

was more immediately instituted, without their countenance and support, with a degree of apathy and selfishness scarcely excusable.

Vast tracks of forest lands of a superior quality within your County, yet remain ungranted and unoccupied, where emigrants may be advantageously accommodated with any quantity of land their means may enable them to purchase, provided a proper system be observed in locating them. The reckless manner in which the Crown Land has hitherto been laid out for settlement, has already driven many away, and is calculated to deter the stoutest heart from settling, when he is forced to the rear of the first concession, without either a pathway or house to cheer him, then the rear of the second in like manner, and perhaps again to the farthest extremity of the third, before he finds vacant ground to set down upon in the wilderness, impressed with a belief that it is infested with wild beasts, and without the near prospect of a neighbor, a road, or any means of conveying necessaries to his family other than on his back. It is not to be wondered at then, that our population has not increased under such a regime; that it has not done so, your Committee consider very fortunate, as it has saved the Country from irretrievable difficulties, for there are yet many places that afford convenient and suitable inlets to the interior, where roads may be opened, and after passing the first concession, the lateral lines of the lots so altered as to front on each side of the roads, which will form a continued settlement on both sides any distance that may be required; thus allowing the settlers an opportunity of erecting school houses and places of worship—privileges that they cannot enjoy in a detached or promiscuously settled country; and it is to be hoped that measures will be adopted to restrain the disposal of the vacant lands of the Crown otherwise, ere it be too late.

Your Committee lay before you the last report of the Saint John's Agricultural Society lately received, for your favorable consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

BY ORDER,

DUGALD STEWART,

Secretary and Treasurer.

Colonial News.

New Brunswick.

St John Observer, Feb. 27.

CALAMITOUS FIRE.

It is our painful duty to record the occurrence of the most extensive and disastrous conflagration, with which our city has been visited for several years past. Between 11 and 12 o'clock last night, a fire broke out in a building on the north side of King Street, owned by J. & G. Lawrence, next but one below the Commercial Hotel, occupied by them, B. O'Brien and others. It is supposed that the disaster was occasioned by a defective chimney, but whatever the cause, the devouring element so rapidly and extensively extended its ravages, as to sweep away the whole range of buildings from the Commercial Hotel (including the large and valuable establishment northwardly along King's Square, to Mr. John Ansley's store, adjoining the country market, where its progress was fortunately arrested; Mr Ansley's store being saved; while on the north side of King Street, every building from the Commercial Hotel corner down to Mr Vernon's brick building at the corner of Germain Street, were also entirely destroyed. So complete was the devastation, that nothing remains on the site of the conflagration, but the lower portions of some of the chimneys. During the fire, a brisk north-easterly wind was blowing, which drove the flames and burning materials across the street, and placed the south side of King Street in imminent danger. The various fire engines were early at the scene of destruction, aided also by those belonging to the military and Portland; the last named being under the direction of John Pollok, Esq., who was indefatigable in his exertions throughout the night. The high wind carried the burning embers to a great distance, some of which unfortunately set fire to the Cupola and roof of Trinity Church, which was for some time in danger of entire destruction. The Military engine and another engine were immediately placed for the protection of the church, and the most complete arrangements made for effecting the purpose; but although the supply of water from the Water Company's plugs was abundant, yet the hose were so frozen, that the water could not be forced through them with sufficient

force to reach the roof of the edifice. A number of resolute young men mounted to the top of the Tower, under the burning Cupola, and cut away the pillars, to allow the blazing mass to fall over; and we regret to say that in performing this hazardous and important service, several of the hardy operators were severely injured. We are informed that a young man named Johnston, and another Wetmore, fell from the top of the Tower to the ground; and though both escaped with life, yet both are severely and dangerously injured. Johnston broke his fall in some degree by catching a rope which hung over the Tower, but his body struck on the western porch before coming to the ground; and one of the pillars struck Wetmore while ascending a ladder, and knocked him to the ground. We understand, also, that Mr. C. Huyghue, son of Lieut. Huyghue of the Ordnance Office, was very much injured by a piece of burning timber striking him on the head; but we are happy to learn that it is confidently expected all three will recover. The loss of property occasioned by this calamity is very great; but we learn that there were insurances to the amount of about £5000 on various portions of it. Some of the sufferers, however, were wholly uninsured.

The land and buildings from Lawrence's cabinet Ware-rooms in King's Street, round to Ansley's store in King Square, were we believe, the property of the Corporation of Trinity Church, who have £1400 insured on the buildings. It is probable, however, that the land will henceforth yield a better ground rent than it did before the fire. There is now an unequalled opportunity for erecting on this site the most complete Hotel and apartments in this Province, which our enterprising citizens may perhaps improve. It is earnestly to be hoped, however, that effectual measures will be taken to secure the erection of a uniform line of first rate brick buildings in place of wooden tenements destroyed, and thus to advance the beauty and security of this important district of the City. Not one particle of a wooden structure should ever again be suffered to disgrace the site now laid bare. We give below, a list of the sufferers, and of the buildings destroyed.

