

The Church Times.

HALIFAX, SATURDAY, JAN. 15. 1853.

THE LEGISLATURE.

On Thursday next the 20th inst. the Provincial Parliament will be convened in Halifax. All parties look forward to their deliberations with anxious feelings. A great crisis in our history has certainly arrived.

It is to be hoped that political strife, and selfish feelings, will not mar the prospect before us, nor hinder the adoption of those great works so long in contemplation, and already begun around us. It is surely a time for the exercise of fervent prayer in behalf of our Legislators as directed by our Church,—“that God would be pleased to direct and prosper all their consultations, to the advancement of His glory, the good of His Church, the safety, honour and welfare of our Sovereign and this Province; that all things may be so ordered and settled by their endeavours, upon the best and surest foundations, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations.” It will be our endeavour to give as full an account of the proceedings of the Session as our space will permit.

SABBATH DESECRATION.

The streets of Halifax on Sundays, at the usual hours for worship, are generally thronged with old and young, on their way to their respective Churches and Chapels, thus giving the appearance at all events, of reverence for the day of God. Not so was it in the vicinity of the Town, on Sunday last. The Lake above Mr. Hosterman's, was partially covered with skaters, with their hurries, and the small spots of ice available on the N. W. Arm were similarly occupied, to the great peril of those upon it.

The road leading in that direction, was filled with persons of all ages, going towards the place of sport; and we regret to add, that well dressed females were to be seen in considerable numbers on the shores, enjoying the scene,—while the vile effluvia, from hundreds of cigars, polluted the pure atmosphere of heaven, for a considerable distance around. All this too, during the hours of Divine Service.

It is not improbable, that on the other side of the Harbour, similar scenes were presented, utterly at variance with the 4th commandment, and exceedingly painful to every serious mind. There was a large proportion of young people, among those whom we were sorry to see in the quarter first named; and we would earnestly call the attention of ministers, parents and guardians, to this lamentable fact; and we would invoke their aid, as well as that of those clothed with civil power, to check, if possible, this outrageous violation of decency, and breach of the Sabbath. They say we are living in days of astonishing progress, and that our fathers were as nothing compared to us their precocious sons. It may be questioned however whether such is the case in reference to the present subject. In old times the *whore* of the Sabbath, and not the small party only, spent within the Church doors, was considered holy. Then, Parents and Masters and “Dames” used to look after the young folk, and catechise them, and keep them around them.—Then, one could walk the streets without being assailed by the curling fumes of the nasty weed, or annoyed by knots of loungers at every corner. In old times, we had a law, that Churchwardens should go their rounds during Divine Service, to clear public houses, and disperse idlers in the streets. We know not whether this good clause has been “revised” out of the new volume which now guides us, but there is one place in the Province where it has been observed to the present time—the Town of Lunenburg, where the wholesome effect of the practice has long been felt. While touching on this subject it may not be amiss to point out, as fitting marks for a policeman's grasp, the urchins who after evening service, annoy by their shouts, improper lan-

guage, and disorderly conduct, those coming out of the north door of St. Paul's Church, around which they congregate for mischief. It would be well to make an example of a score of these, and quietness would probably be the result.

The intelligence received by the last packet, of another change of Ministry at home, was not wholly unexpected, notwithstanding the triumphant majority which sustained them on the first Division of the Session. Past experience does not justify the expectation of the long continuance of a Government formed without those principles of cohesion which naturally belong to men long trained in the same political school, and accustomed to act in unison in all great questions of national policy.

In the new Ministry we find unquestionably men of the first order of talent and statesmanship, some of them long practised in the business of Government, while other names sound new to us on this side of the water. We are most nearly interested in the character and fitness of the person selected for the virtual sovereignty of the Colonial Dependencies of the Empire. It is to be hoped that the change, as regards this functionary, will not operate to the disadvantage of this or the other British North American Colonies, by retarding the progress of those great works, which are now about to be undertaken. But it can hardly be otherwise than highly inconvenient to Colonial interests, overwhelming in amount, and complicated in their nature as these are, to have such frequent changes in the Department entrusted with their management.

We shall look with anxiety for the next intelligence, which will probably convey some idea of the amount of favour with which the Ministry are regarded by the country.

In the last number of the *Acadian Recorder*, which by the way is one of the best conducted of our City papers, we observe that C. W. Fairbanks, Esq., C. E., is again endeavoring to awaken public attention to the importance and feasibility of a Canal, in the Island of Cape Breton, which has been frequently the subject of discussion before. It would appear from Mr. Fairbanks' statement, (and he doubtless completely understands the bearings of the whole matter) that a comparatively trifling sum only, is required to secure, by the completion of this canal, lasting advantages of the most important kind, to that fine Island in particular, and to the Province at large. Being strong advocates for whatever may develop the resources of our country, so richly endowed by the Creator, we cordially wish success to the project in question.

There is another of a kindred character, which the same gentleman aroused from its slumbers some time since, but which seems in danger of again relapsing into forgetfulness. We mean the *Shubenacadie Canal*, so long talked of, once so near completion, and still promising, by the connexion of the waters of our harbour with those of the Basin of Minas and the Bay of Fundy, great advantages to the Capital, and a reasonable return to any who may be spirited enough to embark their dead thousands in the enterprise.

