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FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

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GENERAL COMMITTEE

THE NOVA-SCOTIA

SABBATH ALLIANCE.

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY.

HALIFAX, N. S.:

PRINTED BY JAMES BARNES, 179 HOLLIS STREET,

1851.

## REPORT OF ANNUAL MEETING.

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THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NOVA SCOTIA SABBATH ALLIANCE, was held in the Temperance Hall, on the evening of Tuesday, 11th Novr., 1851.

THE HON. THE CHIEF JUSTICE IN THE CHAIR.

After the Report was read by the Secretary, the following Resolutions were moved, and unanimously adopted.

Moved by the Rev. R. F. Uniacke, seconded by Charles Robson, Esq. :

“That the Report now read be adopted and published.”

Moved by the Rev. E. Evans, seconded by J. W. Ritchie, Esq. :

“That this Meeting believes in the moral obligation of the Sabbath, and that it is the duty of all to remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy, as well as to use every means for the promotion of its due observance.”

Moved by the Rev. P. G. McGregor, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Geikie :

“That this meeting is deeply impressed with a sense of the many temporal and spiritual blessings that flow from the sanctification of the Lord's Day, and that in lending our aid in support of this and similar Associations, we are furthering the best interests of our fellow men.”

Moved by the Rev. G. W. Hill, seconded by S. Fulton, Esq., M. P. P. :

“That the following compose the General Committee for the ensuing year, viz. :—Rev. J. T. Twining, D. D., Rev. E. L. Crawley, D. D., Rev. Alex. W. MacLeod, D. D., Revds. Messrs. Scott, Uniacke, Evans, Martin, Millar, Forrester, Geikie, McGregor, Hill, and Bennet; and Messrs. W. H. Marvin, Alexander Fraser, Nepean Clarke, J. W. Ritchie, J. G. A. Creighton, Dr. Avery, David Allison, James Thomson, M. G. Black, J. H. Anderson, T. A. S. Dewolfe, George H. Starr, C. D. Hunter, Charles Robson, John Smith, H. D. Steele, Dr. Sawers, David McPherson, H. Irce, Peter Lynch, J. J. Sawyer, Thos. Hosterman, S. L. Shannon, John Burton, J. W. Nutting, and Dr. Kaye, 97th Regt. And that the following be the Acting Committee, viz. :—Rev. Dr. Crawley, Rev. Messrs. Scott, Evans, Uniacke, Forrester, McGregor, and Geikie, Dr. Avery, and George H. Starr, Charles Robson, Nepean Clarke, and S. L. Shannon, Esquires.”

Moved by the Rev. Dr. Twining, seconded by Dr. Avery :

“That the thanks of this Meeting be tendered to the Hon. the Chief Justice, for the admirable manner in which he has discharged the duties of Chairman.”

The Benediction was then pronounced by the Rev. Mr. Scott.

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SECRETARY TO THE ALLIANCE :  
THE REV. ALEXANDER FORRESTER.

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TREASURER :  
MARTIN G. BLACK, ESQ.

## FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

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The Committee of the Nova Scotia Sabbath Alliance, in laying their first annual report before the friends of the Sabbath, generally throughout the Province, desire to express their thankfulness to the Lord of the Sabbath for any measure of success that may have attended their efforts, as well as for that Catholic and brotherly spirit that has all along characterized their proceedings.

The object contemplated in the formation of this Alliance, was the humble desire to promote, by the blessing of God, the due observance of the Lord's day. It was considered by not a few of the friends of the Sabbath in this community, that low and latitudinarian views regarding its moral obligation and its consequent sanctification were on the increase amongst various ranks; that attendance on the public means of divine grace on that hallowed day, was not at all proportioned to the number of the Protestant population, and that several forms of Sabbath desecration existed in the midst of us; and, for the purpose of strengthening each other's hands in elevating the standard of Sabbath observance, and in suppressing any species of Sabbath desecration that might exist, it was resolved to form an Association composed of all the sections of Evangelical Protestantism amongst us, encouraged by the many tokens of the divine presence and blessing that had attended the operations of similar associations in Great Britain and America.

This association, taking for its basis the fourth commandment of the Moral law, has now been in existence for upwards of a year; and although the plain and practical application of this commandment may have excited prejudices in some, and opposition in others against this movement, and although not nearly the amount of good has been effected that was anticipated by others, the committee feel amply warranted to persevere, in the firm conviction that God and the Bible are on their side, and that He who is so jealous of the honours of His own day, will not forget the feeblest efforts made to uphold these honours.

