

NOVA SCOTIA.

Enclosure 1, in No. 10.

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Halifax, Nova Scotia, 22 January 1848.

At two o'clock this day, his Excellency Lieutenant-General Sir John Harvey, Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, came down in state to the Council Chamber, and having taken his seat on the throne, the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod was sent to require the immediate attendance of the House of Assembly: the House attended accordingly, and his Excellency was pleased to open the Session with the following speech:—

Mr. President, and Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council:

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

I HAVE pleasure in meeting the Legislature of this ancient and loyal colony at this the first session of its 19th General Assembly.

It will be my duty, at an early period, to lay before you a Despatch from Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, explanatory of his Lordship's views of the principles affecting the administration of Colonial Government, as applicable to this province, in some important particulars.

These principles cannot fail to exercise a powerful influence over the future prosperity of Nova Scotia; and I am happy to encourage the belief that you will justly appreciate the enlightened and liberal sentiments of the Imperial Government which pervade this Despatch; and that his Lordship's expectation of the spirit in which these sentiments will be met, in this country, will not be disappointed.

Next in interest and importance is the fact, which I am enabled to announce to you, that a good and practicable line for the projected railroad between this port and Quebec, has been ascertained by the officers to whom that exploration was confided. I am prepared to concur with you in making the necessary provision for the payment, by this province, of the proportion of the expenses which have attended that exploration; and I shall be gratified to afford my aid in forwarding such measures as may be proper, consistently with the varied interests and wants of this province, for promoting so great a national undertaking.

I invite your early attention to a question which I regard as one of very great importance to the future interests of this province, namely:—that of the surrender of the Crown Estate in Nova Scotia to the control and management of the local Legislature, in exchange for a Civil List.

This question was presented for consideration in a Despatch of the Secretary of State, dated 17th November 1846, which, at the last Session, was communicated to the Legislature, and in which the views of Her Majesty's Government are fully explained.

It will be the occasion of much gratification to me if your deliberations shall lead to a final and satisfactory adjustment of this long-pending negotiation.

I trust before the close of this Session to be prepared to lay before you, for consideration, a proposal for the future management of the Post-office department throughout the North American provinces, and the regulation of the postage payable on the transmission of letters, a proposal which, I confidently expect, will be found conducive to the convenience and the social and the intellectual advancement of the people, and the general interests of the province.

We have again to deplore a deficiency in the crops; but I have reason to believe that the fisheries have in general, during the last season, reached their ordinary productiveness; and it is gratifying to know that the revenue paid and secured during 1847 equals in amount that of the preceding year.

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

The accounts of the public receipts and expenditure during the last year will be laid before you at the earliest practicable period, and although some considerable expenses have been unavoidably incurred in consequence of an unexpected influx of pauper emigration, attended with much sickness, yet I do not, on that account, abstain from tendering to you my congratulations upon the comparative exemption which has been experienced by Nova Scotia during the past year, from that sad extent of calamity by which the neighbouring provinces of Canada and New Brunswick have been, and still continue to be, afflicted; but although our visitation in this respect has been comparatively slight, yet I regret to say that distress to a very considerable extent exists amongst our own settlers and Indians in several parts of the province, especially Cape Breton, in consequence of the failure of the crops generally, but particularly of that of potatoes.

In these cases relief has been afforded, under such precautions for the ultimate protection of the revenue as were in my power, to a moderate, and, it is believed, a sufficient extent, to guard against absolute destitution.

The accounts of these expenditures will be laid before you.

Mr. President, and Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council:

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

Before I leave you to your deliberations, I renew to you the assurance of my readiness at all times freely to communicate and cordially to co-operate with you for the advancement of any object which may appear to us calculated to promote the true interests, prosperity and happiness of Her Majesty's loyal subjects of Nova Scotia.