

bigotted cry not been promulgated by the Toronto paper, Mr. Mowatt would still have been sustained by a handsome majority, there being in the premier Province thousands of persons who vote as Liberals in provincial elections and as Conservatives in Dominion contests. Of course it is almost impossible at this juncture to accurately forecast the result of the coming struggle, nor have we any means of knowing how the parties will stand in the Commons after the ballot boxes are closed; but, of this we feel sure, that a great reaction will have to take place in order to change the present government's majority into a minority. There is no great probability that any decided change will be made in the representations of British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, and the defections must therefore be made in Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia. As before stated, we believe that the government will find its majority in Quebec reduced, but it is not at all clear that the same will hold good in Ontario. In Nova Scotia the parties are evidently preparing to fight out the battle on the old party lines, and as the conflict is likely to be a bitter one, it is to be hoped it will be short, sharp and decisive.

SOCIETY IN HALIFAX.

Strangers visiting Halifax, who have had an opportunity of seeing something of social life among us, have almost unanimously agreed that beneath the coldness and indifference of manner so observable in the upper circles of Halifax society, there exists a kindly friendliness and a warm hospitality which proves that Halifaxians are not all of the iceberg genius; but strangers visiting our city are frequently at a loss to understand the meaning of the lines of latitude and longitude which divide Halifax society into innumerable cliques and sets. There are first the religious parallels which, while they do not affect the relations of men in business, separate them as completely in society as if they were Parisians and Hottentots, and crossing these are the meridians, which divide socially the members of the same denomination, who attend different churches. But these sub-divisions are but secondary, when we take into account those resulting from the possession of wealth or family position, through and by which the entree is obtained to the Halifaxian's paradise, military society. The grades of this portion of the community overlap each other like the strata of the earth's crust, and the geologist would find in its study many points of similarity. There are those who hold that birth alone entitles persons to associate with the officers of the "Queen's army," while others appear to think that their ability to give handsome dinner parties makes it advisable for them to cultivate exclusively military society. Blue blood and sovereigns are unquestionably worth having—but it must puzzle an independent on-looker who observes the eagerness with which these social keys are used—by those desirous of being on friendly terms with the gallants stationed in this garrison. Among the officers there are doubtless many men of education and culture, in whose society there is a genuine charm, but the average officer in a regiment of the line is seldom the equal in any respect of our business and professional men, and yet we, with a full knowledge of this fact, persistently scramble for the leading social places, not for the honor of holding such positions in the community, but rather that we may satisfy our inward longing by falling down and worshipping society's army calf. The constant changes which are being made in the regiments stationed here cause renewed conflicts for place to be made with the advent of each new regiment, and so it comes to pass, that citizens and citizenesses who were leaders in the time of General —, find themselves occupying secondary positions since the arrival of Sir so-and-so. All this social turmoil is a mistake. Halifax is now a large enough city to have a distinctive society of its own—a society in which education and culture should be the chief characteristics, and a society—the entrance to which would be eagerly sought for by the officers of the garrison stationed here. As it now is, everyone laughs in his sleeve at the attempts made by his neighbors to improve their social position. Old time hospitality and true friendliness, although still with us, are fast dying out, and unless some leader at once undertakes the formation of a new and broader society than now exists, Halifaxians will, in a few years, be socially estranged, and ladies and gentlemen will have but a nodding acquaintance with each other.

THE MAYOR'S ADDRESS.

II.

A number of important city improvements have been completed during the past year, and some are still in process of development. The Mayor enumerates these, and we cannot do better than quote the list from his address.

"Of the subjects referred to last year which have since been carried out, I may enumerate: electric lighting of streets, etc.; pounds for stray cattle; additional police protection in suburbs; Catholic Reformatory for boys to be sent from the Police Court; increased number of fire escapes on hotels and public buildings; a general vaccination of school children and the public; repairs and renewals at Rockhead Prison; enclosing and beautifying square fronting the Exhibition building; new road and handsome gates at Point Pleasant Park; improvements and extensions of water works and sewerage; partial renewals of sidewalks, etc.

The Board of Works have also given special attention to the Grand Parade, and though hampered for want of funds have effected considerable permanent repairs on the streets, and are now widening that important thoroughfare, Bell's Lane, so much used by vehicles passing to and from the Depot. The Commissioners of the Public Gardens and Commons have increased the attractions of the former, and greatly improved the latter.

Of the subjects in process of development, the principal are the Graving

Dock, now well under way; the new City Hall; the Street Railway, which is in partial operation, and which is to be further extended north, east and south; and the construction of three new school houses in the northern and western suburbs."

