

THE GLEANER:

AND NORTHUMBERLAND, KENT, GLOUCESTER AND RESTIGOUCHE
COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL.

OLD SERIES]

Nec araneorum sane textus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt, nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes.

[COMPRISED 13 VOLUMES]

NEW SERIES, VOL. VIII.]

MIRAMICHI, MONDAY, APRIL 29, 1850.

[NUMBER 27.]

Provincial Legislature OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

DEBATE ON THE STATE OF THE PROVINCE.

Mr End was the first gentleman on his feet. We have only room to give extracts from his excellent speech. He said—

We enter this debate Mr Chairman, with the painful fact before us, that the history of this Province for the last 20 years records an almost uninterrupted decline from bad to worse, in the same ratio as our protection was diminishing. That its present condition is one of scarcely mitigated desolation. That from Restigouche to the St. Croix is a succession of tenanted houses, empty villages, discontinued Ship Yards, deserted farms, and ruined trade. That with the exception of Fredericton, sustained by the Legislature, public offices, and the Military; and St. Stephens having the benefit of a double trade—the finger of man cannot point at one prospering locality within the whole Province. That 20 years ago we might truly be said to be in a most flourishing condition—our forests teeming with life and activity—our ports filled with ships—our commerce remunerative—our agricultural population independent—every member of every branch of industry, professional, mechanical, agricultural, or commercial, receiving a full and fair remuneration for his labor, and consequently happy and contented. I need not attempt a picture of our then condition. Britain in all her glory, ruling over a space on which it is said the sun never sets, could not claim as her own a happier spot—nor a colony among them all whose inhabitants were more thoroughly devoted to her interests or more strongly attached to her institutions. On its first settlement this land was designated the last retreat of suffering loyalty, and the men of England, Ireland and Scotland, who afterwards flocked to its shores, were not slow in following what they then deemed the glorious example. But, Mr Chairman, how changed is our condition! Would to God that it did not remain to be told! Such attachment have I felt to the political institutions under which I have lived so long that I could almost regret that this land had ever been raised above the surrounding waters, or that the elk, the bear, and the micnac, had ever been disturbed, rather than the detail of our present condition should blot a page in the world's history. Yes, Mr Chairman, it must ever be a foul blot on the page which records the hand of man marred by the laziest works of God's Providence.

[Mr End here goes into the history of Colonial Office misrule, and our Provincial wrongs and sufferings, refers to public documents, shows the impossibility for the Province to revive under present circumstances; and finally concludes with the following very just observations.]—

This is the true condition of New Brunswick—a condition sufficiently distressed in itself, but greatly aggravated by the fact that cross but the boundary line, and you are in a country in which every human being seems profitably employed, where men's energies are stimulated by required labor, where every branch of industry is flourishing, and where every one seems prosperous, contented and happy. We have desolation and distress with British Institutions on the one side—we see prosperity and wealth on the other—with laws (I believe) fairly administered, with a Government infinitely cheaper than our's—but I apprehend quite as congenial to the habits of the people. We see our ablest Statesmen referring with respect to American Institutions—we hear the decisions of their Courts, and the admirable legal productions of their Kents, their Stories, and their Greenleafs quoted as authorities in our Courts of Justice. Our present Lieutenant Governor in a message laid before us appears to appreciate those institutions, for he brings them forth prominently before the colonial minister, as connected with our condition. Thus

