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no. 3, 1852

THE
ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE KINGSTON

Sabbath Reformation Society,
FOR 1852.

ON THURSDAY, THE 20TH JANUARY, THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE KINGSTON SABBATH REFORMATION SOCIETY, WAS HELD IN THE CITY HALL.

HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR, occupied the Chair, and expressed his hearty approval of the Society's objects; and the deep interest he felt in its operations.

The spacious apartment was filled with an intelligent and interested audience.

Several ministers and members of different denominations, took part in the proceedings.

A Memorial to Government, on the subject of the Post Office, was unanimously adopted.

The Society was never in a better condition.

The REV. R. F. BURNS, Corresponding Secretary, submitted the following

REPORT.

In presenting their THIRD ANNUAL REPORT, your Committee,—while deeply lamenting the manifold deficiencies that have marked the administration of the important trust reposed in them,—have devoutly to acknowledge the goodness of Almighty God, in the measure of success that has attended their efforts. They have reason to rejoice that the Sabbath question is exciting public interest, and enlisting public sympathy

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and support, to a larger extent than heretofore. The attention of our Senators and Editors, as well as our Merchants and Artizans, has been directed to it. The healthful moral agitation that was commenced nearly 3 years ago, has been continued, and measures are now pending, which may hereafter issue in substantial results. During the past year, circulars have been published—meetings held—memorials adopted—lectures delivered—tracts distributed—societies formed—correspondence opened up with a variety of places and persons—and though last, not least, access obtained to the public authorities, and a hearing secured in our Legislative Halls.

Much, however, requires yet to be done, in the way of correcting public sentiment—eradicating prejudice—meeting and mastering plausible objections, and dispelling the mist, with which a spurious liberality and a blinded self-interest, have unitedly encompassed the subject. The close relation in which it stands to the glory of God and the good of man,—the direct bearing it has on personal and social prosperity—the powerful influence it exerts in the way of strengthening the pillars of our noble Constitution, and promoting the welfare of genuine Religion—are as yet far from being fully appreciated. To aid in lifting it from the comparatively low position it at present occupies, to the lofty platform assigned it in the Word, is our main object;—an object associated with all that is beautiful in piety and benevolent in patriotism.

Your Committee feel that many more prayers must be offered, and efforts employed, ere this object be attained. Far, however, from despising the day of small things, they would rather be stimulated to a more simple dependance on power divine, and a more vigorous plying of every legitimate human instrumentality.

One of the first matters of business with which your Committee had to do, was to superintend the publication of the previous year's Report. 1,500 copies in a cheap form, were thrown off; for which, through a number of channels, a wide circulation was obtained.

The notice for *simultaneous preaching*, was renewed—publicity being given to it through the columns of

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some of the leading journals in the Province. At a recent meeting of your Committee, it was unanimously resolved, "that this notice be repeated once more, and that the same day be selected as formerly, viz: the *third Sabbath in January*. They humbly trust there will be no falling off in the measure of its observance. This year, very opportunely, it happens shortly before the re-sitting of Parliament. This furnishes a fresh argument in its favor. If universally acted on, it may have a salutary effect on the minds and movements of the community at large, and our statesmen in particular.— It is of paramount importance to have the Sabbath set apart for the advocacy of itself, and the Scriptures as the armoury whence the weapons of our warfare are drawn. The devotion of the Canadian pulpit, at a common period once every year, to the wielding of these weapons, cannot fail to give a mighty impetus to the cause.

The *Visitation Scheme*, projected last year, has been again partially carried out. A list of *twenty-five* localities was drawn up, and distributed amongst the clerical members of Committee, that they might be communicated with, either personally or by letter. Several visits were paid—for example—to Bath, Brockville, Portsmouth, Balynahinch, Storrington and Tyendinaga. In these instances, public meetings were held, addresses given and practical measures adopted. In some cases where visits could not be paid, a correspondence was opened up. We have reason to believe, that through this medium, interest was revived that had begun to flag, and influences were set at work, which would otherwise have remained dormant.

Your Committee also renewed the recommendation to religious bodies throughout the Province, to give prominence to the Sabbath question, in the deliberations of their Courts—supreme and subordinate. They have ascertained that the recommendation was complied with by the Synods of the Church of Scotland, United Presbyterian and Free Churches, Congregational, Union and Wesleyan Methodist Conference. They doubt not it was taken up in some form or another, by the other denominations to whom communications were sent.

It is pleasing to observe that Ecclesiastical Committees have been appointed for the express purpose of directing attention to this subject, and that Pastoral Addresses have been agreed upon ; and the exercise of church discipline enforced in connexion with it.

Your Committee have reason to regret that since last Anniversary, they have been deprived of the efficient services of a group of military friends, who were wont cordially to co-operate with them.

