Signal.

[G]ODERICH, C. W., DEC. 27, 1864.

[C]OMPLIMENTARY DINNER

IN GODERICH, TO

Hon. D. McDonald, M. L. C. and James Dickson, Esq., M. P. P.

UNANIMOUS FEELING IN FAVOR OF CONFEDERATION!

The Dinner to the abovel named gentlemen, in the Huron Hotel, on Thursday night last, came off under no ordinary difficulties. A heavy snow storm obstructed the railway to such an extent that the Express train bearing Mr. Dickson could not get up until about half past nine o'clock; and, of course, the same cause prevented many from coming in from the surrounding country who would undoubtedly have attended under more favorable circumstances. As it was, however, the attendance was very good, for at the appointed hour about one hundred gentlemen took their places at the tables. Robert Gibbons, Esq., Warden, occupied the chair, supported on the right and left by the guests of the evening, and also by Sheriff McDonald, J. V. Detlor, Esq., Mayor elect of Goderich, and other prominent gentlemen.

M. C. Cameron, Esq., occupied the Vice-Chair. Amongst those present we noticed nearly all the members of the County Council, Capts. Seymour and Ross, H. McDermott, Esq., J. S. Sinclair, Esq., Jno Haldan, Esq., S. Pollock, Esq., C. Crabb, Esq., and many others of our most respectable townsmen. The dinner and arrangements generally were never surpassed for completeness on any such occasion in Goderich, and the worthy host certainly deserved all the encomiums passed upon himself and Mrs. Wright towards the close of the entertainment. Considering the very short notice they had—only three or four days—they succeeded in maintaining the ancient honor of Goderich in the matter of splendid repasts.

We may mention here that the Goderich Brass Band, stationed in an extemporized orchestra, did most excellent service during the evening.

After the cloth had been removed, the Chairman expressed his regret that the train by which Mr. Dickson was expected had not been able to get up. He hoped, however, that he might yet arrive before the evening was spent. He would propose the health of our noble Queen, God bless her.

Band—"God save the Queen."

The Prince and Princess of Wales and the rest of the Royal Family.

Band—"Rule Britannia."

The Governor General.

Band—"The Fine ould Irish Gentleman."

It was here given out that Mr. Dickson had arrived. The announcement was received with applause.

The chairman said the next toast he had to propose was "The Government of the day."

Ira Lewis, Esq., County Attorney, being called upon, responded. He said he was a confederate and went in for confederation, [Cheers,] with regard to which he hoped to hear a good deal during the evening

Sheriff MacDonald arose to respond amid loud applause. He said the County Attorney might have satisfied them upon the point at issue. He claimed to be a confederate. (Laughter.) What he meant by that he did not know, but he hoped he had nothing to do with raiders. (Cheers and laughter.) He—the Sheriff—was strongly in favor of Canadian Confederation, which he trusted would be the means of bringing about a better state of things. (Cheers.)

"The Army and Navy," was proposed. Sergeant Johnston responded, saying he felt it to be an honor and a privilege to be able to respond to the Army and Navy of Great Britain. That Army and Navy would always be found where honor and glory might lead. (Cheers.)

In a very neat little speech the Vice-Chairman proposed "The Volunteers of Canada." The toast was drank with enthusiasm.

Capt. Seymour said that the Volunteers of Canada, organized for the protection of their fellow countrymen, had within the past few days shown that they were prepared to go forth in the discharge of duty to defend, if need be, their homes from the unhallowed foot of the invader. (Cheers.) He hoped and trusted that this fair county would never be scourged by war, but if, unfortunately, trouble should arise, the Volunteers would endeavor to show to the country and world that they were no unworthy descendents of the militia of 1812. (Continued Cheering.)

Captain Ross said that to be prepared to do justice to the question of Defence would be one of the most important duties of the proposed Confederation. Seperated as the Provinces were it was necessary that they should be united in order to present a strong, bold front to any invader (Hear, hear.) He was not surprised at the warmth with which the toast had been received, considering the important position it held in the country. He also trusted that it would be long before Great Britain or any one of her colonies should be polluted by the foot of an invader, but he felt equal confidence that when called upon the militia would do their duty manfully. (Cheers.)

The Vice-chairman, in rising to propose "The Guests of the Evening," said that one of them represented in the Legislative Council one of the largest constituencies in the Province, and had filled the position with a degree of statesmanlike ability which did him great honor. [Cheers.] The other, as they all knew, had been intimately connected with the working out of the Municipal system in these Counties for many years, and now, when called to another sphere of usefulness he had discharged the onerous duties devolving upon him with a degree of ability and zeal which aroused the admiration of all. (Load cheers.) The speaker then went on to recite the political events which conspired to break down the present system and prepare the way for the proposed Confederation, from which, when established, he sincerely hoped we would derive all the benefits it was calculated to confer upon us. He had great pleasure in proposing, "The Guests of the evening."—The toast was received with prolonged cheering.

