

The election of a Legislature for New Brunswick occupied the attention of the people of the Province in the autumn of 1785. The elections, after the evil custom of that time, lasted fifteen days and were attended by a considerable amount of rioting in St. John. The first session of the Legislature opened on the 3rd of January, 1786, at the Mallard House, St. John. The members of the first Legislature were as follows:—

St. John: William Pagan, Jonathan Bliss, Christopher Billop, Ward Chipman, John McGeorge and Stanton Hazard.

York: Daniel Murray, Isaac Atwood, Daniel Lyman and Edward Steele.

Westmorland: Amos Botsford, Chas. Dixon, Samuel Gay and Andrew Kinnear.

Kings: John Coffin and Ebenezer Foster.

Queens: Samuel Dickenson and John Yeomans.

Charlotte: William Paine, James Campbell, Robert Pagan and Peter Clinch.

Northumberland: Elias Hardy and William Davidson.

Sunbury: William Hubbard and Richard Vandeburg.

Amos Botsford of Westmorland was elected Speaker, and William Paine Clerk of the House. The number of acts passed at this first session of the Legislature was sixty-one, most of them being merely the re-enactment of laws in force in Nova Scotia. The session closed on 15th March. The second session of the New Brunswick Legislature commenced in St. John on the 14th February, 1787, and closed on the 8th of March. The seat of government was then removed to St. Anne's Point, which was re-named Fredericton. The third session of the Legislature commenced there on the 18th of July, 1788.

From this time until the close of the century, the history of New Brunswick is simply the record of a people struggling against the natural difficulties of their position. Everything had to be created; the farms which were to support the population had to be cleared; roads had to be opened up; houses built; churches erected and schools established. The hardships suffered by the settlers were very great; their food was often scanty; their houses comfortless, and their clothing indifferent. Many of the original Loyalists grew weary of the struggle and returned to the United States, but the majority bravely resolved that they would remain and endure everything rather than surrender their birthright as British subjects.

The main source of the difficulties of the first settlers was the lack of good roads. New Brunswick had to wait a long time before the means of communication had reached any considerable state of development. The St. John and its tributaries formed almost the only means of reaching the interior of the Province, and in winter the rivers were ice-bound. The removal of the Capital to Fredericton gave a stimulus to the efforts of those who were engaged in the work of establishing means of travel on the River St. John. In August, 1784, Nehemiah Beckwith built a scow or tow boat to ply between St. John and Fredericton, but two years later, a schooner called the Four Sisters was put on the route and left St. John for Fredericton every Tuesday. Schooners or sloops formed the ordinary means of getting up the river until the year of 1816, when the first steamboat, the General Smythe, began to run.

As no census of the Province was taken until the year 1824, we have no proper means of estimating the growth of population in New Brunswick during the closing years of the eighteenth century, but it was, without doubt, quite slow. In 1817, it was estimated that New Brunswick had only 35,000 inhabitants, and this was probably not far from the truth, so that the Province, after an existence of more than thirty years, had made no very rapid advance in population.

The government was of that semi-patriarchal order which then prevailed in Nova Scotia, as well as in the other British colonies. The old families who came into power