

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER,

Wednesday, January 19, 1848.

This being the day appointed by Proclamation for the meeting of the Legislature, at one o'clock His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor came in the usual state to the Council Chamber, and being seated on the Throne, commanded the attendance of the House of Assembly, who being come, His Excellency was pleased to open the Session with the following SPEECH:—

Mr. President, and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council,

Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly,

I have called you together at this time from a desire to enable you to apply yourselves, at the earliest period, to the Public Business which will claim your attention, and to mature such measures as may be called for in the present situation of the Province.

I regret that the returns of the late Harvest have not been so abundant as in the preceding year; and the recent check to the Commerce of the Country has strengthened the prevalent conviction that the utmost encouragement should be given to Agriculture, and also to the Fisheries, and to other sources of productive wealth.

Of the measures of the last Session, there are none which hold out the prospect of more extensive benefit than the Act for the improvement of the Parish Schools, and I have the satisfaction to inform you, that by means of the funds placed at my disposal, and through the assistance of Her Majesty's Government, a supply of Elementary Books has been obtained for circulation, which are likely to be found most useful.

Her Majesty's Government have also undertaken to obtain the services of a competent Teacher for the Model and Training School, the arrangements for which are in forwardness; and from the Correspondence which will be laid before you, there is, I hope, every prospect that in a short time an improved system will be in full operation.

I have the satisfaction to inform you, that the Officers who have been engaged in the necessary exploration for adjusting the Canadian Boundary, and for ascertaining the direction of a Line of Railway to be carried through the Provinces, have completed their operations, and from the information I have received from them, I am led to anticipate a successful result to their labours. A Communication from Her Majesty's Government respecting the Railway Survey, will be made to you; and from the importance to the Province of these and other undertakings of the kind, they will merit all the encouragement you may be prepared to extend to them.

From the tenor of a Despatch I have recently received, the Survey of the Bay of Fundy may be expected to be renewed in the ensuing Spring.

A Deputation from the several Provinces having met at Montreal in the last year, on the invitation of the Governor General, to consider of a proposal from Her Majesty's Government for the transfer of the General Post Office, and for the introduction of a uniform system and rate of Postage, it was attended by a Member of the Executive Council, and from the result of the deliberations of the Board, which will be laid before you, I hope that this important measure will be satisfactorily accomplished.

It is with much regret that I have occasion to notice the occurrence of disturbances in some parts of the Province, which have led to the commission of serious outrages, calling for active interposition in support of the Laws, and for the adoption of measures for the better security of life and property, by providing more effectually for the Police of disturbed Districts, and by improving the means of secondary punishment in the Prisons.

The measures adopted in the last year to accomplish a satisfactory settlement of the claims of the Indian Population, and of persons residing on their Lands, having shewn the difficulty of accomplishing this desirable object without a further amendment of the Law, I recommend the subject to your attention, in full assurance of your disposition to do justice to the parties, and to facilitate a measure which will at the same time conduce to the credit and advantage of the Province.

Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly,

I am glad to be able to inform you that the Revenue of the past year has been amply sustained.

The repeal of the Imperial Duties, under the Act of the last Session, will effect a material reduction in the Revenue of the present year, and it will be for you to determine to what extent a seasonable relief may be afforded to Commerce and protection to the fair Trader by diminishing the temptation to Smuggling.

The Accounts of the year, when laid before you, will shew that the Funds which you so liberally placed at the disposal of the Government, have been expended with every attention to Public Economy.

The charges incurred for Sick and Destitute Emigrants have been unavoidably increased from the necessity of protecting the Community from the spread of Disease, and of providing accommodation and relief for the increased numbers who arrived during the Season.