Hon. Donald McDonald, M. L. C., on coming forward to respond was warmly applauded. He said, Mr. Chairman, Vice-chairman and gentlemen, I will not effect surprise at the kind manner with which you, sir, have introduced the toast to which it is my agreable duty in part to respond, nor at the generous warmth and cordiality with which you, gentlemen, have given it your endorsement and approval. None knows better than myself the hearty, kindly impulses which animate those who have made this magnificent section of the Province what it is. And, assuredly, few have had more abundant opportunities than I have had of testing the sterling friendship by which my Huron friends are actuated on an occasion like this. Without presuming to anticipate the speech of my friend and colleague, the representative of Huron, in the Legislative Assembly, I am sure that he, too, will tell the same tale. Whether he and I agree on all other points or not, of this I am confident—that we have, both of us, rare good fortune in being identified with a constituency which, besides being important and on the whole, I trus, prosperous, is known ever to be most generous and confiding. I leave Mr. Dickson, however, himself to execute a task which few know how to perform more adroitly, and content myself with an expression of my own appreciation of the confidence and kindness shown to me. In a case like mine, the Cynic's definition of gratitude is not admissible. It is not a lively sence of favors to come, for on that point I have no misgivings, and I have therefore no necessity for resorting to artifice to woo and win your favor. I am, I trust, honestly grateful for the long continued confidence which you have been pleased to repose in me, and I am very glad of the fresh opportunity you have afforded for meeting in this manner so many of those who in a municipal if not a parliamentary sense, are the representatives of Huron. A stranger desiring to study what may be termed the municipal economy of Huron in the least possible time, could not do better than analyse the composition of its County Council, and the general nature and order of its proceedings. Such a visitor would, at any rate, be compelled to applaud the excellence of a municipal system which has developed so much intelligence, cultivated so much healthy public spirit, and laid so solid a foundation for future local growth and greatness. It has been the fashion in some quarters to sneer at these municipal bodies as so many mimic parliaments. I will not—though I might perhaps—say that Parliament the great might not unfrequently study with advantage the aptitude for business evinced by these minor legislatures. But this I will say—that the County of Huron, in common with every county in Upper Canada, would suffer more in all its material and moral interests from the sudden suppression or annihilation of its municipal organization than by the division of the entire immense territory which shows itself once a year at Quebec. In England, public opinion appears to point to the conclusion that they world has been governed too much—that government is at best an evil, to be restricted within the narrowest possible limits, and to be seen and felt in the fewest possible forms. But they who put forward this view most eagerly and persistently, invariably assert the value of the municipal system, as the only antidote to centralization. They argue, of course that municipal bodies should not overstep their proper functions, but they dwell on the importance of the municipal system as providing the best machinery for meeting the great bulk of popular wants, and at the same time as the best school for educating the people rightly to comprehend the genius and wisely to use the power of representative institutions. In ordinary circumstances, meeting you at this time, I should hardly feel at liberty to go much further, for as a member of the Provincial Parliament, I am more or less prone to talk politics and politics in a party sense are always in theory excluded from the range of municipal debate. Theoretically speaking, County Councils are non-political. We hear here no echo of party politics. Conservatives and Reformers we are here regardless of old party differences, and I apprehend he would not be a welcome guest who should venture to drag them into a speech this evening. But these are not ordinary times. We do not meet under ordinary circumstances. A change has come o'er the spirit of the provincial dream which the majority amongst us would fain not hastily arrest. We have not heard from Dr. Cumming lately, or we might find ourselves nearer the millenium than we have supposed ourselves to be. For suddenly—most unexpectedly—the voice of angry partizanship has been hushed. They who have been wont to scold, scold no more. There is no more calling of ugly names—no more imputation of unworthy motives—no more denunciation, and venom, and plotting and counter-plotting. The lion lies down with the lamb; the wolves and the dogs sleep together. A sort of political millenium has dawned upon us, and partizanship is dead up. We are all on the same side of the fence, with nobody to quarrel with on the other side. Astrange one of us seems disposed to disturb this happy state of things by enquiring too closely as to its probable duration. The good that grew in a night withered in a day. For my part, come next what may, I rejoice that the wonderous metamorphosis has occurred, and I care the singular political events to which it has had its origin. I see no use in discussing the merits and demerits of coalitions in general, and of the existing coalition in particular.