

Mr. President, and Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council;
Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly;

Our exemption from pestilence of every kind during the past year, through the protection of a merciful Providence, demands our deepest gratitude.

The labours of the husbandman within our borders in the past season have been richly rewarded; and the ready sales and remunerating prices of all kinds of farm stock and produce, I am happy to find, have contributed largely to his well being and comfort.

I confidently feel that the recent importations of improved Stock will result in general advantage to the farming classes, and hope that you will be disposed to encourage, by liberal grants, an object of such vital importance to the agriculture of the Province.

I regret to learn that the Fisheries, more especially in the autumn, have disappointed the hopes of the hardy and enterprising body who derive their subsistence from that great branch of Provincial industry.

I am happy to acquaint you that the Revenue has somewhat exceeded that of last year, and gives continued proof of the increasing prosperity and active industry of the people.

The extension of the Provincial Railway has been vigorously prosecuted. The stream of eastern traffic has been tapped at the Grand Lake, and it is confidently hoped that ere the close of this year the line will be open to Windsor and Stewiacke.

The Accounts of the expenditure and liabilities incurred in these large operations will be laid before you at an early day, and will satisfy you I trust of the integrity and prudence with which the Works have been conducted.

The Reports and Accounts of the Lunatic Asylum, which will also be laid before you, will show that the building of that Institution has favourably advanced during the past season.

It was thought advisable that a further Survey should be had of the St. Peter's Canal by an experienced Engineer. The Report of the gentleman who was employed will be presented at an early day, and I invite your attention to a subject of such prominent interest to the whole eastern section of the Province.

Two Acts have been recently passed by the Imperial Parliament for assimilating the Laws affecting Trade and Commerce in the United Kingdom, and Bills founded upon these, but adapted to our local Legislation, will be submitted for your approval.

Two measures have also been prepared, and will be immediately submitted to you, the one having for its object the more efficient protection of the Crown Lands, and the other, a more easy and economical process of Escheat.

The subject of the Mines and Minerals I regret to say is still unsettled, the Home Government having been hitherto unable to come to a determination on this complicated and important question.—The correspondence will shew that it has engaged the anxious solicitude of my Government, and I entertain the hope that the great interests involved will be considered and disposed of in a manner acceptable to the people.

Since the close of the last Session private enterprise has completed a Telegraphic union of the North American Provinces by a Submarine Cable, connecting Newfoundland with Cape Breton.

A still larger experiment is about to be made for carrying Telegraphic Communication across the Atlantic. The Company by whom it was projected have entered into arrangements for conveying their messages across our territory, and the inhabitants of this Province, as well as of the other parts of the American Continent, have a deep interest in their success. An intimation however has been conveyed to me that another Company, of adequate resources, proposes to lay down a line from Ireland direct to Nova Scotia. Both parties will apply to you for legislative privileges, and I recommend their respective claims to your attentive consideration.

Be assured, gentlemen, that in this, as in every other matter affecting the welfare and progress of the people whom you represent, you may rely on my cordial cooperation.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, THURSDAY, FEB. 5.

The hon. Provincial Secretary by command of his Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, laid on the table of the House, the returns from the Township of Windsor—County of Sydney, Cape Breton, and Colchester, announcing the election of Messrs. Howe, Henry, Caldwell, and A. G. Archibald by their respective constituencies.

The above named gentlemen then advanced to the Clerks' table and took the usual oath of allegiance.

The hon. J. W. Johnston then rose and said. It is usual at the opening of a Session of the Legislature of this Province for a member of the Government for the time being to lay on the table of the House a Bill *pro forma*, there may be occasions on which this ceremony may be dispensed with—whether the present is one, I leave to the hon. members to determine. But, sir, independently of those mere matters of form, it is unquestionably of deep and paramount importance that the people of this Province should know whether the Constitutional advisers of the Representative of her Majesty enjoy the confidence of this House and the people of this country; and therefore, Sir, I believe it to be more respectful to his Excellency and more coincident with the rules of Parliamentary practice that if that confidence has been forfeited, his Excellency and this people should know it before the answer to the Address has been proposed. It is not my purpose now to enter into any detailed statement of the object of this resolution; but it can hardly meet with the contradiction of any that the Government of this country had lost the confidence of the country at the close of the last session. I am aware that there was no recorded vote to that effect; but it is enough that it was a well-known, if not acknowledged fact, that the confidence of this House and the people was withdrawn from the Government last Session. I therefore beg to move the following Resolution:

Resolved, That it is essential to the satisfactory result of the deliberations of this House on the important measures submitted by his Excellency the Lieutenant Governor in his Speech, for its consideration on other subjects of public interest, that her Majesty's Executive Council should enjoy the confidence of this House, and therefore this House feels it to be respectful to his Excellency and due to the people we represent, to declare before these subjects are brought under debate, in answer to his Excellency's Speech that the present Executive Councilors of his Excellency do not possess the confidence of the representatives of the people—and that it is the humble duty of this House respectfully to inform his Excellency that the confidence of this House so essential to the public welfare, and the harmonious co-operation of this House with the administration of public affairs, is not enjoyed by his Excellency's present constitutional advisers.

Hon. Attorney General.—In replying to the Speech, delivered by the hon. and learned member for Annapolis—who has just resumed his seat, I may at the outset observe that the course he has pursued is somewhat inconsistent with Parliamentary usage—but that is more a question of detail than of principle. Sir, I wish this House and Country to understand that the present Constitutional Advisers of His Excellency do not desire, and would not consent, if they could to hold the position they occupy for one instant, if they did not enjoy the confidence of this House. It is the constitution of this Country, derived from, and sanctioned by British usage, from the Revolution of 1688, down to the present hour—that the Ministry for the time being, must enjoy the confidence of a majority of this House—that principle I endorse, and am prepared to support,—but I do not believe that the hon. and learned member for Annapolis was correct when he stated that at the close of the last session the Administration had lost the confidence of this House.

