The Daily British Whig

"Oplfer per Orbem Dicti."

FRIDAY MORNING, FEB'Y 3, 1865.

The news from Quebec is very cheering. Ministers are confident of carrying Confederation without any trouble or bother. There is no severe opposition against it, either from Upper or Lower Canada. And in every other measure the Ministry will carry all before them. There is some talk of the extreme ends of the Grits and Rouges getting up an Opposition in both Houses; but their numbers are so small, as to be regarded as wholly insignificant. George Brown and his two Reform colleagues are working energetically, and in perfect harmony with the rest of the Cabinet, and nothing has transpired, or is likely to transpire to disturb this harmony. All these gentlemen have their full share in the Government of the country, and cordially approve of every measure else it be made public. They see that the utmost economy is exercised in the expenditure of the public money, and their zeal and intelligence cannot fail to be welcome in Upper Canada, where Reform principles have always been so popular. We cannot speak so decidedly of Mr. Howland, because he is comparatively a new man, but Messrs. Brown and Macdougall are two of the cleverest men in Canada, and it is a great pleasure to see them working so well with their old opponents, who, whatever their faults may have been, ever had the best interests of the country at heart.

THE ALIEN BILL.

Our readers will peruse with interest the Speeches of Messrs. John A. Macdonald, J. H. Cameron, and George Brown on the Alien Bill. This law is one of the necessities of the times. Such a law as was passed by the Parliament of Great Britain during the European troubles of 1848. In the Legislative Assembly its advocates so satisfied the members of its utility, as well as its necessity, that in a full House only four voted against the second reading. In the Press, there is more serious opposition, for both the Toronto Leader and the Montreal Gazette are out strongly against it. They think its provisions are both cruel and arbitrary, but they utterly ignore the necessity of a stringent law. The same outcry was raised against the British Alien Bill when introduced, and the liberty of the subject and the sanctity of British soil as a refuge for the oppressed, were said to be in great danger; but the result showed that the fear was groundless, as the law was enacted and lived its term of life without necessity for any of its terrible clauses ever to be put in execution! So, as Mr. Macdonald says, the Canadian Alien Bill will be a caution to evil doers, and prevent the danger so much now dreaded. Another thing which the opposers to the new law pretend to fear, is the arbitrary and tyrannical way with which it may be used. These alarmists forget that a Governor General in Council has a reputation to preserve, and is by no means likely to use a strong power, placed in his hands for a special necessity, otherwise than with mildness and discretion. No Ministry could outlive a Session in Canada that would be guilty of any abuse of a power placed in their hands for a purpose like the present. This the House of Assembly must have thought when it almost unanimously voted for the Bill.

Whatever may be the opinions of individuals in Canada, whatever may be the opinions of the Canadian Press, as to the justness of the Confederate cause, or of the cruel way in which the war has been conducted, they have nothing whatsoever to do with any law enacted to maintain the neutrality of Canada as an integral part of the British Empire. Let us sympathise with the poor oppressed Southerners as much as we please, but we must not aid them in any way, or do ought that could possibly jeopardize the amicable relations between the United States and Great Britain. It will be time enough to act an independent part when Canada is a nation. There is nothing wrong in asking an Alien to behave himself properly. He seeks an asylum here and he obtains it, but he has no right to disturb the peace of the land to which he flies for refuge. And in sending him out of the country, in case he violates the provisions of the Alien Bill, he is not sent back to the country from which he flees, for he has the option of going to any other country he chooses. In short, we can safely predict, that when this Alien Bill expires, there will be no single Alien to complain of its provisions being arbitrary or cruel.

SPEECHES OF THE HON. MESSRS. JOHN A. MACDONALD, J. H. CAMERON AND GEO. BROWN ON THE ALIEN BILL.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

January 31st.