—Such a discussion would certainly not be productive of much good, whilst it certainly it would tend to damage interests which most of us, irrespective of party, are most anxious to promote. Enough that the change has occurred. Enough that the coalition is in existance, with the confessed approval of the great majority of both parties. Whether it stand long or fall soon, of one thing I am confident: the very fact that it exists is a gain of no common kind. For henceforth the vocabulary of partizan slang must undergo a process of expurgation which will reflect favorably on the reputation of the Province abroad, and on the temper of the people at home. It will not do hereafter for a reformer to hurl the term corruptionist at the head of every man who differs with him; nor will conservatives be able to brand reformers as revolutionists and rebels, when reform logic proves too much for the conservative mind. These nicknames must disappear, or, as all events, if used again, they must take their rise in some particular transaction hereafter to occur, instead of being terms in general use, to be employed as often without as with reason. The past goes into oblivion, and we start afresh with a clean slate, and with every body certified by everybody else. Well, I take it this alone is a boon of very great importance. Men now meet and work together whom party nicknames have separated for years, and I hope and believe that this renewed and comparatively unrestrained political intercourse will redound to the credit and satisfaction of all parties. Differences will come again, of course. New parties will spring up, and party lines be drawn as tight as of yore. But surely the present eventful era, when it shall have passed away, will leave blessed fruit in the shape of a respect that will prevent mutual recrimination based on traditional antipathies, and secure a more healthy as well as a more agreeable state of political existance than would otherwise have been possible. But, gentlemen, more than altered and amended political feeling—more than new parties, purified and invigorated—is destined to result from the extraordinary events which we hardly yet begin to realize. We passed into a coalition under one form of constitutional being; we shall emerge from it under another. We seem not fully to realize the fact. Our neighbors on the other side of the line are still engaged in a terrible conflict, the end whereof neither they nor others foresee. They are going none knows whither in the direction of great organic change, amidst a strife which to friendly spectators like ourselves cannot but be appalling. On the other hand, we of the British Colonies, are passing peacefully, and with scarcely a ripple to break the surface, from a condition of divided dependencies of the Crown to a condition bordering close upon nationality—cherishing ardently as ever attachment to the old flag, but with responsibility worthy of a great colonial federation. The transition comes suddenly, but I don't know that it is objectionable on that account. Had we been at liberty long to contemplate the change in advance, we should probably have been like the bather shivering on the river's brink and afraid to take the decisive plunge. We were deep in the stream well nigh before we knew what was happening.—We are in it now, and the instinct of self preservation, if nothing else, will impel us to strike boldly for the land. Who doubts that had we been asked 12 months ago to entertain proposals for the abandonment of the system of government which we have had for years, and to embark on a great and costly experiment—who doubts that a large proportion of the people would have hesitated ere approving of the change? They would have said, "Tis better to bear the ills we have than fly to others we know not of." A period as long and tempestuous as that which ushered responsible government into existance, and as that which preceded the secularization of the Clergy Reserves, would in all likelihood have intervened between the inception of the change and its final consummation.—Now how different! Thanks to the marvellous tact in the political world of the province, we no sooner hear of a sweeping constitutional change, than we find ourselves on the eve of its accomplishment. It was vaguely announced as the basis of a coalition some six or seven months ago, and already the leaders of the two great parties have agreed on outlines and details, and in a month or two more we may expect to have the whole thing crushed. Never before in the history of constitutional change has a work of such magnitude been wrought so speedily, or with so little apparent dissension. In this feature of the affair, however, I see more than cause for wonder, for, depend upon it, the change would not be so easy, nor would acquiescence in it be so general, were not the great body of the community in their hearts weary of the old state of things. They were thoroughly dissatisfied, and therefore the change we are witnessing is accepted joyfully, as a deliverance from the bondage of old partizan names and evils,—as breaking down old party, personal and sectional difficulties, and leading to a new and, we trust, a more pleasant state of things. (Cheers.) Let us take care that the haste to be rid of old evils leads us not to accept of new things without sufficiently weighing their bearings. It is good to escape from party deadlocks, and sectional squabbles and struggles, and governmental chaos; but these all are tired—sick unto satiety. But prudence requires us to see whither we are going, and to make sure that the ground on which we tread shall not prove a treacherous bog. I shall not presume this evening to enter upon such a discussion as that which I indicate as necessary; for though the general features of the new scheme have been published, there are details unexplained with which we should be familiar before pronouncing a final and positive judgement. So soon as the scheme shall be promulgated officially and in its entirety, the duty will be incumbent upon us to examine closely its every point, and so to aid in rendering it what we mean that every man should insist upon his particular preferences, and oppose the scheme unless his own peculiar views prevail. Should such a spirit as that prevail, we should inevitably go back to the old slough of partizan malice and abuse. A deadlock would occur again, and we should be compelled to start afresh, with tempers soured by what had happened. I feel disposed to take it for granted that certain changes which I should have individually preferred were discussed in the Conference and found impracticable. Such changes I mean as that which would have limited the new constitution to the Canadas, postponing to a future period the larger question of general federation. We know that this view was held by our friends in the government, and we learn from correspondence which has appeared in journals published in the maritime provinces—inspired