey to Woodstock would proceed immediately; whilst he (Mr. F.) was informed that the Postmaster General had ridiculed the idea of a railroad to Woodstock.

A reference to questions of the short Session, they

stated they would carry out the law, and the survey to Woodstock would proceed immediately. In the middle of September, the survey—such as it was—began; this was immediately in Executive parlance. Now he never could agree to that paragraph of the Address, as it expressed approbation of the doings of a government which ignored the interests of this part of the province. He (Mr. F.) found large liabilities incurred in railroad operations, and large amounts expended on the road from Shediac to Saint John, and he proposed a scheme which would finally provide for all the interests; and as it was impossible to build all the roads at once, to complete the work which was partially done and otherwise would be lost, and at the same time progress with their own road to Woodstock. This was not the course he would have adopted had the ground been clear. It did not give this part of the Province its due, but former Houses of Assembly and former legislation had restrained them; and he was compelled to adopt the best course consistent with the state of things existing. This had not been carried out. How was the work now carried on? He believed large expenditures in the winter, that would be lost. The Government assumed all the power, and he condemned the system as wrong which placed the whole controlling power in the hands of one or two members of the government. He never would consent to this in any government, especially when those controlling individuals owned property contiguous to the proposed line. It was a long time before the people would consent to yield the management of these public works to the Executive. They thought they should be managed by Companies; and it was only after checks and salutary restraining provisions had been thrown round the Executive power that the people yielded up these matters to them. The people were, he thought, right, no one man should be trusted with so great and responsible a power. This centralization of power he never could agree to. Its patronage and means of corruption would place the whole country in the power of the Executive. It would be one vast job. He would never consent to confer such power upon any Government past, present or future. It would centralize every thing and swallow up every other interest in the country. Give to the government the management of this great expenditure and they would control our whole Legislation. Why was not the commission appointed? Political economy he supposed. They could not find men to accept the offices who could run. They tried and then determined to brave it out (here Mr. F. referred to the Railroad acts of last winter and showed how they were all connected together, and how particular they were in requiring no money to be paid till certified by the Commissioners.) The whole proceeding is in violation of law. The finances were flourishing it was said, and would always flourish if the government could issue Debentures and sell them for cost without authority of law. The Government have glorified themselves on the prosperous state of the finances. He had no doubt they would always maintain that financial state while the credit of the country would bear it. But what have they the Government done, he would ask, to maintain the financial prosperity? Why they had issued debentures to the amount of £50,000 stg., but upon what authority he would ask had they done this and where was the security they offered for it. He contended that these debentures had not been legally issued—that they did not as they should bear upon their face the evidence of their legality—but they were issued solely on the responsibility of the executive. Would the House approve of this? A sum equal to three years' Ryer Road appropriation issued by the mere dash of a pen, a charge upon their property and revenue forever, without any authority but their own mere motion.

He was a little curious to hear the Surveyor General's account of the matter—how it is that he has changed his opinion so materially in so short a time. He was likewise anxious to know what influence had been brought to bear upon the Messrs. Barings; as he supposed from what the Government declared, those gentlemen were prepared to do our business upon much more favorable terms than they proposed to him. He had, when in England, to place the matter fairly before the Barings; but doubtless the present Government had flooded those gentlemen with some new light. The House had always complained when large amounts were overdrawn. Here was not a mere temporary draft of a large sum, but a permanent charge upon the Revenue of the Province which the property of the country in all future time must pay. He referred to the endeavors made by the Government and their friends to decry the policy of the late Government and glorify their own. He commented upon the way in which the late Secretary had been treated. He did intend to have made some remarks with reference to that gentleman—remarks which he felt would be appreciated by the people, but as that gentleman was present he would refrain. He would however take the opportunity to compare the alleged difference between Mr. Tilley's financial statements and the facts. The Hon. Prov. Secretary had estimated this difference to be £35,000. Mr. Tilley's estimate of Revenue was £118,000. The product from the same source exceeded £124,000, nearly £130,000. Railroad imports included, of which a trifle over £3000 had been collected in St. John for liquors since the repeal, and from the best estimate he could form £0,000 was a large sum for liquors since the repeal, from which deduct £3000 which is about the amount that would have been received for duties on liquors in Bond and imported under the law had it not been repealed, which left the receipt of revenue £127,000, just one £1000 less than Mr. Tilley estimated it, and his estimate was based on the supposition that the Railway work would have been prosecuted with more vigor and our importations increased. This estimate could not have been made from ignorance, as the Secretary was an intelligent man; but it really appeared like ignorance or an intention to deceive and carry the system they had pursued. It was at