Lieutenant-Colonel Lawrence, R. B., succeeded Dr. Mair, as President of our Society. From affliction, personal and relative, he was unable to be present at many of its meetings, or to take an active part in conducting its affairs ; but his heart was ever warm towards it, and his hand opened liberally for its support.

Captains Stace and Haultain, R. A., and Dr. Fraser, R. B., were useful members of Committee. Nor in this connexion, can we lose sight of our esteemed brother, the Rev. Alex. Lorimer, who has been identified with our Society since its commencement, and who uniformly evinced a warm interest in its welfare.

We feel that it is no more than due to those gentlemen, thus publicly to give expression to our respect for their characters, and the deep sense we entertain of the valuable assistance they were permitted to render to a cause with which it is an honor, in however humble a way, to be connected.

It having been officially advertised that Parliament would meet on the 20th of August, your Committee issued a circular in July, with the view of reviving the agitation which had temporarily subsided. To this circular a model petition and certain plain practical directions for the getting up of petitions to Parliament, were affixed.

Shortly after the assembling of Parliament, George Brown, Esq., M. P. P. for Kent, gave notice of his intention to introduce a Bill on the subject of the Sabbath. Subsequently it came more formally up, in the shape of a motion for the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee, to take into consideration Sabbath abuses in general, and those in the Post Office and on the Canals in particular. After a brisk discussion of

some hours duration, the motion was carried and a Committee, (of which Mr. Brown is Chairman,) nominated accordingly. The discussion served to give prominence to the subject—to reflect light on several of its most important bearings—to elicit partially the mind of the Government leaders—to remove sundry misapprehensions, and to exhibit that the opposition is by no means invincible, but that with prudent and prayerful dealing, it may be successfully, perhaps speedily, overcome.

An eye-witness thus writes from Quebec:—"The debate of last night did our cause a great deal of good. Till then there was nothing but sneers and laughter when the subject was touched upon. But the expression of feeling from so many respectable members has changed the face of things wonderfully."

The Parliamentary Committee have set themselves at the onset, to collect and digest statistics. With a view to this, they have been receiving evidence, oral and documentary, from parties to whose opinions, from their position in society, business relations, and mental and moral qualifications, weight may be attached.—Your Committee was at an early date, applied to by Mr. Brown, and has been enabled to render some assistance in procuring suitable witnesses, increasing the number of memorials, and gathering telling facts. On the matter of witnesses, we communicated with Toronto and Hamilton, while John Counter, Esq., Mayor of the City, acted as our own representative.—The thanks of your Committee are due to that gentlemen, for so promptly acceding to their wishes, despite the pressure of other duties.

It is somewhat remarkable, and forms an auspicious omen, that one of the witnesses already summoned, was a Roman Catholic Priest. He volunteered evidence, we understand, specially respecting Sabbath desecration on the St. Lawrence Canals; and the evidence he gave proved of the most satisfactory description. It is encouraging, in connexion with a Church which practically sets an extinguisher on the Sabbath, by making it the season for sales, celebrations and festive amusements, to find one frankly recognizing its benefits, and boldly standing forward in its defence.

In consequence of the adjournment of Parliament, the Committee had of course to suspend their labours. It is our earnest hope that they may be vigorously resumed in February, and ultimately lead to wholesome and thorough legislation. In the meantime, your Committee cannot but tender to Mr. Brown the tribute of their admiration and gratitude, for the stand he has taken on this vital question, and express their entire willingness to assist him in every feasible way in promoting Sabbath reform.

In the month of September, on receiving a list of the memorials sent in to Government on the Post Office and the Canals, and finding that they amounted only to 34, your Committee resolved on an immediate effort to increase the number. A second circular was drawn up, a thousand copies of which were printed, and one despatched to every Protestant Minister in the Province—urging the imminence of the crisis, and the necessity for instant action. Convinced too, that many were friendly to the cause, who were either unable or unwilling to go through the mechanical work of making out memorials; your Committee made out 24 in manuscript and in triplicate, with sufficient room on the blank part for an average number of names. These were addressed to prominent individuals in each locality, who would be likely to take an interest on the subject, with copies of the printed circulars, and special letters accompanying.

The places thus communicated with, were London, St. Catharines, Cobourg, Peterborough, Port Hope, Brantford, Hamilton, Picton, Brockville, Cornwall, Niagara, Barrie, Chatham, Port Sarnia, Belleville, Bytown, Perth, Oakville, Galt, Guelph, Dundas, Paris, Napanee.

The following, which form but a specimen of answers already received, will serve to shew that this experiment has not proved altogether in vain.

The Mayor and ex-member for Peterborough, thus writes:—"The petitions have been numerous signed, and forwarded to Mr. Brown to present. I had before brought the subject before the Town Council, and had a petition adopted and forwarded from that body, signed by myself as Mayor, in behalf of the town. I trust

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the numerous petitions forwarded on this subject, may bring about so desirable a result without further delay."