if not written by prominent delegates—that the deliberations at Quebec were in constant danger of being broken off by differences of opinion on important questions. Mutual concessions were indispensable. I only hope that all the concessions have not been on the side of Canada. Yield something—yield much—we undoubtedly must. But I should hardly be satisfied should it turn out that the yielding has been mainly on our side. I may advert to one matter in which you and I have a common interest by way of illustration. I refer to the proposed constitution of the Upper Chamber. You are aware that under the scheme as now proposed, the intention is to make the Legislative Council a Crown nominated body instead of an elective body. To my mind this is a retrograde movement—not a movement in the direction of reform. It is a going backward to the old days of colonial vassalage, instead of going forward to the dignity and greatness of a new nation. There would be some excuse for the step, had the experience of Canada in relation to the elective principle been unfavorable. Had the Legislative Council fallen from a high estate, when composed of nominees, to a low estate when elected by the people, there would be reason in the proposition to restore the old principle. But the opposite is notoriously the fact. So long as the Council was composed exclusively of nominees of the Crown, it was destitute of influence in the country. Of debates it had not a pretence, and all it did was the barest routine, which, except for form's sake, had as well remained undone. Since the introduction of the elective element what have we had? Why, the Legislative Council has become a power in the state. Its debates are conducted with a degree of intelligence, ability, and temper to which the press and the people have borne ungrudging testimony. [Hear, hear.] On this head, indeed, there is but one opinion. Mr. Galt, addressing his constituents the other day, unreservedly admitted that the experiment of an elective Council in Canada has worked well. But he said that the delegates from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were unanimously against the application of the elective principle to a second chamber, and the Canadian delegates gave up the point. Was the concession wise? I think not. Was it necessary? We shall be able to answer the question better bye and bye. Certainly I think that we have a right to know why upon this point the larger body in the confederation deemed it expedient to yield to the smaller bodies. [Applause.] My view, gentlemen, is, that rather than revert to a Crown nominated as distinguished from a popularly elected chamber, it would be better to dispense with the form of a second chamber altogether, and confine the law-making power to the representatives of the people. For if nominated by the Crown, the members of the Legislative Council would be merely the creatures of the Executive—the reflex of its will; and as such of little real utility, however ornamental they may be considered. This not a new view with me, or one which takes its rise in the possibility of the application of an objectionable principle to my own case.—As far back as the 4th April, 1861, in my place in Parliament, I moved to exclude from the Legislative Council individuals holding office under the Crown. The resolution I moved on that occasion affirmed that "The "Legislative Council is at once an expression "of the popular will, and a check to hasty "legislation and the improper exercise of "executive power." I respectfully submit that the body would be divested of the qualities, and impotent in regard to these functions, the moment it is stripped of the elective character and converted into a mere creation of the executive. Whether you in common with the other electors of Canada will have an opportunity of pronouncing an opinion on the subject, remains uncertain. Unless journals which we are now accustomed to consider well informed are in this instance misinformed, the intention is not to submit the question of constitutional change to the direct verdict of the people. At the same time, I must say that the position assumed by the administration, as explained by Mr. Brown at the Toronto festival, is not in fairness open to the animadversions to which many journals have given utterance. Mr. Brown remarked that it is not for the Administration to say that this measure shall or shall not be sent specially to the people; adding "we are in the hands of the representatives of the people and by their decision we are ready to abide." This sounds fair enough. There is no constitutional necessity that I know of for dissolving the House because of this measure, but the step may be expedient nevertheless. That expediency should be judged by the character of the discussions in the legislature when the measure is under consideration. If there be wide differences of opinion, whether amongst the representatives of Upper or of Lower Canada—if it be apparent that whilst the wisdom of some great change is conceded, essential details are objected to—then an appeal should be made to the people, that they may decide for themselves. I will not, however, myself give scope to a spirit which I deprecate in others. There is need of forbearance and conciliation on all sides, and on all points of this great question, and I am not disposed to indulge in anything savoring of dogmatism. We must learn to make our individual views and preferences, subordinate to the general good. Even after the scheme shall have been settled and sanctioned, there will still be need for great forbearance, in parliament, in the press, and by the people. The experiment will be a vital one; it will involve more delicate issues than I care now to enumerate; and for a time, at least, it will not work without frequent jarring of the governmental machinery. Let us, then, make up our minds to bear and forbear, that a change pregnant with mighty results to every one of us, may be affected, not only under the most favorable circumstances, but in a manner most surely calculated to attain the ends desired. Meanwhile, we are afloat on the sea of change, and I can but pray that Providence may guide us amidst its perils, and sustain us under all its trials. Gentlemen, again I thank you. (Great applause.)