One of the earliest matters that engaged the attention of the committee, was the obtaining of statistical information regarding any forms of Sabbath desecration, that might prevail in and around Halifax, as well as in other parts of the Province. A sub-committee was appointed for this purpose from whose report it appeared that no small amount of Sabbath desecration existed, in connection with the Instrumental Music in marching the troops to the Garrison Chapel on the morning of that day, in connection with the then existing Postal arrangements, in connection with the sale of Spirituous Liquors and various articles of food, in connection with games, sinful recreations and amusements, &c.

The committee would glance at these in order, and mention the steps that have been taken regarding them respectively :—

#### **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.**

There existed no difference of opinion as to the extent of Sabbath desecration to which this practice gave birth, not only in disturbing the citizens repairing to their several places of worship, but in congregating large crowds of people. The difficulty here experienced by the committee was the party to whom application should be made with a view to its suppression, and after due enquiry and deliberation, it was resolved to memorialize the Lieutenant-Governor on the subject. A Deputation waited on his Excellency to present said memorial. That deputation was received most courteously, and the following Sabbath the practice was discontinued.

#### **POST OFFICE.**

It is well known that Sabbath profanation prevailed to an alarming extent in this department of public Service. According to the old arrangement, the Mail on the Western Route left Annapolis every Sabbath about mid-day, and one of the Mails on the Eastern Route left Halifax late on the Saturday afternoon, thereby perpetrating a fearful amount of Sabbath desecration along both these lines. Any one who has been at Amherst and Pictou, on occasion of the arrival of the Mail, can bear testimony to this fact. As the Post Office department was soon to be brought under Provincial Control, and Legislative measures to be adopted by the last Session of the House of Assembly relative to its future management, the committee spared no pains in endeavouring to obtain redress for these claimant grievances. They appointed a special committee to watch over the whole of this business. This sub-committee used all diligence in stimulating those most exposed to these evils to petition the Legislature, in conferring again and again with the committee of the House of Assembly charged with the matter, and in repeatedly memorializing the Governor in Council. And the committee have now the highest possible satisfaction in being able to state that with, one solitary exception,—the case of Amherst,—there is no such thing as secular labour in this department of public Service on the Lord's day, a state of things which, as far as the committee are aware, does not exist in any other portion of her Majesty's dominions. The following extract is taken from the report of the House of Assembly of last Session.

“ The attention of the committee has been called by the Sabbath Alliance and numerous Petitions, to the secular duties performed on the Sunday by the transmission of Mails and delivery of letters on that day, and after deliberate consideration have adopted schemes by means of which the advantages of post communication will be greatly enlarged. And no office be kept open or Mail be transmitted through the Province on the Lord's day.” The schemes here referred to, the committee have reason to believe, have even been greatly improved in the way of avoiding all secular labour in this department, and the exception of Amherst has arisen entirely from the difficulty of arranging with the Postal authorities in the neighbouring Province. It is to be hoped, however, that the energetic friends of the Sabbath at Amherst will continue to testify until they get rid of the evil. Then will Nova Scotia present to the whole world the

ennobling spectacle of a total cessation from all secular labour in the Post Office on the Lord's day—a position, in the opinion of the committee, vastly more commanding than that which she possesses by any natural resources, whether external or internal.

#### TRAFFIC IN INTOXICATING LIQUORS.

That traffic in intoxicating Liquor is carried on, to a very large extent, on Sabbath, is a notorious and melancholy fact. It was ascertained last summer by one thoroughly conversant with the matter, that in three or four streets in Halifax, spirituous liquors were sold on Sabbath in not less than 36 shops! In consequence of this information, the committee presented a petition to the House of Assembly last winter, praying for more distinct and definite regulations in the License law, that the civil authorities might be placed in a more advantageous position in the punishment of offenders. That petition was favourably received by the House, and a committee appointed to consider the whole subject.—That committee had a long interview with the committee of the Sabbath Alliance, and drew up a very interesting report which was submitted to the House and from which we make a few extracts:—

“Your committee have given a deep and serious consideration to the evils referred to in said petition, and have had before them the Rev. Mr. Forrester and others, forming a deputation from said society, who have very ably represented the christian views of this association, and their anxiety to enforce in Halifax the capital of the Province, a strict, solemn, and becoming observance of the Lord's day.”

