

From the Novascotian.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

Geological Survey.

This morning (April 10,) Mr J. Young moved the following Resolution, in the Committee of Supply:—

Resolved, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the sum of Two Hundred Pounds be granted and placed at the disposal of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, to carry on a Geological Survey of this Province, in order to ascertain the position and extent of its Mines and Minerals, and particularly to discover the Beds of Rock Salt and Limestone.

He stated that he hoped the proposition would meet with the almost unanimous assent of the House; the purpose which it was the object of the resolution to accomplish, would be admitted to be one of great importance; as, by a Geological Survey, conducted upon proper principles, and under the direction of a gentleman of scientific attainments, the mineral wealth and resources of the country would be explored and brought before the public eye, and a stimulus given for the employment of dormant capital in enterprises of extensive and permanent utility. The gentleman whose name was mentioned in the resolution, had already been engaged for a considerable period in the researches of this nature, and had published a work on the Geology and Mineralogy of the province, admirable for the extent and minuteness of its information, and the result of the indefatigable exertions of its author. By the aid of the science of Geology, a judgment might be formed from an inspection of the surface of the character and properties of the strata beneath. He could not enter into the subject at present, except to show the reason for granting the sum proposed. An ignorant person, from an examination of the surface of a soil, could form no idea of the order of strata beneath; but the person who was acquainted with the principles of Geology knew the arrangements which obtained in the different classes of formations, and could predict, from an inspection of the superficial layers, those that were placed below. The house needed not to be told the benefit which would result to the fisheries, from the discovery of salt mines, and from working them extensively. Then again, over every part of the Country were distributed quantities of lime stone, which might be rendered of extensive utility to those engaged in agricultural pursuits. In the old country wherever this substance was found, it was largely employed for purposes of cultivation, and he was desirous that, in this Province, the same system should be introduced. It was the object of the present resolution to assist the efforts of private industry, in the discovery of those mineral substances which were intimately connected with the prosperity of the Fisheries, and of the Agriculture of the Province. It was the intention of Dr. Gesner, if this sum of money should be placed at his disposal, to employ two miners to proceed with him in the survey; and wherever, from an examination of the surface, he should be led to believe that there was a body of salt below, to sink a shaft in order to ascertain its thickness, so as to afford to capitalist some data upon which they might found their calculations as to the prospect of employing their money in this way, with any hopes of a profitable return. These minerals were under the controul of the Province, and might be made to contribute to its prosperity. The object of the resolution was, not to institute a vague search after particular minerals, which might be the source of gratification to a geological connoisseur, but to direct attention to

those of more useful parts of the science, by the aid of which, the wealth and prosperity of the country would be promoted, and its revenue increased. He trusted, therefore, that all those who were desirous to render their assistance to the development of our Provincial resources, that all those who wished to see a spirit of activity and enterprise stirred up among the inhabitants of the country, would give their support to the Resolution. It might perhaps be objected, that our mines and minerals were in the hands of an English Association, and it was folly to spend our money in researches tending only to the benefit of strangers; but the substances named in the resolution did not come within the terms of the Lease which the Mining Company held, and in them there was a wide field for scientific investigation. With these explanations he would move the resolution, and if its general scope was acceptable to the committee, he felt confident that the sum he had inserted would be considered extremely moderate, when taken in connexion with the importance of the object it was given to accomplish.

Mr Stewart opposed the resolution. No man was more willing than himself to give to Doctor Gesner the credit which he deserved for his indefatigable exertions, in developing the mineral wealth of the Province, but the sum now proposed to be granted was for the purpose of commencing a general Geological survey, which, before it was completed, would cost at least £2000. If the first step were taken, the rest would follow as an inevitable consequence. Besides, he did not see the use of these researches, while every thing we had, except perhaps the very dust of the fields, was in the possession of a wealthy English Company. If the Hon. gentleman from Sydney would go to Cumberland, he would find salt springs there, he would find too an abundance of rock salt, but for what purpose? Did the Province get any benefit by them? No it was the Company, and they only, who benefited. As for coals, they were abundant every where. It was not necessary to set out to discover them. With respect to iron ore, there was plenty of that in Annapolis. The mine there had been worked, but it had been found an unprofitable speculation. He admitted that, in a scientific point of view, the investigation might be important; and under other circumstances, he would be disposed to encourage it; but when the Provincial funds were already in a state of depression and embarrassment, he would not think of giving his assent to this sum, leading, as it inevitably would to a series of others, that would entail upon the Province a charge of 2 or 3 thousand pounds.