the time considered so great a financial feat that it was intimated to be the joint production of the Secretary and Auditor-General. In passing he would just draw the attention of the House to the fact that notwithstanding the great noise made about the pecuniary benefit which would accrue to the country by the repeal of the Liquor Law, it had amounted to about £2,000, after deducting the expenses of the Legislature. The people had been told by the members of the Government and their friends that theirs was merely a provisional Government; some believed it—he did not. They promised that they would fill up the vacancies in the Government immediately; but look at the facts;—the most important office—that of Surveyor-General—remained unfilled for months; he had himself attended the Crown Land Office at one of their sales, and then he found, on enquiring, that the Provincial Secretary had the management. But, what was the cause of the delay; why, he conceived the Government wished to make political capital out of the office. He had been in Queen's County, and there he found a gentleman to whom the Government had promised the office, but that gentleman did not get it, and why? because the Government thought it their duty, if possible, to find a man who had given evidence of his love for the prerogative; and in the Hon. member for Restigouche they found one after their own heart,—one whose antecedents recommended him strongly to their regard. In the events during Sir Wm. Colebrook's administration, when the House had the "Alfred Reade" case before them, he had given abundant evidence of his predilection and his political sentiments. He suited their views exactly, and got the office. [Mr. Montgomery here stated that he was not in the House; that Mr. Cunard had no letter of his; that he remained in the Council then, and would under similar circumstances again.] Mr. Fisher went on to say that at any rate he remained in the government, and now approved of the act, and at all events, he (Mr. F.) had a right to judge by his acts. Much fault was found with the late government when there seemed to be on their part some delay in filling up this same office. The eyes of the whole country were turned upon one man, as the proper person to fill it, but he would not accept the appointment and they were compelled to make a provisional appointment. This he (Mr. F.) did not like, but it was unavoidable. Yet opposition was brought to bear against them. They were arraigned before the House during the absence of some of their number and some of the members of the present Government voted for the Resolution at that time moved. With reference to the Board of Works, the Chief Commissioner was not appointed until September. Why? they could not find a man who could run, who would accept, but his hon. colleague, and his own business did not allow him to spend his time running about the country looking after the roads and bridges, without neglecting it, which he would not do; and the important matters connected with the Board of Works were thrown in the shade. The government cannot urge in excuse of their delay that they did not like the law, for they had long advocated it, and it was only because they had not the moral courage to propose or the political influence to carry it, that they did not bring forward a similar law when they were in power.

The whole utility of this department was lost the last season, as the summer was nearly over and the most important works must have been left to themselves. These departments were like Mahomet's coffin, floating backwards and forwards, as no one cared for them. The Postmaster Gen. was appointed at once. The former Government provided for the appointment of this officer, when it should be deemed expedient—and the present government seemed to discover its expediency at once. He found the deficiency in the Post Office department had increased from £55 to £60 to £250. He had heard of important changes that had been made in the department, and he had examined the Gazette to ascertain what they were—and they were so absurd as to satisfy him that little had been done to enforce its efficiency. He referred to the last notice. He stated that it appeared to have taken 1 month and 16 days for the productions of the Postmaster General's mind to reach the Gazette Office. He dwelt upon the last order to the Postmaster at St. John which he condemned as being uncalled for; he thought common courtesy,—common decency, or at least common sense, should have induced the Postmaster General to have conveyed that order to Mr. Howe in a less public way. Another unpardonable piece of negligence on the part of the government was exhibited in their delay in appointing the Agricultural Commission. This was only appointed on the 17th December, and he was informed they had never met. The country were led to believe some great thing had been done, when in reality no action had been taken except some circulars issued by Dr. Robb a short time ago.

But the Emigration scheme demanded a notice. He thought it a little singular that when he had proposed a vote last year for money out of the surplus Civil List Fund to promote Emigration, every member of the present government with the exception of his Hon. Colleague Mr. McPherson voted against him. When in England he had, he said, brought the matter before the Colonial Secretary and thought it very advisable to promote a healthy stream of Emigration—but he had been opposed by the members of this government. Since the present government took up the subject—and the country was filled with the praises of the forth coming scheme—soon overtaken, and (he Mr. F.) was certainly amazed to find such a connection proceed from a government in which their whole support was from practical men, his hon. friends. He appealed to members all round, particularly to the farmers, if they even had met with anything so strangely at variance with the wants of the country.

[Mr. Wilnot—"Wait till it is explained"]. Mr. Fisher—"Explained! it was perfectly clear, read and