One can hardly drive along the Eastern road without wonderment, that the track so clearly pointed out by Nature for the easy transit of those productions which abound in the interior of the country, and of those commodities required from the City in exchange, should have remained so long unavailable. However, we hope we shall all wake up by and bye.

There are signs about Bluenose's eyelids, which indicate that his sleep is nearly over, and, as it has certainly continued long enough, in all conscience for the purposes of refreshment, it may be hoped that he will soon go to work, with renovated strength and activity, having a good deal upon his hands.

We notice in a late list of Clerical appointments in England, the name of the Rev. Sir George Prevost, Bart. to be Rural Dean of Dursley, Gloucestershire. He is the only son of a former Governor of Nova Scotia bearing the same name, and still remembered with affectionate respect by the older portion of our community.

CONVOCATION.

We find in the *Ecclesiastical Gazette* for December, the proceedings at large of the two Houses of Convocation lately convened as customary in London. Our space will not permit us to do more than extract the following Address to Her Majesty, which was agreed upon by both Branches:—

“Madam,—We, your Majesty's faithful subjects, the Archbishops, Bishops, and clergy of the province of Canterbury, assembled in Convocation, most humbly approach your Majesty with respectful assurance of loyal affection to your Majesty's throne and person. And we desire to add our sincere congratulations that since the last occasion when we enjoyed a similar privilege, it has pleased Almighty God to bless both your Majesty's royal family and the country at large with a measure of prosperity which demands our warmest thankfulness.

“Your Majesty has been graciously pleased to state to your assembled Parliament that your Majesty has received assurances of a disposition on the part of foreign powers to maintain those friendly relations with this country which have already been prolonged beyond all former example. And never, perhaps, was there a time when the inhabitants of this land were more generally prosperous, more willingly obedient to the laws, or more loyally affected towards the throne. It is our earnest prayer to Almighty God that He will continue to ourselves, and extend to all nations, the blessings of peace and unity.

“Here we earnestly desire to assure your Majesty of our deep sympathy with the sorrow which your Majesty has so graciously expressed—a sorrow which is even shared by foreign nations—for the loss which the empire is now mourning, in the death of that great warrior and statesman to whom, above all, it has been owing, under God's all-ruling Providence, that we have enjoyed this long and unprecedented peace and prosperity. We assure your Majesty that we prize, above the splendour of his greatest exploits, that high sense of duty which led him to devote all his faculties to the service of his Sovereign and his country, and to value his most glorious victories chiefly as they secured a lasting peace.

“The subject, however, in which your Majesty will expect us to feel the deepest interest is the state of religion in this land. And here there is much to encourage, whilst there is also much to lament, and much that we hope gradually to amend. Great exertions have been made during the last thirty-six years, with a desire of providing the means of spiritual instruction for a population increasing beyond all former experience. Much has been done by the awakened liberality of individuals, assisted by recent legislative measures, towards enabling the Church to fulfil the ends of her divine mission. Much however still remains to be done; and we assure your Majesty that our heartiest endeavours shall be used to relieve, wherever they exist, the spiritual wants of the population. We feel a confident persuasion that these our endeavours will be seconded by the pious and ready co-operation of our lay brethren in the Church. In connexion with this subject we cannot but observe, that although the population of England and Wales has been doubled in the last half century, the number of English and Welsh Bishops remains nearly the same as it was three centuries ago—a state of things to which we beg respectfully to invite your Majesty's consideration.

“We trust, however, that if the Church has been unable to accomplish all that might be desired, it has yet given no slight proof of activity and power. Fewer churches were built during the whole of the last century than are now consecrated to the service of God in every successive year. Inadequate as are still the means of providing Christian education for the increasing numbers who require it, we thankfully acknowledge that great efforts have been made for its extension and improvement.

“And great and painful as are the privations of many of your Majesty's poorer subjects in our crowded cities, it must be a peculiar source of satisfaction to your Majesty that, under the continuous and active encouragement of your Majesty's illustrious consort, institutions have been formed, and are daily forming, to increase the comforts of the labouring classes, and to improve their moral and social condition; and, as all true charity has its origin in religious principle, we trust that in this instance also proof has been given of the influence of that faith which it is the duty of the clergy to inculcate and maintain amongst the people entrusted to their charge. For whatever has been done or intended of good, we desire to give God the glory through our Lord Jesus Christ, being deeply conscious of the imperfection of all our endeavours.

“In thus referring to the subjects which appear to us especially to concern the well-being of the Church, we cannot omit to speak of those deliberative functions of this Convocation which many members of our Church desire to see again called into active exercise.

“We do not, indeed, deem it advisable, at the present moment, to petition your Majesty for your royal licence to transact such business as we may not enter upon without it; but we think it our duty respectfully to express our conviction both that its legislative assemblies are an essential and most important part of the constitution of our Reformed Church, and that the circumstances of the present day make it all the more imperative to preserve, and, as far as possible, to improve them, and more particularly that the resumption of their active functions, in such manner as your M-