We cannot close our remarks without observing, that throughout the conflagration, the Water Company's plugs afforded an abundant and continuous supply of water; without the aid of which, we fear the destruction would have been vastly more extensive. The fire was not completely subdued till about 5 o'clock this morning. Great praise is also due to the Military, and to the various Companies belonging to the different public and private Engines, and the Fire Department, and Fire Clubs, for their active and efficient services.

King Street.—Commercial Hotel, owned by Trinity Church, and occupied by Mr. Wetmore, as Hotel, by J. Sweeney, another, and Harvey Perkins, as shops; two three story building owned by J. & G. Lawrence, occupied by them as cabinet water-rooms and dwelling, by Sons of Temperance as Division Room, and by John Christy, Grocer, and B. O'Brien, as Shop—a vacant Shop in these buildings; two three story buildings owned by Stephen Wiggins, Esq., Shops occupied by R. D. McArthur, Druggist, R. Summers, Grocer, and Fellows & Co. Druggists—dwelling apartments occupied by I. Fellows, as a Boarding House; three story building belonging to W. Wright, Esq., Shop occupied by T. Clerk & Co., as a Crockery Store—dwelling apartments by Miss Trounce, and by Mr. Smith, as a Boarding House; two two story houses owned by W. Wright, Esq., Shops occupied by D. Paterson, as a Shoe Store, by W. M' Rae, Leather Cutter, and by James Christie, as a Leather and Finding Store—dwelling apartments by Mrs. Doagan, Milliner, Mr. Welsh, Tailor, and Mr. Slaven; two story building owned by John Brundage, and occupied by R. Stubs & Co.; three story building owned by John Brundage, occupied by him as a Boarding House—and Mr. Keohan as a Shoemaker's Shop; three story building owned by Miss Adams, occupied by her, and others, as dwelling apartments, by G. Peacock, as a Leather Cutting Shop, and D. O'L. Warlock, as a Watchmaker's Shop.

King's Square.—Shops in Commercial Hotel occupied by S. M'Leod, Tailor, J. Hennesy, Hugh McPherson, and another; two story building owned by Trinity Church, Shop occupied by Mr. Nelson, Grocer, and up-stairs by W. Ellison, as Daguerotype Rooms, two story building belonging to the Estate of the late Thomas Millidge, Esq., occupied by James Davidson, Grocer, and J. D. Robertson, Flour Store; Messrs. Lawrence's Workshop, Hotel and J. Davidson's Stables, in rear of above buildings.

Canada.

Quebec Chronicle, Feb. 23.

Monster Temperance Meeting.—Pursuant to advertisement, a public meeting of the citizens of Quebec was held in the Hall of the House of Assembly, yesterday evening, at seven o'clock, for the purpose of expressing their opinion with regard to the causes of intemperance, &c.

Although our reporter was in attendance half an hour before the time appointed, it was with the greatest difficulty and perseverance that he gained the platform, so crowded was the hall. Not less than 2000 persons could have been present; and it is assumed that not less than 5000 had to go away without effecting an entrance. We have obtained a lengthy report of the speeches, which our limited time this morning prevents us from publishing till our next.

His Honor the Mayor presided, and was supported by Monseigneur de Sidsme, Jeffery Hale, Esq., and Robert Symes, Esq. J. P., Presidents of the respective Temperance Societies of this city. Messrs. White and Rheume officiated as Secretaries. The resolutions were moved and seconded by an equal number, we believe of French and English gentlemen: and from the cordial and enthusiastic manner in which the audience received each speaker, without reference to creed or country, it was obvious that but one feeling pervaded the mass, and that was the success of the Temperance Cause.

Quebec Chronicle, Feb. 21.

A requisition numerously and respectfully signed, appears in yesterday's *Mercury*, for a public meeting to be held on Friday next, in the Hall of Assembly, of citizens opposed to the proposition now now before the Assembly of this province, to indemnify the rebels of 1837 and 1838.

The Courier with the Halifax mail, who arrived this morning, states that the ice has taken as far down as Berthier, 24 miles below Quebec.

Temperance.—Never, we believe, since the movement commenced, was there such an amount of feeling in Quebec, upon the subject. At St Rochs, in particular, through the influence of the sermons which have been preached by the Rev. Mr. Mailloux, one thousand heads of families yesterday took the pledge; and we are informed that 500 more were prepared to do so, had there been a sufficient supply of temperance crosses. Upwards of 30 tavern-keepers and grocers, as was stated yesterday afternoon by the Rev. gentleman, have determined on discontinuing the sale of spirituous liquors.

On our first page will be found the requisition for the meeting to be held to-morrow.

Novascotia.

Halifax Courier, Feb. 26.