James Dickson, Esq., M. P. P., then came forward to respond, and was vociferously cheered. He said, Mr. Chairman, Vice-Chairman and gentlemen, I desire to return my best thanks for the very kind manner in which the last toast has been proposed and with which it has been received by this assembly. It affords me great pleasure indeed to meet on this occasion so many leading and influential men of these United Counties, in order that we may discuss some of the great questions which are now occupying the public mind. [Hear, hear.] Before setting out, however, in that direction, permit me to say that I cordially coincide with the remarks of my worthy colleague as regards the duties and responsibilities of County Councillors. The great question at present occupying the public mind is the confederation of the British North American Provinces, and I only wish that when I go down to Quebec I may be sure that I am voting upon the subject comformably with the desire of a great majority of the people of these United Counties, remembering that the good of the country, in so far as I am concerned, consists, in the first place, in the welfare and prosperity of these populous and wealthy counties. [Laughter and cheers.] I am free to confess that I heartily agree with this scheme of Confederation, if it can be shown to a demonstration that it will not trench too deeply upon our pockets, because I believe the time has fully come when we should grow out of the littleness of colonial politics and lay the foundations of a nation which shall stretch from sea to sea. (Immense applause.) A Great Republic is our nearest neighbor, and it behoves us as a people to present a bold front to the dangers that threaten us. I said before that it is always my desire to carry out what I believe to be the wishes of the people of this great constituency, and I have no doubt that when I go down again to Parliament you will still entrust to me the task of trying to do the best I can for you, under the circumstances. [Cheers] If I am, as I have announced, in favor of confederation, it is not because I consider a Federal Union the best form of Government—for I am an advocate of Legislative Union, (Hear, hear,)—but the difficulties are so great that the latter seems impracticable, and all things considered, I believe the delegates were quite right in laying out the scheme they decided upon. It is a step in the right direction, and just as soon as we become a more homogeneous people, I have do doubt a Legislative union will take place. (Cheers.) The Federal system needs something, what it is perhaps difficult to say, but one defect that has led to much trouble in the neighboring States was that Sovereign Power was vested in the respective States, and withheld from the General Government. The Canadian and other delegates proposed to remedy that by pursuing a directly contrary policy. The territorial area of the proposed Confederation is something upon which I can dwell with pleasure. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia contain 81,000 square miles, or as great an area as Wales and old Scotland. Those Provinces abound in minerals, such as coal, iron, and I might say gold. When Mr. Galt saw the produce of the Gold mines his eyes distended, and he was heard to say, "here is a specific for all the financial crises that could ever take place" (Laughter and applause.) The area of those Provinces when added to that of Canada will make 350,000 square miles, enough, certainly for a splendid country. And when the time comes when we can have an opportunity of sending our sons up to the far west, to a hardy too much to say that we shall occupy a third place amongst the nations of the world. (Cheers.) Mr. Galt in his his speech at Sherbrooke told us that the imports and exports of Canada and the Provinces in 1863, amounted to the sum of $137,000,000. Of this Canada produced $88,000,000. He told us at the same time that the tonnage of the Provinces mentioned amounted to 12,000,000 of tons; and I, myself, in looking into the Trade and Navigation returns, found that upon the Lakes we had seven millions of tons, a portion of which, however, has to be credited to American bottoms. Mr. Galt says that this tonnage stands perhaps fourth amongst the great maritime nations, and that in it we have a nucleus which will enable us to compete with Great Britain, or the United States in a very few years.—I trust, Mr. Chairman, that when the new state of things is introduced, we shall be able to give away our Crown Lands to actual settlers, and do away forever with what I call the cursed speculation in lands. (Cheers.)—With reference again to Confederation, I hope before it is passed there will be an appeal to the people—(hear, hear,)—and I can assure you if it is asked for you will find my name amongst the *yeas*. (Cheers.) The people should have the supreme power, and have a right to be appealed to in a matter of so much importance. I do not desire a dissolution—a simple vote *yea* or *nay*, is all that is required. [Great applause.) Mr. Dickson speaking on the proposed change in the mode of selecting members for the Upper House, bore testimony to the increased efficiency and energy infused into that branch under the elective principle, and expressed his belief that when the selection came to be made by the Crown, they would find the Honorable member for Tecumseth filling an honorable position in that body. [Cheers.] Taking up another subject, Mr. Dickson said that confounded County Town question of Bruce had cost him many an hour's sleep.—[Laughter.] He had resolved to do as the people of the County dictated. One night down came the Reeves of Kincardine and Southampton. The Reeve of Kincardine said "Dickson, you will have to exert yourself, for the people of Bruce are determined to have two counties, and the capital of South Bruce shall be Kincardine. The Reeve of Southampton said "we intend to have a county named Wallace, and Southampton shall be the County town." I said if the people so decreed I approved of it. They told me a great many people approved of it. I went in for it, of course, but the scheme fell through. Then down comes Mr. Gunn of Inverhuron, and says, "Dickson, the old scheme was a farce—(laughter)—the people were determined to keep the County as a whole and not divide it into Wallace and Bruce, and what they wanted now was to have the question put whether the County Town should be in the interior or on the coast." Although that scheme failed also, he could say that Mr. Gunn did his duty for Bruce faithfully. What puzzled him was what the County was going to do now. Mr. Gunn had told them, in a famous resolution not long since, that in order to make Bruce right there must be a reconstruction of Huron, Perth, Wellington and Grey, but he—Mr. D.—did not know why that doctrine should prevail. For his part he believed that if the people of Bruce wished to consult the interests of the county *as a whole* they would place the County town neither at Kincardine nor Walkerton, but at at Paisley, which was undoubtedly the most central place. (Applause from a number of Bruce Reeves.) Mr. Dickson then resumed his seat amidst continued cheering.