it appears that by some means, ancient prejudices have been worn down among us all, and the comparison which we cannot help making between our condition, even including our loyalty, and that of our immediate neighbors, is deplorably humiliating to us. It appears, Mr Chairman, that in Canada, men's minds have been agitated by the same subject—a document is published purporting to be a despatch from the Colonial Minister prohibiting such ideas—and of that despatch, I will only say, that people's apprehensions of the insanity of his Lordship, were entirely removed on having ascertained that the pretended despatch was really only a hoax, &c., supposed to have been maliciously got up by some of his enemies. There will be difference of opinion on this subject. I think if a due regard for the public good be recognised as the true end and aim of our deliberations that our course is plain before us. I doubt if Great Britain in a commercial point of view, will or indeed can, restore our lost prosperity. Her Legislature appears to be too deeply imbued with the anti-colonial principle—and I think that she cannot recede from that which she has already done. I doubt whether a mere commercial understanding with our neighbors, even on the footing of the most perfect reciprocity, would be a remedy for the evils which we endure. Such a condition would be liable to continual diplomatic changes and interruptions, and still submit to the colonial minister, our interests as they have been, would either be overlooked, or considered of secondary importance. I think such a commerce would be an unsafe one, would produce continual sources of irritation and dissatisfaction, and place this colony physically as well as politically in a worse condition than the present. In weighing this matter we should avoid all appeals to our feelings, and turn a deaf ear to those oratorical displays which are loose and declamatory, addressed to our passion rather than our judgment. The Hon. the Attorney General took occasion, a few days ago, when we were in debate on this subject, to caution us against entertaining a thought on Annexation—he asked us "could we join a country where man sells man?" and quoted with great force the beautiful lines of Cowper—

Slaves cannot breathe in England, if their lungs
Inhale our air, that moment they are free,
They touch our country and their shackles fall!

It was not at this time understood that the gagging despatch was really a hoax—and I could not refrain from comparing the spirit of those lines with the spirit of the despatch. I put my comparison in the shape of a parody, which I beg to deliver for the edification of my honorable friend—

Men must not think in Can'da, if they use
The brains God gave—they disobey Lord Grey,

But if they speak—then are they traitors all!

Mr Woodward was surprised to hear the hon. member for Gloucester (Mr End) attribute all the commercial and other embarrassments under which the Province now labors, to the present Colonial policy of the mother country. He (Mr W.) could not view it in that light. He was sorry to see that the hon. member had drawn so deplorable a picture of the condition of the country. He would agree that the state of things was far from being what might be desired; and that commerce was very much depressed; yet, he believed that, as always has been the case, these changes of policy are consequent changes, in commercial affairs must come about. The hon. member has said that the country was in a more flourishing condition 20 years ago. This he (Mr W.) could not believe. He was convinced that there was a great deal more real wealth at present in the country and particularly in St. John than at any former period! and he did not like to bear the hon. member draw such pictures of poverty, and misery, which people out of the House did not understand or EXPERIENCE! The Colonies were now in a state of transition; and he felt convinced

that when the present Free Trade policy had received a fair trial it would be found to work well. It has been stated by hon members that the lumbering trade has ruined the Province; but he believed that the business had done much good. Whence have we derived the revenue which went to improve the roads and bridges through the country, and support the various public departments, but from the lumbering business? It has been, together with ship building, our chief, he might say the only, source of commerce, and hence our revenue; and because changes and circumstances over which we had no control, have caused a temporary stagnation in that branch of business, it was not right to ascribe the present state of things to the lumbering trade. He believed that many of the evils of which the people of this Province have to complain, have arisen from extravagance, and unsystematic management in the various departments of business, than from any other cause. He thought that while pursuing the lumbering and shipping business, the agricultural and other interests of the country were materially neglected, which if attended to, would have greatly added to the prosperity of the people; but no one could deny that it is the lumbering business of the Province which has been the means of accomplishing the improvements that have been made. In fact, it has hitherto been our only staple commodity. He would deny that protection to any article of produce, or manufacture, had ever been the state policy of the mother country. It had merely been a matter of expediency; and it is such that has brought about the free trade policy as well. Men whether jointly or individually, will always pursue such measures as they deem most conducive to their interests, and which circumstances render expedient; and such has been the case with regard to the policy which many in these colonies look upon as an infringement on their rights. It was time that the lumbering and shipbuilding trade of this Province has received a check; but he did not think that check would be of a permanent nature. This province is in a transition state; but he believed the result would be a transition from a worse to a better condition; and that the present free trade policy would bring about a more healthy and flourishing aspect in all our commercial relations; yet that could not come about immediately; it must be done gradually. It was his opinion that the wisest Legislation was to let every branch of industry take its proper and most legitimate course. This could be done by restriction.