Port of Halifax.—The past few days have afforded a strange sight to the citizens of Halifax. The harbour has been partially closed with ice. Had it not been for the services of the Cunard Steamer *Margaret*, Capt. Fraser, the navigation would have been fast locked in the embraces of old winter, perhaps, for weeks to come. Happily we do not often witness such a scene; and it is fortunate that Halifax harbor maintains its superiority in this respect. Although it has been partially skimmed over several times during the past twenty years; still it has not been entirely closed by the frost since the year 1821. If the same means had then been at the disposal of Messrs. Cunard, it would not then have happened; for we remember that on that occasion also were the citizens of Halifax indebted to the same enterprising House for cutting a channel through the ice into the offing. The Government brig *Chebucto* led the way followed by a fleet of the outward bound trade to the West Indies, and elsewhere. We note these facts with great pleasure, because it is injurious to the interests of the Port to allow persons abroad to suppose that Halifax harbour offers any obstructions to Navigation at all seasons, or under any circumstances. With the most ordinary foresight and attention, the evident advantages of a free and open communication with the sea may at all times be kept up. We are glad that such attention has been used on the present occasion.

On Wednesday last the wharves presented quite an animated spectacle to the numbers of the people who were there assembled to witness the arrival of the Steamers. The *Margaret* had, as usual been employed in breaking up the ice, and had been down below Chebucto Head. Even as far out as that local-

ity she fell in with floating masses of ice. At meridian she came past the lower part of the city in company with the Royal Mail Propellor *Ospray*, Captain Sampson from Bermuda. The evening previous one of the Dartmouth Steamers had brought up the Packet Brig *Halifax* from Boston, and Brig. *Otter* from the West Indies; and the latter lying at anchor in the channel off the long wharf, occasioned the two steamers to touch each other without damage however to either, except the port cat head of the *Ospray*, being carried away in the collision. They soon got clear, and the latter beautiful ship glided, as if by some mysterious influence through the channel, up to Cunard's Wharf. The scene reminded us of the illustrations in Parry's voyages to the Northern Regions. The Steamer from England was also at the same time signalled in the offing from Fort George; and about 4, P. M. that noble ship passed up the harbour without condescending to take the open channel;—but steering directly for the main body of the field of ice, which her symmetrical proportions sent flying in all directions. The *Europa's* arrival has done more to break up the ice than the exertions of all the rest of the steamers united; and it was really surprising to see the ice thrown up to a height of two or three feet, several yards in advance of her stem, as she majestically dashed up to Cunard's wharf, in an hour or two less than eleven days from Liverpool, in the season of mid winter, and having on board a fare of seventy-seven passengers who crowded every elevated position on board to get a sight of the novel spectacle.

The *Ospray* encountered very severe weather, both on her passage to and from Bermuda,—4½ days on the former and 5 on the latter. She also met with considerable ice more than 50 miles to the southward of this port, which together with a tremendous gale of wind on the northern edge of the gulf stream detained her an unusual time on the passage.

Temperance Hall.—The Tenders for the erection of the new "Temperance Hall" have been opened, and that of Mr. David Calder, Builder of this city, accepted by the committee. The Edifice will be of the Grecian Order, 68 feet in length by 67 feet in width, two stories in height; and the exterior for which alone the contract specifies, will cost £2500.

Provincial Legislature.

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNALS.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, February 12.

On motion of Mr. Woodward, Resolved, That a humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor, praying that his Excellency will be pleased to direct to be laid before the House, Returns showing the amount of Postage collected at the several Post Offices within the Province in the years ending fifth January, 1848, and the fifth January, 1849; the salaries paid to the respective Postmasters and Clerks connected with the Post Office; the amount paid the Surveyor of the Post Office for salary, travelling expenses, and other contingencies of his office; the annual sum paid to each of the Contractors for carrying the regular mails; the number of times such mails are transmitted weekly, the times at which the mails are due and closed at the respective Post Offices; and what new Lines were applied for or established, or any Lines that may have been discontinued, and what amount of the aggregate Postages fall under the heads of British, American, and Colonial, respectively, for the aforesaid periods.

February 13.

Mr. End presented a petition from George Wilson, of Bathurst, praying aid towards establishing and keeping up a weekly communication between that place and Shippigan. Referred to the mail committee.

Mr. Wark presented a petition from William McLeod and John W. Holderness, of Richibucto, Commissioners for the erection of the Bridge across Richibucto River, praying compensation for their services. Referred to the Road Committee.

Mr. Read presented a petition from John Wooler, of Bathurst, praying for a Bounty on the Tonnage of Vessels engaged by him in the Deep Sea Fishery, during the past year. Referred to the committee on Fisheries.

Mr. End brought in a Bill to authorize the erection of a Lock up House at Shippigan, in the county of Gloucester.

On motion of Mr. Street, Resolved, That a Select Committee be appointed, to whom shall be referred the petition presented to this House relative to the Leper Establishment on Sheldrake Island, in the county of Northumberland; together with all other documents and papers laid or that may be laid before this House relative to the unfortunate people afflicted with Leprosy, to report thereon by Bill or otherwise. Ordered, That Mr. Street, Mr. Curran, Mr. End, Mr. Thomson, and Mr. Wilson, do compose the said committee.

February 15.

Read a third time as engrossed, a Bill to authorize the Justices of the Peace for the