I do not know whether the hon. gentleman wishes to present this House as a spectacle to the country—detaining its business as in former days with a fourteen days' debate; I am not quite aware whether the Opposition intend to open the Box of Pandora or not; but I am quite sure, from the ideas expressed to day that the floodgates of oratory will be opened, and that, at least, from the Opposition side, we shall listen to the eloquence and wit which characterise it. The Speech from the Throne contains nothing unusual. It has been drawn without any intention to give offence or provoke discussion—and if any attempt be made to delay the business of the country without cause, I can only say—Let the responsibility rest with them.

Mr. Marshall contended that the resolution was perfectly in order, in the prosecution of public business; and he agreed entirely that this preliminary question should be settled, as the Hon. Attorney General had said, before the usual business of the country could be properly transacted.

Hon. Attorney General wished not to be misunderstood. He did not value office; but he should much regret if the intercourse between the head of the Government and the House should be suspended, and the petitions of the people, and other transactions of the House interrupted.

Hon. J. W. Johnston agreed to the suggestion of the Attorney General, that his resolution should be moved in amendment to the answer to the Address.

Hon. Attorney General was glad that the Hon. Member opposite had assented to do so.

Mr. McLellan said—I rise, Mr. Speaker, to move the Answer to the Address of His Excellency. In my view, Sir, there never was a period in the history of the country when an answer to a speech was moved and the whole province presented a scene of

greater prosperity than at present. I have known the Hon. Member for Annapolis I conceive premature. It is an old saying that those young ladies who exhibit most anxiety to get married generally remain the longest period without husbands. But Sir, I do not intend to detain the House with any lengthened remarks, and therefore, without further profero beg leave to move the following address: (This was a re-echo of the Speech, and will be published in due course.)

On motion of the Hon. Attorney General the House adjourned until to-morrow at three o'clock.

Editorial Miscellany.

We do not know whether the following description will be deemed to be a novelty, but if it is it must have been an attractive one.—We are not prepared to say whether or not the Wesleyans derive their special service on the last night of the year from the early days of the Church; but we may mention here, that there was evening service in the Bishop's Chapel also, on the last night of 1856; and we can most cordially agree with the *Hereford Times*, that being a season when the mercies of the past should be acknowledged, and future grace entreated, it is a much better practice than drinking or dancing:

"One of those midnight services which, though common enough in the early days of the Church, would hardly have been heard of a few years ago, except among some of the Dissenting communities, was held at Monkland on New Year's Eve. The church bells began to chime at half-past 10 p. m., and by 11 p. m. a numerous congregation had assembled in the little church—some persons even walking from Cholstrey and Leominster for the purpose. The service was begun by chanting the 90th Psalm, so well known as the burial Psalm; and so full of words that must have gone home to the hearts of those who met to pray, as it were, at the funeral of the old year, that God would "so teach them to number their days that they might apply their hearts unto wisdom." The Vicar then preached an affecting sermon; speaking of the mercies and sins of the past year, alluding to some deaths that had taken place, and concluding with an earnest appeal to all present to pray for themselves and others that they might find pardon for what was past, and grace to live to Christ for the future. The Litany was then said, and at the end of it there was a pause for about ten minutes for private prayer, after which the congregation rose from their knees and sang a hymn. The candles were lighted on the altar, and the Communion Service for the Feast of the Circumcision was said. The Vicar again preached a short sermon, from Revelation xxii. 5; and the sacrament was administered, the whole congregation remaining in the church till the end. It was, altogether, a strange way of seeing the old year out and the new year in to Church-people in these parts, but a better one, we must confess, than that of drinking or dancing.—*Hereford Times*."

The following passages from a Sermon preached by the Bishop of London to the Young Men's Christian Association, which met at an early communion celebrated at a quarter to seven, in St. Alban's Church, Woodstreet, will be read with interest.

"If there are any here who are not members of the Church of England, I rejoice that they should show their friendly feeling by being present to hear the Word preached by her ministers, and to join in her Scriptural prayers, and in hearing those portions of the Word of God which our Prayer-book sets before us at this time. As to any such approaching the most sacred rite of Communion in our Church, that is a matter which they must weigh well with themselves. We invite those to approach who are baptized, confirmed, or ready to be confirmed. I can well understand those who are members of some other national Church rejoicing to communicate with the Church of England while they sojourn amongst us, without forsaking the Church of their own country and home. I can understand, also, that many of our own countrymen who, from their early training, have been kept apart from our Church, may, as years advance, feel a growing desire to unite with her as the great safeguard of Scriptural Christianity in the land, though they cannot resolve entirely to separate themselves from some other body with which they have many tender associations of kindred and of spiritual privilege enjoyed in times past. Still I am bound to say that that seems to me an unsound state in which a man of mature age and independent position hangs doubtful between one communion and another, not feeling himself really united with the church, and ready to cast in his lot with it, though he loves much its services, and feels that they do his heart good. There is always some danger of hanging loose between two systems, and thus failing of the help which either, according to its means, endeavours to afford for the building up of the soul. But enough of these matters. We are met together to-day to worship in the Church of England, and we, her ministers, invite you, in her name to the holy feast of love, as believing you to be anxious, through her teaching, and her time-honoured Scriptural forms, to seek closer union with the Lord she serves, her zeal in spreading whose Gospel is her highest claim on your allegiance. We meet in our national Church to-day to devote ourselves for the new year to do what we can, as citizens of this great nation, that we may advance the cause of Christ; and goodness amongst our fellow-citizens; and we seek grace through the Lord's ordinance that our hearts may be right while we attempt to guide others."