Mr. John A. Macdonald moved the second reading of the Alien Bill. He said the government were fully sensible of the responsibility they assumed in introducing a bill of this kind. Such a bill as this under ordinary circumstances could not be received with favor by a Legislature composed such as this was, and influenced by such principles of action and of government as obtained in the mother country; but it was because in the opinion of the government the circumstances in which the country was now placed are of an exceptional character that they brought down this measure. On its face it would be seen it was a bill not designed to form a portion of the law permanently. It was introduced because of the present circumstances of this country and this continent, and it was hoped ere long these unhappy circumstances would cease. The bill consisted of three portions. The first portion of it was to enable the government under certain conditions and restrictions to remove from this country aliens, who coming here and seeking asylum in consequence of war, may, in their own land by their conduct have proved themselves unworthy of that asylum. When the war now raging in the neighboring country first broke out a considerable number of refugees came to this country, especially of the class whose sympathies were with the Southern Confederacy. Although the sympathies of Canada might naturally be supposed to be with the Northern States, these unfortunate people who had been driven from their homes, many of them ruined in their circumstances, were received here with kindness and consideration, and he was bound to say the great body of them had shown themselves worthy of the reception which had been extended to them—until lately, a year or so ago, there was no reason for a complaint with regard to any of them. When he first heard that his predecessor, the member for Cornwall, was in communication with the authorities on the other side of the lines, in consequence of information received as to an intended breach of the neutrality laws by Southern refugees, he must say he believed a majority of the people of Canada had received the intelligence with the greatest incredulity. But the government of the day of course had information on which they acted, and since the present government had assumed office in March last, they also had information which it would be unwise to submit to the House, showing that some of those people were planing enterprises in violation of our neutrality laws. There had been two overt acts of a most violent character—the seizure of the Philo Parsons and the St. Alban's raid—which were distinct violations of the privileges of asylum, and an abuse of the hospitalities extended to these people, and everybody knew that, unless measures were taken to prevent them, we were in great hazard of having these raids continued. It was out of the question that we could allow this sort of thing to go on, placing the peace and happiness of this country in imminent danger, for if raiders proceeded from this country, we must expect retaliatory raids from the other side. For even if the United States Government were to exert all its power and authority it would be unable to restrain the natural indignation which would arise among the people along the northern frontier if their peace were continually endangered and their country outraged in the manner that had already happened at St. Alban's and in the west. Under these circumstances the government had felt they would be failing in their duty if they did not introduce some such measure as this. In the first place, it must be remembered it applied not to British subjects, but to aliens, whom no government was obliged to receive except by sufferance, unless under the treaty obligations. It had been the pride of England to furnish an asylum to foreigners driven to her shores by the actions of their own harsh or oppressive governments, but she has never hesitated, when occasion arose, to protect herself by enacting laws similar to the present bill. It was nearly a transcript of an act passed in England in 1848, but more stringent alien acts had been passed in 1792, 1802, 1803, 1814, and 1815. That of 1848 was passed under circumstances very similar to those which now existed here. The present bill was not directed against foreigners who had come here for the purposes of trade and residence, but those who had come to make use of our country as a base of operations against the United States, and to induce if possible war between Great Britain and the United States. We could not disguise from ourselves the fact that the people of the Southern States felt and avowed that they owed no friendship to England. They knew that but for England, France would long ago have recognized the Southern Confederacy. He believed the Southern refugees appreciated the kindness they had received here, and did not desire that Canada as Canada should be injured. Still the interests of their own country were pre-eminent with them, and he feared unless restrained they would continue to perpetrate acts like those already perpetrated, for the purpose of forcing on hostilities between England and the United States. He believed the very passing of this act would prevent the necessity of its ever being put in force. (Hear, hear.) It had no bearing on those willing to obey our laws, but it would operate as an effective check on those men who were behind the scenes, the cool, calculating men in Montreal, Toronto, or elsewhere, who had sent out those unfortunate