

(Prince Edward Island) by Governor Patterson. The Assembly met in July; there were eighteen members. The land question (which has never yet been satisfactorily disposed of) engaged the attention of the Assembly, and an act was passed to secure the payment of quit rents.*—A papal decree abolishing the order of Jesuits in Canada was issued.—The last capitulary act of the chapter of Quebec took place in this year.—The Nova Scotia Assembly met on 20th April, and the session closed on the 24th; five acts having been passed.—Lord William Campbell appointed Governor of South Carolina. He was succeeded by Francis Legge, a major in the army.

* The recent appointment of the Right Hon. Mr. Childers, Dr. Jenkins, Mr. J. S. Cowell, and Mr. Haliburton, as Land Commissioners for Prince Edward Island (with instructions to enquire into the original grants, the extent to which the conditions attached to them have been fulfilled, the amount of rent paid by the tenants, and the cost of recovering arrears), having called public attention to the question of land tenure in Prince Edward Island, it may not be uninteresting to give at length the views of the Earl of Durham upon this subject as expressed in a letter addressed to Lord Glenelg (then Colonial Secretary), in October, 1838, which letter has been recently published by Mr. Duncan Campbell, the historian, who is now engaged in writing a history of Prince Edward Island:—

“CASTLE OF ST. LEWIS,

“QUEBEC, 8th October, 1838.

“MY LORD,—

“I have had the honor of receiving your Lordship's despatch of the 5th ultimo (No. 103), whereby you desire that I will express to you my judgment on the whole subject of Escheat in the Island of Prince Edward.

“After perusing the voluminous documents enclosed in your Lordship's despatch, I do not feel that it is in my power to add anything to the very full information on the subject which these documents comprise. The information before me is now so ample, that upon no matter of fact can I entertain a doubt. Nearly the whole Island was alienated in one day by the Crown, in very large grants, chiefly to absentees, and upon conditions of settlement which have been wholly disregarded. The extreme improvidence, I might say the reckless profusion, which dictated these grants, is obvious. The total neglect of the Government as to enforcing the con-

1774. A proclamation appeared in the *Nova Scotia Gazette* on 20th September against public meetings on the ground that they tended to disturbance. —A cargo of tea having arrived at Halifax from New England consigned to a Mr. William Smith, Mr. Smith called a public meeting to consider the mode in which the tea should be disposed of. This conduct being considered by the authorities as likely to provoke disturbances, the meeting was forbidden, and Mr. Smith and a Mr. Fillis, who had acted with him, were deprived by the governor in council of all offices held by them under the government. This prompt action on the part of the council seems to have

ditions of the grants is not less so. The great bulk of the Island is still possessed by absentees, who hold it as a sort of reversionary interest which requires no present attention, but may become valuable some day or other, through the growing want of the inhabitants. But in the meantime, the inhabitants of the Island are subjected to the greatest inconvenience, nay, to the most serious injury, from the state of property in land. The absent proprietors neither improve the land themselves, nor will let others improve it. They retain the land, and keep it in a state of wilderness. Your Lordship can scarcely conceive the degree of injury inflicted on a new settlement by being hemmed in by wilderness land, which has been placed out of the control of Government, and is entirely neglected by its absent proprietors. This evil pervades British North America, and has been, for many years past, a subject of universal and bitter complaints. The same evil was felt in many of the States of the American Union, where, however, it has been remedied by taxation of a penal character,—taxation, I mean, in the nature of a fine for the abatement of a nuisance. In Prince Edward Island this evil has attained its maximum. It has been long and loudly complained of, but without any effect. The people, their representative Assembly, the Legislative Council and the Governor, have cordially concurred in devising a remedy for it. All their efforts, however, have proved in vain. Some influence—it cannot be that of equity or reason—has steadily counteracted the measures of the Colonial Legislature. I cannot imagine that it is any other influence than that of the absent proprietors, resident in England; and in saying so I do but express the universal opinion of the Colony. The only question, therefore, as it appears to me, is whether that influence shall prevail against the