From *St. Catharines*, we learn that a memorial was transmitted "by the Mayor to the member for the County, for presentation to Parliament, most numerous and respectably signed."

A friend from *Port Sarnia*, informs us:—"We have forwarded *two* petitions—one general, and signed by nearly *the whole adult population* of our village, and the other from the Municipality in Council assembled—both framed in accordance with the model and instructions furnished previously."

Your Committee have resolved on renewing this experiment, and are at present engaged in preparing fresh forms, to be despatched so soon as an accurate list has been obtained of the memorials presented up till the adjournment of Parliament.

To the subject of the *Canals*, your Committee regret they have not been able as yet, to pay that amount of attention which its growing importance demands.

In most of the memorials to Government, the subject was referred to. We have also still in existence a sub-Committee, to gather such information from forwarders, lockmasters, &c., as may form the basis of more direct and definite action in future. From the success that has attended the closing of the Welland, as well as several of the leading Canals in the States, your Committee are not without hope, that an effort, if energetically made in this direction, would meet with a favourable issue.

Memorials were again sent from our City to the three branches of the Legislature, on the subject of Sabbath labour in the Post Office. These were entrusted to the Hon. A. N. Morin, Provincial Secretary, for transmission to His Excellency; and to the Honorables Jas. Ferrier and John A. Macdonald, for presentation to the Legislative Council and Assembly, respectively. No acknowledgments were received from the last two gentlemen, but it is fully understood that the memorials reached their destination, and were duly presented.—They were signed more numerous than any previously sent. Upwards of 700 of the male members of the

community appended their names, embracing the great majority of those distinguished for respectability in station, activity in enterprise, and mental and moral worth. Had female signatures been admitted, (and who is better qualified to attest the benefits of the Sabbath than woman?) the number could, without difficulty, have been increased two or three fold.

Besides the general memorials, *denominational* ones this year, were sent. It was thought advisable that the Church should co-operate with the community at large, in defending the character and asserting the claims of an Institution—essential alike to her existence and welfare. Several congregations accordingly, in the city, despatched petitions signed either by the members separately, or by their several representatives. Other congregations throughout the country, and the supreme courts of certain religious bodies, such as the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, and the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, have taken similar action.

Feeling, for various reasons, that it would be of the utmost importance to have an efficient organization at Quebec, Captains Stace and Haultain were respectfully requested by your Committee, to do what they could to accomplish this desirable end. Your Committee are not exactly aware how far the movement subsequently made in Quebec, is traceable to this suggestion on their part. It is gratifying, however, to have it in their power to report, that at one of the largest and most enthusiastic meetings ever held in that City, in which ministers of the principal Protestant denominations, as well as members of Parliament, took part; and on whose platform the Post Master General stood prominent—a Society was formed, with a vigorous staff of office-bearers, and an influential Committee. Your Committee fondly anticipate, that through its means a salutary influence may be brought to bear upon the Government and a pathway opened up for the easier transmission of memorials, and the transaction of other matters of business connected with our present agitation.

At Toronto also, a public meeting was convened some time since, on a requisition to the Mayor, signed by citizens of all creeds and classes. An association

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was established, with which we have had agreeable correspondence, and memorials were agreed upon, which carried to the seat of Government upwards of *three thousand* signatures.

Your Committee have had pleasure in acting conjointly with our esteemed friends in Montreal, in all measures affecting the interests of our common cause. The correspondence commenced on the formation of their Society, has been continued. Owing to the protracted illness of the zealous Secretary, the Rev. F. H. Marling, the publication of "*The Advocate*," the periodical started under their auspices, has not been so regular as otherwise it would have been. *Two* numbers have been issued during the year; 500 of the first, and 300 of the second of which were received by us, and extensively circulated. It will be recollected that we became subscribers to the extent of 200, so that cordial thanks are due for the surplus supply.

Communications have also been addressed to the Secretaries of the Sabbath Alliance in Scotland and the Lord's Day Protection Society in England, gratefully acknowledging the grant of tracts generously made by them. It is gratifying to notice the firmness and fidelity displayed by these influential co-adjutors in our fatherland, in resisting the threatened encroachment on the sacred domain of the Sabbath, in connexion with the New Crystal Palace now erecting in the neighborhood of London. Your Committee, though far removed from the scene of contest, and not directly interested in the issue, feel, that as professors of a common christianity, and standing as Sabbath advocates on a common platform, they are bound to waft across the ocean the intelligence that they are by no means uninterested spectators of a struggle, which must go far to decide the question whether or not, in the matter of Sabbath observance, Britain is to approximate France, and London be converted into Paris. While all our sympathies are in favor of facilitating the progress of science, furnishing a suitable repository for the triumphs of art, and increasing the comforts of the working classes, they would, nevertheless, lift a decided testimony against a measure, which, if carried out, will deal a death-blow

to that righteousness which can alone exalt our nation ; and do incalculable injury to the minds and morals of of those for whose benefit it is professedly intended.