young men, who full of enthusiasm, perhaps, in the cause of their country, had recklessly committed the outrages, putting their own lives in peril. The moment the law passed and these men behind the scenes knew they could be exported from the country when there was any good cause of complain against them, he believed their course of conduct would very soon be changed. Having quoted the language used by Sir George Grey, in introducing the alien act of 1848, the Attorney General stated that this bill was introduced with the full sanction of the Imperial Government, which included some of the men who composed the government of 1848, and the government before introducing this bill took counsel with the Imperial Government on the subject, and had thus distinct sanction, the Imperial Government expressly indicating the act of 1848 as the most proper to be put in operation in this country. It has been initiated entirely at the suggestion of the Canadian Government and not from any dictation suggested, or so much as the expression of a desire on the part of the U. S. government to have such legislation. In some respects the measure had been altered to suit the circumstances of this country. The English act empowered the Secretary of State, as a mere despotic act, to remove an alien supposed to be dangerous to the peace of the country. In framing this bill the government had thought that was too great a power to place in the hands of any one Minister and the power was given to the Governor General, acting of course with the advice and on the responsibility of his Council. The Imperial act gave the alien the right to appeal to the Lords of the Privy Council. We had no Privy Council as apart from a Cabinet Council. The Privy Council in this country were all included in the Executive Council; accordingly when the Governor issued his warrant the parties had a right to appeal to the Governor in Council acting judicially. He could claim a statement in writing of the charge against him and he would be allowed to answer it by counsel and produce evidence. All this with the fullest publicity seemed to give the amplest protection that could be required. Some had said that the case should be determined by the courts, but if the case were one in which there was sufficient evidence to place the party on trial before courts, there would be no necessity for this act at all which was of a purely exceptional nature. He read from the speech of Lord Lansdowne on the second reading of the bill of 1848 to show that it was intended to hold aliens responsible not for their conduct elsewhere, but in England. He quoted from the speech of Lord Stanley, now Earl Derby, who thought the bill should have been introduced even at an earlier period, and also from Lord Denham, and said that he might cite other speeches to prove how favorably the bill had been received. This was further proven by the vote on the second reading which was 141 for to twenty two against, and 146 to 29 against on third reading. He (Mr. John A. Macdonald) believed in his conscience that this country was in a far more perilous position than it was in England in 1848, and that if there was a necessity for the bill there at that time, there was an infinitely greater necessity for it in Canada now. The second branch of the bill was composed of a series of clauses, to which he thought no one could have any objection, and which were an adoption of the Act of the Congress of the United States, which passed in 1838 to prevent incursions into Canada. At that time the position of Canada was the reverse of what it was now. Then it was suffering from inroads from the United States, and in continual fear of others being made. The Imperial Government appealed the United States to put an end to these things, and the Congress of the United States did not hesitate to put in force the law giving strong additional powers to their officers all along the frontier, which were found amply sufficient to stop them. The circumstances were now reversed, and he thought no member would have any hesitation in supporting those clauses, giving power to the Government promptly to prevent such actions either on land or water, to put a stop to which the United States had armed their officers with ample power. The last branch of the bill was for the purpose of requiring persons manufacturing arms and munitions of war which might be suspected to be intended to be hostilities against the United States, to give an account of them. This provision of law was absolutely necessary, as he had found in his experience this summer. He had found that arms and cannon were being prepared, not strictly manufactured, for the purpose of being sent to the United States. He had found the places were these preparations were going on, and where shot and shell and munitions of all kinds were being manufactured. The Government had no means or power of seizing these articles, or of calling parties to account. He would not enter particulars of the information the government had received, for if he did he might defeat the end in view, but he might say that they had the most distinct evidence on oath that manufactories of this kind were going on in Upper Canada. The provisions of the Imperial act of 1819 had therefore been embodied in the bill, to enable the government to call these parties to account to show that these arms were being manufactured for legitimate and proper purposes.—These were all the provisions of the bill before the House, and he now moved it a second reading.