“That the evidence submitted to your committee, and the enquiries conducted by them, have satisfied them that a very extensive and secret sale of spirituous liquors is carried on in licensed taverns in the city of Halifax, and especially in the Upper Streets, in defiance of the law, and that means are taken by admitting customers at private and secluded entrances and back-doors to escape the vigilance of the Police, and to insult its authority. That scenes of riot and drunkenness often occur in the open streets, and thus the christian on his way to the house of Prayer is offended by sights and violence, revolting to a religious sense, dangerous by example to the younger members of a family and discreditable to a community.”

“They do not conceive it necessary to enlarge upon the imperative duty which rests upon the Legislature to enforce, by suitable enactments, the orderly and suitable observance of the Sabbath. The way in which the Lord's day is observed—the subdued and sober spirit manifested—the regular attendance to settled ordinances—the peace and good order which prevails in the public streets—are in communities, as in families, the best standard of religious faith, and of the morals and character of a people, &c. &c.”

The committee have much pleasure in stating that in the Compend of the Provincial laws recently published, the Law of License is much more clearly defined; and they have still greater pleasure in giving all the publicity in their power to the law of the City of Halifax bearing upon this point, as given in the Charter and Ordinance of the City of Halifax, recently published by the City Recorder.

"No house, tavern, shop or other place whatever, the occupier whereof holds a shop or a tavern licensed for selling Liquors, shall be open before sunrise or kept open after eleven o'clock at night, all inmates not lodgers shall then depart, and no light shall be kept burning there after that hour. *On Sundays every such place shall be entirely closed, and no business done therein.*" Thus it is manifest, that in so far as the city of Halifax is concerned to secure the entire abolition of the sale of Ardent Spirits on the Sabbath, all that is required is the thorough enforcement of the law by the city authorities, and a sub-committee of the Alliance is at present charged with this matter.

The Committee deem it altogether unnecessary to dwell on the many evils connected with this traffic on the Lord's day. "Is it," say the godly McCheyne, "is it to be tamely borne in this land of light and reformation that these pest-houses and dens of iniquity, these mentraps for precious souls shall be open on the Sabbath, nay, that they shall be enriched and kept afloat by this unholy traffic, many of them declaring that they could not keep up the shop, if it was not for the Sabbath market day?"

The Sabbath Alliance of Scotland is directing all its mighty energies to this same evil. In the narrative of its proceedings recently come to hand, it is thus declared regarding the License law—"It is notorious that the system as it has existed hitherto, has operated as if it had been expressly framed to corrupt and ruin the greatest possible number. The primary and only justifiable object of granting a License for the sale of intoxicating Liquors, viz., that of providing for the necessary accommodation of the community, has been totally lost sight of. It has even been very generally assumed, and certainly acted upon, that every person who could produce a certificate of character had a right to obtain a License. The question has been regarded almost exclusively as one of finance, so that at last to the shame of our country, a large proportion of the public revenue is derived directly from the vices of the people."

#### TRAFFIC IN ARTICLES OF FOOD.

The committee regret to be obliged to state that there are also Articles of Food sold in Halifax on the Lord's day. But they would call special attention to the fact of the Fish-market being open every Sabbath morning from 6 to 9 o'clock—sometimes largely frequented not merely by the labouring population, but by others who have it equally in their power to supply themselves with that article on Saturday. This the committee hold to be a direct violation of the fourth commandment,—a violation severely reprobated by the Great Jewish Reformer Nehemiah, "There dwelt men of Tyre also there, which brought fish and all manner of Ware, and sold on the Sabbath to the children of Israel, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, what evil is this that ye do and profane the Sabbath." The committee are aware that this practice is defended by some, on the ground of its being a work of necessity and mercy both as it respects the Fishermen and the poor Labourer or Mechanic. But the committee cannot, of course, sustain such a plea.—They do not consider any work, a work of necessity that can be done on Saturday or deferred till Monday; and this rule of exception cannot be applied in the present instance. Moreover they are satisfied that were the city authorities

to interpose and to put an end to this species of Sabbath desecration, several of the Fishermen themselves would consider that they had obtained a large boon. The committee some time ago lodged a memorial with the city authorities to this effect, and although the matter has been discussed by the City Council, the Fish-market still remains open.

