

Canada, urged in vain its claim to become the capital of the province, notwithstanding the strong recommendation of Lord Dorchester and Commodore Bouchette. Yet, though Niagara secured for a time the coveted prize, Kingston was virtually the *first* capital, for it was in an old wooden church on its market place that Governor Simcoe was first inducted into office. Here his first cabinet was formed and the writs issued to summon the first Legislative Council which soon afterwards met at Niagara, the latter, however, yielding in its turn to "Muddy Little York" which at that time scarcely possessed the characteristics of a village.

When, however, among other constitutional changes which followed the rebellion of 1837, the Provinces were re-united in 1840 under Lord Sydenham, he made Kingston the capital of the united Provinces, and a proviso to this effect was inserted in the contract of union. The Governor's accidental death put an end to the hope of Kingston becoming the seat of Government, though it retained its metropolitan position during the life time of the two succeeding Governors, Lord Sydenham and Sir Charles Metcalfe, the Vice-regal residence being Alwington House, while the Parliament of Canada met in the buildings now occupied by the General Hospital. In 1843 and '44 the fine City Hall buildings were built and offered to the Government for parliamentary purposes, but were finally declined.

### Commercial Prosperity.

Yet, though the removal of the seat of government was of course a great blow to the rising city, this did not permanently check its prosperity. In 1847, besides owning a City Hall which was then considered the finest edifice of the kind on the continent of America, it contained several stone churches, a large and massive Roman Catholic Cathedral, Convents, Hotel Dieu and Seminary, an infant University, a public hospital, extensive barracks and four banks. Ten first-class steamers were daily running to and from it, while about 30 smaller steamers and propellers and two hundred schooners and sailing barges made a respectable fleet to fill its capacious harbour. It had also become a city, being elevated to that rank in 1846. In winter, communication with Montreal and Toronto was maintained by stages having their headquarters in Kingston. The Grand Trunk Railway, completed a few years later, changed its business prospects materially, because the distance of its main line from the city proper seriously interfered with its freight and transhipment business, although several elevators show that in summer it is still an important point for the transhipment of grain. The opening up of the back country by the recent construction of the Kingston and Pembroke Railway, and the running of a branch line from the Grand Trunk line into the city, have of late considerably increased its traffic and stimulated its growth.