Mr. Hillyard Cameron asked the Attorney General whether it was intended to make any alterations in the bill in committee, or to pass it in the shape in which it then stood?

Mr. John A. Macdonald said, it was not designed to make any changes in it.

Mr. Cameron was sorry to say, then, that he was not able to do what the gentleman opposite has declared he would do—vote for the second reading of the bill—or, the grounds on which he would so vote were because he thought it armed the executive with powers dangerous to the rights of the subject, and he did not hesitate for a moment to say so. (Hear, hear.) He did not think that the Imperial Legislature or people of any colony of Great Britain had ever passed a measure of this kind for the benefit of other countries, but for themselves, and he believed this measure was intended, not for the benefit of Canada, but in a far greater degree for the benefit of the people of the United States. It might be said we had had difficulty and trouble in consequence of expeditions which were said to have gone from this country into the United States, but which had never been proved to have gone from this country. (Hear, hear.) In the first clauses of the bill power was given to remove from the country aliens suspected of entertaining hostile designs against the United States, while in the concluding part of the bill we were told that the writ of habeas corpus was in no way to be suspended. How could these two portions be reconciled, and how could it be said that habeas corpus would not be effected? It was true alien acts had been passed in England, but it was equally true that when attempt was made to pass them at the instance of foreign power the people of England rose up in strong remonstrance against them. It was true that while England was prepared to do what might properly be required as a neutral, it was also true that the people were unprepared at the dictation of any foreign government to do anything by which the rights and immunities of any British subject would be infringed, or the rights of asylum violated. Therefore it was found that all alien acts passed from 1792 down to 1848 had been passed for our own protection and not to satisfy the demands of foreign powers. He did not object, so far as the United States were concerned, to give them precisely the same measure of benefit or protection that they had given us in 1838. He would re-enact here every clause of the act of Congress passed in that year, but he would not go one single step further; but power given in this bill were such as should be given to the government only under circumstances of extraordinary emergency and the House ought to have more proof than had been given that such circumstances had arisen before the government of that country felt it to be its duty to offer such a bill to the people. It was a measure which the Imperial authorities might possibly propose for acceptance in a colony but which they would not dare ask from Englishmen. He believed that there was no desire among the people of this country, whether their sympathies might be with any portion of what were formerly the United States, to bring about a war with that country because they could not help feeling what position they would occupy in case of war—how many privations and difficulties they would be subjected to, and how many happy hearthstones would be drenched in blood, but nothwithstanding all this he believed there was a principle in the liberty to which we were entitled as Englishmen, and in the protection we had ever afforded to foreigners whenever that they been oppressed or thrust out of the land of their birth which prepares us to endure even all this suffering and hardship rather than that the bright star, British liberty which had always shone out, should fade away.—(Hear, hear.) There might be a majority of the members in favor of the measure as it stood, but he hoped they would pause before they determined to make a law which would strike so great a blow as he believed, at that sort of protection which had always been given by England and her colonies, to foreigners who sought an asylum in its dominions. He then commented upon the provisions of the bill which declared that habeas corpus shall not be suspended, and yet permitted of an alien to be imprisoned without trial, and held in confinement for a month in case navigation by the St. Lawrence should be closed before he could obtain judicial investigation of the cause of his imprisonment. It was true that he might obtain liberation on bail, but what mockery it was to give foreigners and strangers, probably innocent of any offence whatever, opportunity to procure bail, which there was not the slightest chance of his obtaining. It had been argued that powers of this nature had been given to the privy council in England, but the privy council had a judicial committee in whom all had confidence, and whose judgment were held in respect. He then referred to the fact that when the Orsini conspiracy took place, the Imperial Parliament refused to pass an alien bill because it believed it had been introduced upon the demand of a foreign power. They felt that even although the law might be right in itself they could never place it on the statute book at the instance of a foreign government; but in 1861, when there was no pressure by foreign power for the measure, it had been adopted by Parliament and became part of the criminal law of the country. A great many might say they desired this bill because their sympathies were with the North. He said, and he never hesitated to say, that this sympathies were always with the South. (Hear, hear) He would not do or countenance any act that would embroil this country with the United States but at the same time he had no hesitation in declaring that his feelings and sympathies were more aroused by the manly and brave fight the people of the Southern States were making for their independence than by the attempts of the North to put them down. He referred to the abuse that had been heaped upon England by the Northern people and press and to the acts of positive unfriendliness that they had committed against Canada, and asked what special privileges could they demand or expect from us? He thought the bill armed the executive with too strong powers, and if he was the only man in the House who would vote against its second reading, his voice would be raised against it.

Mr. Brown was surprised at the speech of the gentleman who had just spoken, until the gentleman had announced his sympathies with the cause of the South. Those sympathies doubtless influenced his course but there was a strong contrast between what he had said of British freedom and his sympathy with those who were fighting to keep 4,000,000 slaves in bondage. He [Mr. Brown], however spoke not for the North or South, but as a Minister of the Crown, and he acknowledged that he deeply regretted that such a Bill was necessary, without which, however, the Government would certainly not have asked for it. That necessity certainly arose from the fact that this country had been used as a basis for carrying on outrages against a friendly state. Of course, it was well known that money must have been supplied for that purpose, and the Government knew, or at least suspected, the men who had concocted the scheme, and who were now walking about our streets, the Government having no power to interfere with them. Was there no necessity, he asked, when attacks were made upon steamboats owned by good neighbours, with whom we transacted a constant, large and profitable trade; and when it was remembered that our frontier, offering facilities for such enterprises, extended for many hundreds of miles? Was there no necessity, when we had cause to send troops to the frontier and could not tell where the requirement for such protection might stop? Legal process was of course impossible in these cases. Its operations came too late, and yet, even before any positive acts were committed, there were frequently suspicions so strong as to make interference for prevention imperatively necessary. Yet, in acting under this Bill, the Government would find itself checked by public opinion and by the action of that House, to which it would be responsible. He denied what Mr. Dorion had said, that the Bill would drive away emigrants. It would have no effect upon those who sought a peaceful home, and he was bound to say that nothing had inflicted so much injury on this country, during the last few years, as the impression that it was in a state of insecurity and exposed to risk of war. Nor was it true that it would lead to a system of registration or passports.—Well, we have not, and do not propose to have. The Bill was intended not to drive away peaceful citizens, but to make them secure, and if it were passed there would to morrow be a state of tranquility on the frontier such as has not prevailed there for a considerable period. Mr. Brown repeated the Attorney General's assertion that the Bill had not been dictated from the United States but had originated in this country; and as to the assertion that the colony was about to go further than England had gone, he asked whether it was not required that she should do so by the exposure of her situation and from the fact that broils might occur on anyday along her extended frontier bounded by small streams or imaginary lines. Nor was it true that the habeas corpus was abolished. It was reserved that to show that proceedings had been taken under the Bill would be an answer to the writ, but the whole subject might be brought before the court and would thus be made public, and if injustice were attempted would give occasion to the protection of public opinion and of the press. It was spoken of as a great hardship that some of these men might be detained in prison through the winter. He thought if they were and were sent away in the spring it would be the best thing that could be done with them. As little founded was the complaint that the persons who might be arrested would not be able to find bail, for that was the case with every stranger though arrested for the most trifling cause—though only bound over to keep the peace. The appeal to the Executive Council was as much an appeal to a body of lawyers as was that which in England was allowed to the Privy Council, as there were nine lawyers in the present excellent government. It was said again that we ought not to grant this Act because it was a concession to the United States whose press had bullied us. There had been bullying on both sides and the less we said of that the better. He concluded by saying that he supported the Bill not as a partizan of the North or South, but as a citizen of Canada anxious to preserve the peace of the country, and prevent war between Great Britain and the United States.