"The Commercial Interests of Goderich," was responded to by J. V. Detlor, Esq., who dilated upon the vast benefits accruing from a flourishing commerce, and expressed his regret that the various governments of the country had done so little to further the commercial interests of these counties, by the construction of necessary harbours, &c. He might be permitted to suggest that when he found the Government in such a "tight place," his friend Mr. Dickson might have got something for us by telling them that his support depended upon a degree of justice being done to his constituents. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Dickson proposed "The junior County of Bruce, coupled with the name of Mr. Gunn."

Mr. Gunn responded. He attributed the whole blame of the want of success in settling their Co. town matters to selfishness, more of which had been shown by the people themselves, perhaps, than by their reeves. He spoke of the want of proper harbors, and said he was in a position to assert that Mr Dickson was not to blame at all in the matter, as he had fought their battles in Quebec with great energy and ability. He looked upon Mr Dickson as a conservative with liberal tendencies; Mr McPherson, their representative in the Upper House, on the contrary, was a liberal with conservative tendencies. (Cheers and laughter.)

The toast of "The Warden" was proposed and duly responded to.

Mr. Crabb proposed "The Press," which was briefly acknowledged by Mr. W. T. Cox.

Geo. Sproat, Esq., of Tuckersmith, proposed "The Agriculture of Canada," in a very neat little speech.

Hon. Mr. McDonald proposed the "Bar." Messrs. H. McDermott and J. S. Sinclair responded in fitting terms.

"The Ladies" was acknowledged by Mr. S. H. Detlor, in a witty speech

"Our Host and Hostess" was responded to by Mr. Wright in his usual off-hand style.

We must not forget to mention that excellent songs were given during the evening by Messrs. M. Gibson, T. Adair, J. Gillies, J. Mitchell and others.

The assembly broke up about 1 o'clock, after having spent a most happy evening.

ALLEGED FENIANISM.

FLYING RUMORS!

NO APPARENT FOUNDATION FOR THEM!

We adopt the above heading because it faintly reflects the intense excitement that has reigned paramount in this county during the past week. Roused from their enjoyment of all the blessings of peace and quietness the people give themselves up entirely to the discussion of the all-absorbing topic of the day.

If a tenth part of the flying rumors were true, people might well be alarmed. Coffins full of pikes were said to have gone up the gravel road from Seaforth towards the back townships. Rumors also came into Howick from the East that half the people of the township of Arthur had been murdered in cold blood, and that armed Fenians were marching Westward burning and destroying all before them. The protestant farmers of Howick turned out at once and we are informed that they drilled for a whole day, expecting an uprising at any moment. It turned out, however, to be false alarm. No Fenians appeared and no one was able to sift a single grain of truth out of the alarming stories put in circulation. In Wawanosh and Ashfield the excitement was still more intense. No story, in fact, seemed to be too wild for belief. Whole families fled for refuge to the houses of their more courageous neighbors, and several cases of hardship from exposure are reported. It being rumored and believed by many that bands of Fenians were organized and armed in those townships, the protestant yeomanry formed themselves into companies and for several nights kept up a regular patrol upon the cross roads, but without seeing an enemy or stopping any suspicious person. No want of evidence, however, could stop the stories which seemed to swell the further they travelled. A coffin full of pikes, it was said, had passed through Goderich, secret Fenian meetings were being held, and to crown all it flew from mouth to mouth on Wednesday that Dr. McDougall had gone out to hold an inquest on the bodies of six murdered men, somewhere near Belfast. Of course there was not the least truth in this last report. Although everybody had heard all this, not a soul had *seen* anything to create alarm. But alarmed the people were, in earnest, and during the week a constant demand has been made upon the storekeepers of Goderich for guns, pistols, lead, shot, caps, &c. In one case a farmer was so eagerly beat upon having a pistol home with him that he actually left his watch as security.

For our own part we must confess that although we have made careful enquiries we cannot see the slightest foundation for all the ado that has been made, and until we have something more substantial before us, it is only reasonable to attribute the universal feeling of anxiety and distrust to the imaginations of a few individuals who have nothing better to do than help on the sensation of the day. In the name of common sense, if any one has a charge to make against Fenians, he should institute it before the proper authorities and let a thorough sifting take place, but let us not do injustice to those who, for all we know to the contrary, are innocent of the charges brought against them. We feel convinced that every reader of the *Signal*—protestant or catholic—will concur in the view we take with regard to the necessity of an investigation into the cause of the trouble. It is a serious matter, and for the sake of the timid women and children dwelling in lonely country houses, we earnestly trust that all good men will, if they can find nothing against their neighbors, try by every means in their power to allay the excitement ere it leads to irreparable mischief. And, in conclusion, we implore our Protestant readers, however watchful they may be, to allow no mere *rumor*, however wild, to hurry them on to the commission of any act of fancied reparation, which they would have to regret after the present feeling of alarm has subsided. We may say before leaving the subject that persons from Lucknow inform us that the excitement is decreasing.

COUNTIES' COUNCIL.

The United Counties' Council met in the Court Room on Tuesday last, at 3 o'clock, p. m.