It will be noted that the Mayor spoke of the three new school houses as being erected in the northern and western suburbs. Further on we shall have occasion to touch on the unfair manner in which the outlying portions of the wards of the city are treated. The property is subject to city taxation, but otherwise the districts are neglected, and in this respect the Mayor is justified in speaking of them as suburbs and not as portions of the city. Turning to the estimates for 1886-7, we find that the total amount of expenditure is placed at \$296,734.18, from which may be deducted \$22,630 estimated revenue, leaving the net amount, \$274,104.18 cents. Deducting from this the \$13,024 allowed for uncollected taxes, leaves the sum of \$261,080.18 to be raised by taxation, to which must be added the estimated revenue of \$22,630, making the total net expenditure for the year, \$283,710.18. This is an increase of \$16,548.18 over the taxation of 1885. But communities do not stand still and it would be a poor indication of the prosperity of a city if its taxation did not increase with its growth.

A comparison of this total estimated expenditure, with the estimates of other cities of equal populations would show that Halifax occupies a most enviable position; that is, if a false economy is not being practised, which we fear is the case in one or two particulars. In glancing over the estimates we find that only \$33,050 is apportioned to "streets and cleaning, and half cost horses." This, we think, is altogether too small an amount to efficiently carry out one of the most important branches of the city's service. The Mayor states that it is smaller now than it was fifteen years ago, and the neglected condition of the streets and sidewalks in many portions of the city, proves that double the amount estimated is required. Some of the main thoroughfares are in good order, but a walk through Albermarle and Grafton Streets, and the cross streets on the north and west portions of the city, would show a most disgraceful state of affairs. The sidewalks are in a still worse condition; parts of such leading streets as Hollis, Granville and Barrington Streets being greatly in need of repairs. During wet weather the sidewalks along Argyle, the upper side of Barrington St., and the majority of the streets in the city are often ankle deep in mud, and it is amusing to see pedestrians balancing themselves, and trying to keep out of the mud by walking on the curb stones. We were struck by the truth of some comments made by an old tar, who with a companion, was passing along the narrow brick walk opposite the Pentagon building on Water Street. The street was deep with mud and the heavy teams were splashing dirty water and mud on the sidewalk and over the unfortunate foot passengers. "I say, Bill," said he, "I have been all over the world, but this Halifax is the d—dest dirty ole I hever got hin." There was more truth than poetry in his remarks, and the time has come to remedy the evil. In winter snow and ice are allowed to accumulate to an entirely unwarranted extent and many serious accidents are the consequences. We should awaken to the fact that this city has now become the winterport of the Dominion, and that as soon as the short line is completed, it is destined to attain to a great size. It is the part of wisdom to provide in advance for a large increase in population. Legislation is needed and it should be provided at the coming session of the local parliament. Wards 1, 2, 5, 6 are altogether too large, and a line along Robie Street should be made their western boundaries. What might be called the tail ends of these wards are sadly neglected. The tail cannot wag the head, and in consequence the eastern part of the wards receive an entirely unfair share of the money expended." The best remedy would be to increase the number of wards in the city to eight, that portion of the city west of Robie Street being divided into two new wards. A third alderman from each ward is about as necessary as the fifth wheel to a coach, and the number should be reduced to two, or sixteen in all. This would give the western and northern sections of the city fair representation, which at present they do not have. There is plenty of room for the city to grow in this direction, but the want of water, gas, good roads, sidewalks and other conveniences, that should have been supplied, has kept the population down. The residents have the privilege of paying city taxes and lately have received the boon of police protection, but outside of this little or nothing is done for them. Water is sadly needed, but under the present act the residents must guarantee the interest on the outlay, before the water can be extended. This provision of the act is absurd and should be amended. If the authorities lay the water pipes in the principal streets of the section, it would be rapidly built up and the taxable wealth of the city greatly increased. From a sanitary point of view this should be done at once, as hundreds of families are now depending on wells and springs of impure water for their domestic supply. If an epidemic should unfortunately break out, whole neighborhoods would be depopulated. Another grievance that should be remedied is the loose way in which land owners are permitted to lay out their properties. If the city has not now the power it should obtain it at once, and run regular lines of streets through the whole peninsula. Each property owner now lays out his own streets, and this results in no end of pocket streets that run nowhere and which the city refuses to take over. Many of these streets are built upon, and the city, while taxing the properties, refuses to improve the streets. In one instance, much to the annoyance of the neighborhood, it has turned one of these streets into a gravel pit. Mud walks are the rule in this section, and pedestrians find the roads the only possible ways. Why cannot the city supply cheap plank walks and crossings? The only possible virtue in the present system or want of system is that it really teaches every man to "paddle his own canoe."

Justice to the outlying sections of the city wards has drawn our attention from many commendable features of the Mayor's address, but we may take them up on a future occasion.