Mr. President, and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council,

Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly,

The aggravated distress which has prevailed in some parts of the United Kingdom, having led to an extensive emigration of persons enfeebled by famine and disease, who have been unable to contend

with the difficulties of a first settlement, I am bound to notice the zeal and humanity with which the Local Authorities have co-operated with the Government in alleviating their sufferings. The mortality, I regret to say, has, notwithstanding, been considerable, partly arising from the inadequate arrangements for the reception and accommodation of the numbers who claimed relief, which could only be imperfectly remedied during the season, and from other causes for which Her Majesty's Government are desirous that a corrective should be applied.

The formation of an Orphan Asylum at Saint John, has afforded a refuge for a number of destitute Children whose Parents had died either on the passage or in the Hospitals, and it promises to be an Institution of great value to the community.

The Correspondence which will be laid before you, will attest the anxiety which has been felt by Her Majesty's Government to protect the interests of the Province, and to mitigate the evils attendant on the removal to the Colonies of so large a number of helpless people; and I have the satisfaction to inform you, that in consideration of the augmented charges which have thus fallen upon the Province, it was intended that application should be made to Parliament for an appropriation in aid of these expenses.

To prevent a recurrence of the fatal Epidemics which have prevailed, I recommend to your adoption the measures now in progress in England for improving the Health of Towns.

From the Correspondence which has passed with Her Majesty's Government, and will be submitted to you, on the subject of the annual Road Acts, I hope for your concurrence in the adoption of an improved system for the opening of Roads and construction of Bridges, whereby the Settlement of the Lands may be encouraged with advantage to the Settlers.

A spirit of improvement would be excited in the Local Communities by an improved system of finance, which would facilitate the judicious application of the Public Credit in the execution of Works of acknowledged benefit.

By such measures, I should confidently hope that the Resources of the Province would progressively be developed, its Revenues sustained, and the Community preserved from a recurrence of those distressing reactions which are the ordinary consequences attending the disturbance of the general course of Trade.

The present depression, originating in a visitation of Providence, has already led to some important changes in the general policy of the Empire, and I devoutly hope, that in establishing the Public Prosperity on a more solid basis, your participation in the benefit may be fully assured.

THE HUMBLE ADDRESS OF HER MAJESTY'S LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

To His Excellency Sir WILLIAM MACBEAN GEORGE COLEBROOKE, Knight of the Hanoverian Guelphic Order, Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief of the Province of New Brunswick, &c. &c. &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Legislative Council in General Assembly, thank Your Excellency for the Speech you have made at the opening of the present Session, and for the early opportunity afforded us to mature the measures which may be called for by the present state of the Province.

We regret with Your Excellency that the returns of last year's Harvest, as compared with the preceding year, have not been so abundant; and, whatever may be the fluctuations of Commerce, we believe it to be of the highest importance to the prosperity of the Country to afford every encouragement to Agriculture, the Fisheries, and other sources of productive wealth.

It is gratifying to learn from Your Excellency that the Act relating to Parish Schools, passed at the last Session, has the prospect of being so extensively beneficial, and that through the assistance of Her Majesty's Government and Your Excellency's unwearied exertions, the means for accomplishing its objects are now in such progress as promise speedily to bring an improved system into active operation.

We thank Your Excellency for the information respecting the exploration for adjusting the Canadian Boundary, offering, as it does, the prospect of a speedy and favourable settlement of the question, and also respecting the direction of a Line of Railway to pass through the Provinces, a measure of vast importance to the whole of British North America, by connecting it more closely with the Mother Country, and greatly augmenting its prosperity; we therefore think any practicable scheme for opening such a line merits all the encouragement which the infant resources of the Province can command, and any Communication of Her Majesty's Government respecting the Railway Survey, when laid before us, will be regarded with the highest interest.

The renewal of the Bay of Fundy Survey in the Spring, to which Your Excellency has referred, is another gratifying instance of the solicitude of Her Majesty's Government for the welfare of this Province.

The Postal arrangement of this portion of the British Dominions has long been a subject of complaint, and we are persuaded that the information now afforded by Your Excellency of the proposed transfer of the General Post Office, with the introduction of an improved system, will be hailed throughout the Provinces as one of the greatest benefits which can be conferred by Her Majesty's Government.