The following gentlemen were present: Messrs. Mallough Dalton, J. Whitehead, Spence, VanEvery, Piper, Churchill, P. McDonald, A. McDonald, Case, Brown Morgan, Snell, Gibson, Strong, Govenlock, C. Whitehead, Perdue, Adamson, Alex. Johnston, Sweet, Parsons, Chesney, Sproat, Messar, Bishop, Creery, Cook, Lumsden, Esplin, Brocelbank, Smith, Gunn, McKinnon, Fisher, Hogg, Gillies, Dobbin, Pinkerton, R. Johnston, Millar, J. P. McIntyre, Sutton, Chapman, Rowand, Adair, Riter, Kribbs, Martin.

The minutes of the last session of Council were read over, after which

The Warden addressed the Council on the Hodgins' law suit, which is not yet settled, and pointed out the necessity of certain improvements asked for at the gaol. He spoke of proposed changes in the mode of holding the County Agricultural Show, and concluded by alluding to the resignation of the Counties' Clerk, which he held in his hand Mr. Ritchie had fulfilled the duties connected with his office for a number of years with the greatest diligence and ability. He, (the Warden) could assure the gentlemen present that this resignation was the only paper he ever regretted having to deliver to them. The Warden was considerably affected during the delivery of the latter portion of his address We need hardly say that his personal remarks were received with rounds of applause.

Letter from the Counties' Clerk to the Warden tendering his resignation, was received and read.

Certificate from the tp. clerk of Wawanosh to the effect that Robt. Currie, Esq., had been elected Reeve of that township instead of Mr. Mathers, resigned, was received and read, when Mr. Currie was requested to take his seat.

On motion of Mr. Gillies, a committee consisting of Messrs. Millar, Gillies, Lumsden, Brocelbank and Rowand was appointed to receive any papers connected with Roads and Bridges in the County of Bruce.

A large number of accounts for various sums; read and referred to Finance Committee.

Moved by Mr. A. Johnston, seconded by Mr Millar, That the letter of D. H. Ritchie, Esq., resigning the office of Co. Clerk, which he has so long and so honorably held, to the entire satisfaction of this Council and of the people of these United Counties, together with any letters addressed by applicants for said office, be referred to a committee, and that said com. shall consist of Jos. Whitehead, VanEvery, Sproat, Govenlock, Lumsden, Sutton and Gunn.—Carried.

Application from Mr. Robt. Pinkerton, asking for County Clerkship. Mr. Pinkerton alluding to his qualifications, said he was proficient in the French and German languages.

Application for County Clerkship from Peter Adamson, Esq., Wm. Fraser, Esq., and Thomas Kydd, Esq., were referred to the special committee.

Moved by Mr. Bishop, seconded by Mr Case, That parties going to and returning from Statute Labor be exempt from paying toll, and that the Engineer be instructed to make that proviso in the letting of the toll gates for the ensuing year.—Carried.

Wednesday.

A committee of five was appointed to take up the subject of fairs throughout the country.

Petition of A. C. Hawkins, John Allen and others of the townships of Colborne and Ashfield relative to the improvement of the Ashfield road, was read and referred to the committee on Gravel Roads appointed at last meeting.

Several other petitions were read and referred to committees.

Moved by Mr. Morgan, seconded by Mr. Currie, That the Rev. Mr. Stewart, of Blythe, be appointed Local Superintendant for the townships of Wawanosh and Hullet in the place of the Rev. Mr. Sims, resigned. Referred to School com.

Letter from Mr. Nairn to Dr. Stokes was read and referred to School com.

Moved by Mr. Sutton, seconded by Mr. Gunn, That the time appointed for collectors to return their rolls be extended to the 1st of March, 1865.—Carried.

Moved by Mr. Gibson, seconded by by Mr. Strong, That the Warden and Clerk be instructed to petition the proper department of the Government to ascertain the reason why the share belonging to the new townships of the County of Huron of the amount of the Improvement Fund has been withheld, and for a statement of the expenditure made by the Colonial Engineer in former years, and where said expenditure was made.—Carried.

Thursday.

Petition of delegates from Branch Agricultural Societies with regard to Memorializing Government for changes in the Agricultural Act, relative to the mode of holding County Shows. The petition was published in full in our columns some time since.

On motion of Mr. Sproat, a committee consisting of Messrs. Gunn, Lumsden, Brocelbank, Bishop, Adamson, Snell and Govenlock, the Warden *ex officio* was appointed to report upon the matter.

Mr. C. Whitehead moved that the grant of $2,000 made at last session of the council to build a bridge in Wawanosh be withheld until said township paid up its Co. debt.

Mr. Currie remonstrated against such a motion being brought up, and after some discussion it was withdrawn.

The inspector of Weights and Measures reported that he had nearly completed his round of the Counties, but that, unfortunately, the standard weights and measures belonging to the County had been destroyed in the recent fire.

THE COUNTY CLERKSHIP.

The report of the Committee appointed to receive the resignation of the County Clerk and the applications for that office. Members present: Messrs. Joseph Whitehead, VanEvery, Sproat, Govenlock, Lumsden, Sutton and Gunn.