It was not right to charge the mother country with injustice in adopting her present policy. It should be remembered that England had to legislate for twenty millions of people, on the other side of the water; and that it was her just duty to subserve the interests of the great majority of her subjects. In these Colonies there were, comparatively speaking, but few; and it would be absurd for that few to expect that their interests should be regarded at the expense of the twenty millions. He believed that if England had adopted her present policy sixty years ago, she would be in a more flourishing condition than she is at present. Much has been said about the protective policy of the United States; but his opinion was, as a general principle, protection was not for the benefit of that country. As he said before, men would pursue such measures as best suited their purpose; and it was only when the whigs were in the ascendancy that the high protection was maintained in the United States, because they the whigs were directly interested in sustaining that policy. He was inclined to attribute the prosperous condition of the United States, more to the fact of their possessing every variety of climate and production within themselves, and to the free trade that existed between the different States than to high protection.

He thought there were many matters of a local nature of very great importance which should be considered and taken up while discussing the state of the Pro-

vince. Hon. members were too apt to look abroad for the cause of our ills, instead of applying a remedy to the evils that exist at home. We ought to look at the enormous expense of our local Legislation and Government; and aim at reducing those expenses within our means. He would again say that much of what we have to complain has arisen from extravagance. He would like to see the subject of salaries taken up, and he hoped it would be fully dealt with before the Session was over. Instead of flying in the face of the British Government we would show greater exertion among ourselves and apply our energies to our own resources; reduce our expenses and become more economical. He believed that if our tariff was done away with altogether, and direct taxation resorted to for the support of the Government, the country would benefit by it; and if we obtain reciprocal free trade with the United States we must adopt that principle. He had been told that if reciprocal free trade were obtained the United States would, in a short time, swallow up the Colonies; but his opinion was, that this policy would be a sure means of bringing that event about. It has also been said that the changes in the Navigation Laws would destroy the ship building interests of the Province. Such was not his opinion nor was it the opinion of ship-builders themselves here or in England. He was sorry that the Hon. member for Gloucester, who preceded him had drawn up such desponding and desolating pictures which were calculated to have a bad effect outside. It was much better cheerfully to unite and assist each other in carrying out every species of reform and turning every branch of our industrial resources to good account. The province was as it was despondency; or bemoaning would not make it better. He considered the changes which have come about as things that were inevitable; and that after a little time those changes would work beneficially. The United States were our most natural Market and he felt sanguine that that Market would soon be open to the Colonies. In the mean time he would impress upon the Committee the necessity of turning their attention to matters over which they had control.

Mr Street admitted the importance of the discussion, and rather approved of what had fallen from the hon. member from St. John (Mr R. D. Wilmot) than the views which were held by the hon. and learned member from St. John (Mr Ritchie). It must be admitted that for years back this country had been in an exceedingly depressed state; but he was not one of those who wished to attribute all the evils which had overtaken this country to the effect of the imperial policy, nor did he participate in the fears for a separation from the mother country which the hon. member had expressed in the original resolution. He thought the day of separation, in the words of Lord John Russell, 'was not yet approaching.'

On the contrary, he believed that there was a settled repugnance in the minds of the people of these colonies to any transfer of their allegiance to a foreign power, and he was quite unable to see the speech of Lord John Russell in the light in which it was seen by his hon. and learned from St. John. (Here the hon. member quoted from Lord John Russell's speech.) Here Lord John Russell told them that it was his firm belief that it was their duty to maintain their great and valuable colonial empire. There surely was nothing which appeared like a wish to shake off the Colonies in this passage. His Lordship also, in noticing the Canadian movement in favor of annexation, says 'that from the character of several gentlemen who are members of the association, it is not their intention to push their project of joining a neighboring state to the ultimate result of endeavoring by force of arms to effect a separation from Great Britain.'

He (Mr Street) would call the attention of his hon. and learned friend to what follows. 'But knowing the determined will of the Sovereign of this country, and of her advisers, not to permit