At the suggestion of your Committee, an extensive supply of *Books and Tracts* on the Sabbath, have been obtained from the American Tract Society. These are to be found at the Depository in this City. From the solidity of their matter, the beauty of their style, and the reasonableness of their prices, they are well worthy of being examined and circulated.

In the present aspect of the times,—the opening prospects of the Province, and the marked progress by which the Sabbath movement has been distinguished, your Committee would recognize fresh incentives to fervent prayer and devoted effort.

It is pleasing to observe that the *Press* has lent its powerful aid to the cause, more during the past, than any previous year. We should specially advert to the notice taken of our proceedings, and the admission given to our circulars, in the *Toronto Globe*, the *Montreal Witness*, the *Quebec Gazette*, the *Cornwall Freeholder*, the *Port Hope Echo*, the *Niagara Mail*, the *Simcoe Standard*, the *Christian Advocate*, the *Christian Guardian*, the *Record*, the *Presbyterian*, and the *Kingston News*. We would earnestly trust that the number of such papers may be increased, and a yet larger portion of their columns be devoted to the advocacy of a cause with which the future weal of our rapidly rising Province is closely wrapt up.

It is encouraging too, that such a favorable hearing has been obtained in Parliament. We shall await with intense interest the report of the Committee, and the fate of the Bill which has been promised.

It is most cheering also, to have the noble precedent of *Nova Scotia* to fall back upon. It gives a practical refutation, the most convincing, to the notion that our movement is utopian, and that the proposed change is impracticable—that if introduced, the entire machinery of Provincial business would be disarranged, and the utmost inconvenience experienced. The stoppage of mails, and the suspension of labor in the Post Office, have been tried in the sister Province for nearly

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two years with perfect success. About the beginning of 1851, the House of Assembly there agreed upon the following deliverance:—"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 the 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 Post Office be kept open or mail transmitted, on the Lord's day." Let us fondly hope the day may not be far distant when the Canadian Legislature will endorse the Nova Scotian verdict. If it has succeeded in the one Province, why may it not in the other.

But while encouraged by such considerations as these, let us not be blind to the formidable character of the forces ranged against us. We have an enemy ingenious in his schemes and indefatigable in his efforts. Let us not be ignorant of his devices. At the present moment a great amount of mind and money are being unitedly embarked on the opposition side. We have the flippant sneers of the "*Times*,"—the plausible theories of the *Westminster Review*, and the clever jokes of *Punch*. Men of the first order of talent are throwing their influence into the anti Sabbath scale. One individual—inflamed with more than ordinary zeal—has engaged five clerks, with an aggregate salary of £40 sterling a week, to write down the Sabbath. And should our ears be greeted with the rumbling sound of the rail car, and the shrill note of the whistle, on the Sabbath, it would be difficult to estimate the extent of the calamity that would ensue. In England, 800 trains run regularly on the Sabbath. About 50,000 servants are statedly engaged. Then, in addition, there must be reckoned the proprietors and the innkeepers,—then office clerks and servants,—the drivers and conductors of cars;—and the ostlers of the various omnibuses, coaches, chaises, flies, &c.,—(to say nothing of the crowd of idlers and the *much catille*,)—attached to every railway station, and its corresponding towns and villages: "so that it may be truly affirmed of these train whistles, as they resound over thousands of miles on the

Lord's day, that they shriek out defiance both to God's law and to humanity."

Are we willing that this picture be transferred to Canada. Should it be, the floodgates of evil will be unsealed. A tide will set in, which will sap the foundations of our infant nation's prosperity, and sweep away on its tumultuous bosom, the scattered fragments of her pious and patriotic institutions. Let us resolve we shall imitate the children of this world, who are wiser in their generation than the children of light, by uniting our mental and material resources, to raise an embankment against this advancing tide. But let us cease from man, and rest with unwavering faith and undaunted fortitude, on the arm of Omnipotence. "If God be for us, who can be against us." Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God.

N. B.—Since the foregoing was written, we have ascertained that 134 (one hundred and thirty-four,) memorials had been sent in, up to the adjournment of Parliament. This is encouraging. There is room, however, for a large addition.

Parliament has now re-assembled. The Parliamentary Committee will doubtless speedily submit their report. Legislative action of some kind is likely to follow. It is, therefore, of the utmost consequence that the friends of the Sabbath delay not a moment in making known their views.

Memorials will be in time till about the 10th or 15th March. Every one sent will form a tributary stream to swell that tide of moral influence on which, (favored with the gales of Heaven,) our noble vessel will be borne forward to its desired haven.

Kingston, 14th February, 1853.