The committee having carefully considered the documents submitted beg leave to report as follows, viz:

1. Letter from D. H. Ritchie, Esq., tendering his resignation of the office of County Clerk. Your committee deeply regret that Mr Ritchie has decided upon resigning the office of County Clerk, which he has so long, ably, and creditably filled during a period of fourteen years.—During the whole of that time the duties of office have been discharged by Mr Ritchie with a degree of efficiency, zeal, assiduity and accuracy never, we venture to state, excelled, in any other country.

In the natural course of thing all public bodies are subject to change. In the course of years and during the incumbency of Mr. Ritchie this council has not been exempt from the vicissitudes to which all municipal bodies are subject, but whatever may have been the annual changes in the composition of the council, County interests have ever been safe in the vigilant keeping of Mr. Ritchie. His friendly word and smile have at all times cheered the new members while retiring members have parted from him with regret. On all occasions his conduct towards individuals has been characterized by a most laudable degree of impartiality, suavity and sincere kindness.

Your committee feel satisfied that every member of this Council parts with Mr. Ritchie with regret and regret, in which feeling they are confident that they are heartily joined by ex-Reeve and Deputy Reeve in these United Counties, as well as every individual who has had occasion to come in contact with Mr. Ritchie, either in his official or private capacity.

Your committee feel confident that your Honorable body will cordially join with them in their sincerest wish and sincere desire, that in his private retirement from official life, Mr. Ritchie may long live in the full enjoyment of health, prosperity and every blessing calculated to smooth the rugged path, and to ameliorate the ills of life, and to administer to his comfort, happiness and welfare in the evening of his days.

Nos. 32, 34 and 49.—Applications for the office of County Clerk from Messrs. Robt. Pinkerton, Peter Adamson, Wm. Fraser and Thomas Kydd.

Your committee beg to recommend the appointment of Mr. Peter Adamson, Reeve of Stanley, to the office of County Clerk, vacated by Mr. Ritchie. They do so in one respect with regret and regret, seeing that in appointing Mr. Adamson to office, this Council loses the benefit of his active, useful and valuable services as a member of this Council. They console, however, by the reflection that the council in this appointment will still have the benefit of Mr. Adamson's experience and thorough knowledge of municipal law and municipal affairs.

Your committee recommend that the office of County Clerk be kept open one day in each week, viz., on every Wednesday, and that the office shall also be kept open for one week immediately ensuing each meeting of this Council. That public notice to this effect be given by him throughout the United Counties that a By Law be prepared appointing Mr. Adamson to the said office of Clerk of the United Counties of Huron & Bruce to enter on the duties of the office on Wednesday the 18th January, prox., after Mr. Ritchie shall have finished up the business of the present year.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

WM. GUNN, Chairman.

Com. Room, Goderich, December 22, 1864.

The Rept was unanimously adopted.

Moved by Mr. Parsons, seconded by Mr. Sweet, That the resolution No. 88, passed at the last meeting, be rescinded relative to paying boundary line appropriation in one sum on the certificate of the Reeve, and that boundary line accounts come before the Council in the usual way. Carried.

On motion of Mr. Piper a By-Law for authorizing a deviation of road in the township of Goderich was confirmed.

Friday.

By-Law appointing Peter Adamson County Clerk in place of D. H. Ritchie, resigned, was read and adopted. Mr. Adamson briefly thanked the Council, and said he would endeavor to discharge his duties to the best of his ability.

Report of the special committee on Gravel Roads read. It was recommended that the sum of $10,000 be raised by debentures, for improving certain roads, as follows:—Ashfield Colborne $7000, Seaforth and Howick $9000, Stephen $4000, Wingham $2000, Hullett $2000.

Moved by Mr. Govenlock, That the By-Law now read and over until the January meeting.

On the yeas being taken the report was sustained by a majority of 15, and was confirmed accordingly.

A Special Committee reported recommending the erection of the Bridge in Wawanosh on the situation as best by the County Engineer; between the 5th and 6th cons. Mr. Cummings moved, seconded by Mr. Churchill, That the report be so amended as to place the bridge on the site for which the great weight obtained. Report confirmed on a div.

The report of the committee appointed to consider all matters relating to Roads and Bridges in Bruce was read, when, after several amendments had been voted down, it was

Moved in amendment by Mr. Rowand, seconded by Mr. Adair, That the first clause of the report be not adopted, but be amended by striking out the delivery on the same and inserting as follows:—Your committee recommend that the sum of $400 be granted to repair Allen's Bridge, under superintendance of Mr. Sproat. Carried by a majority of one.

It was further moved in amendment by Mr Gillies, seconded by Mr Rowand, That the following be substituted instead of clause 79. Your committee find that according to section 399 of the Municipal Institutions Act that townlines and deviations are, under the exclusive jurisdiction of County Councils, and that it is therefore the duty of said councils to maintain such roads and bridges erected thereon in a safe and passable state of repair,