There are other painful forms of Sabbath desecration to which the attention of the committee has been directed. They would specify particularly angling in the Lakes around Halifax at some seasons of the year by great numbers, Skating on N. W. Arm and Lakes—Walking and strolling in the fields and woods for amusement, games, &c.—Vessels leaving Harbour on commencement of Voyages—much unnecessary use of public and private carriages, Travelling with Teams homewards from the city—catching Salmon, &c. &c. Regarding some of these forms of Sabbath profanation, the committee are making most anxious enquiry, and are devising means which, they hope will, under God, eventually lead to their suppression. But whilst it is their incumbent duty to use every legitimate means with the view of arresting the progress of, or putting an end altogether to any existing kinds of Sabbath profanation, by calm and well-tempered appeals to the conscience and enlightened judgment of the parties more directly concerned, the committee are, at the same time, perfectly satisfied that many of these forms can only be affected by the prevalence of a higher general tone of feeling on the subject of Sabbath observance through the diffusion of sound, scriptural, and enlarged views on its obligation and privilege—With this end in view, the committee have used all diligence in circulating donations of excellent Tracts received from the Messrs Drummond of Stirling—as well as those from Dr. Greville, Secretary of the Scottish Sabbath Alliance; and the committee have only been waiting for adequate means for the publication of a monthly or quarterly series of Tracts, of their own, which, it is hoped, might prove better adapted to the present position of the question in these lands, and trust that the time is not far distant, when they shall feel themselves warranted to undertake this work. The committee also issued a request to all the ministers connected with the Alliance, to preach on a certain specified day on the Sabbath, in the hope that by the adoption of such a course, a greater moral impression might be produced. This request was generally complied with, and the committee have reason to believe, that it was followed with beneficial effects.

It affords too, the highest possible satisfaction to the committee to be able to state that all the Public News-rooms in Halifax are now shut on the Lord's day, and thus no small source of temptation to worldly conversation removed.

Such is a brief outline of the proceedings of the committee during the past year,—brief we say, for it would require a volume of no small size to present a full narrative of all that has transpired at the regular monthly meetings of the General committee, as well as at the meetings of sub-committees appointed for certain specific objects. But however brief this statement, enough it is hoped has been brought forward to satisfy the friends of the Sabbath generally throughout the Province, that the committee have not been unfaithful to the trust reposed in them, and that the operations of the Alliance have not been altogether unblest.

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It has been the desire of the committee to proceed with a due measure of caution and prudence, well aware of the deadening influence of certain forms of Sabbath profanation with which the minds, even of the seriously disposed, have been familiarized from childhood, and the committee have felt it to be the highest complement they could receive, that whilst they have been taunted by some as having done literally nothing, they have been bitterly complained of by others as having done too much, and as having acted very inquisitorially.

It is not for the committee to attempt to calculate the amount of good that may, under God, have flowed from the instrumentality of the Alliance, but they would take the liberty of saying that the result of their observations and proceedings has been the thorough conviction of the vast utility of this association, and the necessity of redoubled diligence and perseverance in the prosecution of the work on which the Alliance has embarked.

This, the committee might plead from the obligations imposed on all professing christians to join in the promotion of any specific benevolent object respecting which they are at one, and which plainly demands their cordial co-operation.— This, they might argue too, from the design of the Ordinance itself, as well as from the innumerable blessings that flow from its due observance to man, individually, and to man, in a collective capacity. But they would rather plead for an increasing interest in behalf of this movement from the very nature of the Sabbath law. Here the committee do not refer to the obligation binding upon all, individually, from the Monarch on the throne, to the beggar in rags, to remember the Sabbath day and to keep it holy; or even to the relative obligations of the Sabbath, of Parents to their children, of Masters to their servants, of Proprietors to their cattle, of religious communities to unbelievers, within their gates, but to the remarkable peculiarity of this law, that unless it be observed by all in a community, it cannot be properly observed by any. You may keep the first, and the second, and the third commandment of the decalogue, though all around be violating them. But it is otherwise with the Fourth Commandment. It cannot be observed by the body ecclesiastic, unless it be observed by the body politic, nor by servants unless by masters, nor by tradesmen unless by their employers, nor by children unless by their parents, nor by one member of a household unless by the whole. So long, in a word, as society keeps the Sabbath, individuals may break it without materially disturbing its sacred peace.— But should society cease to regard the day, it will not long be in the power of individuals, however well inclined, except in a few favourable cases, to enjoy its rest. And does not this grand and prominent peculiarity of the Sabbath law, call upon us to unite all our efforts and energies for the preservation of its sanctity, for the maintenance of its integrity? And seeing that the very nature of the Institute itself demands such united effort, such Catholic co-operation, have we not the highest possible warrant to expect the divine blessing to accompany the operations of this glorious Alliance, aye, and that the Lord of the Sabbath will render the Ordinances which every returning Sabbath brings along with it a feast of fat things, a river of refreshment to our souls, and thereby make every Sabbath that passes over our heads a blessed preparation for, as well as a hallowed foretaste of, that Sabbath that shall never end?