This question having been taken upon the Resolution, it was carried by a considerable majority.

When the Report of the Committee was brought up to the House on the next day, Mr McDonald moved that it should not be received—which elicited a discussion, the first part of which we did not hear. Messrs. Young had supported—Messrs. Doyle, and Howe, and others opposed it. We heard the concluding part of

Mr W. Young's speech, who said he was in favour of receiving the Report. He urged upon the house the vast importance to the Province of the contemplated survey. He spoke of the exertions already made by Dr. Gesner, in collecting the information upon which his work was founded. He thought it was the duty of the Legislator to encourage the application of native talent, to the development of our Provincial resources, and he referred to the example of Massachusetts, and some of the other older Colonies, where these investigations had been instituted; and had been productive of the best results to their wealth

and prosperity. He was surprised to see this vote opposed by the hon. members from Halifax and Isle Madame, who knew the value of science, and who, he hoped, would not have been indifferent to the honor and advancement of the Province.

Mr Howe thought it was scarcely fair for gentlemen who came from the other side of the Atlantic, to reproach others with indifference to the welfare of the country in which they were born. He trusted that there was not a man in that Assembly, whose bosom throbbed more ardently with regard for Nova Scotia than his own; but this was not a question whether her resources shall be developed, and her character raised—but how that was to be done. The question is, whether we shall, at a time when our Treasury is exhausted, commence a Geological Survey of the province, upon a bold Resolution without any previous inquiry, as to the abilities of the party to be employed—the sum necessary—time to be taken—or the probable results? or whether we shall wait until the matter can be taken up, in a style worthy of the Legislature and the country, by the appointment of a Committee to investigate the facts, and by the judicious expenditure of some three or four thousand pounds. The effect of this Resolution will be to lure Dr. Gesner away from his profession, to make partial examinations and reports—and, when we meet again next year, we must provide further sums, and in fact take him on the Civil List. I am anxious to pay the Dr. a compliment for his talent and exertions—to let him see and feel that the country appreciate his labors—and I am disposed to accompany the Resolution with a present of £100. But this proposition holds out a pledge that the House will do, what it has neither funds nor the information to enable it to undertake. Far better will it be to leave the Dr. to follow out his own researches in his own way, to give him a bonus and bid him God speed, than to tempt him away from his usual avocations, to commence what must end in failure, from the mode in which it is to be begun. If a Geological Survey, costing 3000 guineas, were made, that would be a document that in other counties would carry authority with it, that would attract foreign capital into the province, and raise the character of the Legislature; but these piecemeal examinations, without plan, funds or connexion, would be of little use. Appeals to the feelings are out of place on a subject like this—the judgment and reason should be addressed. Let us not be led away by these learned enumerations of our minerals, nor by even the pillars of salt, which the hon. member from Sydney has raised. Already our knowledge of the country's resources, outstrips our capital and enterprise. We know there are beds of iron ore in Pictou and in Moose River, but who works them? Are there not abundance of coals in Onslow and Cumberland, but who is there to embark capital in either place. And as to Plaster and Lime, there are hundreds of beds that require no Geologists to discover—which could now be pointed out to Capitalists by the members of this House, in their different towns and counties—where then is the necessity of wasting money, which we have not got, in premature and partial examinations, when there are neither enterprise nor industry in the country to make the most of the knowledge which all at present possess.

Mr B. Smith, though fully impressed with the importance of the work, and with the talents of the person to whose charge it was proposed to commit it, could not, under present circumstances, think the house justified in embarking in a measure which would entail so great a charge upon the Province. Unless the house could set apart £1000 for the survey, it was in vain to commence the