Mr. John A. Macdonald, in reply to Mr. Cowan, said no person naturalized by the law of Canada was an alien in Canada, and this bill, if passed by the Canadian Parliament, could not possibly affect any one who was a naturalized subject in Canada. The policy of the Imperial Government to regard aliens naturalized in colonies entitled to British protection was only within the bounds of of that colony. Aliens naturalized in Canada were of course entitled to British protection while in Canada, but elsewhere could not enjoy it. He read a circular despatch from the late Duke of Newcastle of the 12th July, 1863, warning Canadian Governors against the idea that persons naturalized in the colonies had a right to Imperial protection. This was a settled policy of the British Government. It had operated with great harshness, no doubt, in many cases; but it was beyond the power of local authorities to afford any remedy. Then referring to the bill before the House, he said it had not been introduced at the demand suggestion, or hint of the United States. They had never referred, even to the remotest manner, to the necessity or advisability of its passage to preserve friendly relations between the two countries; but it has been laid before the House solely at the instant and upon the responsibility of the advices to his Excellency the Governor General. He would say at once he did not accept the support of those gentlemen who said they would support the second reading, although they could not approve of all the provisions of the bill, because without any power it conferred upon the Government, the bill was not worth a straw. The country was standing upon a volcano, and, if measures of this kind were not passed, the Government would not be responsible for the peace and prosperity of the country; and if no such measure of protection were adopted, and if another raid were to take place, and we had another proclamation from Gen. Dix, which this time would not be canceled, followed by the threatened consequences, these very gentlemen who now cry out for information on oath, and the observances of the ordinary forms of law, would be the very first to blame the Government for their supineness, and for not having taken proper precautions to prevent these calamities. He could tell the House that the responsibilities resting on the shoulders of the Government were fearful, and it would be no answer to the people of Western Canada when they found their country devastated and laid waste, and the Government had no power to prevent the raids which caused it. If an Alien Bill was necessary in England in 1848 to prevent civil war, and Lord Palmerson, who declared in 1848 that he would not introduce such a measure on the demand of any foreign power, was still a member of the Imperial Government, and gave his sanction and approval to this measure. It was only yesterday that the officers of the Canadian Government employed for the protection of the frontier had communicated to the government that they had received information on an oath, of a formidable raid being organized, and to-day intelligence had been received from the United States government that it had information from its own officers conformatory of his statement. Mr. J. A. Macdonald went on to urge the Bill, on the ground that it was necessary to preserve peace between the two countries, and that it was dictated by prudence and considerations of safety, and not by the U. S., or even by the Imperial Government.

The House then divided—Messrs. J. H. Cameron, Ford Jones, Pope and Shanly voting in the negative.

The bill was then read a second time, to be committed to-morrow.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Quebec, Feb. 1.

The Speaker took the chair at three o'clock.

Mr. Campbell introduced a bill to make better provision for the inspection of fish and fisheries; also, a bill to amend chap. 62 of the Consolidated Statutes of Canada for the better regulation of fishing and protection of the fisheries.

The House then adjourned at half past three.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Quebec, Feb. 1.

The Speaker took the chair at three o'clock.

On motion of M. Caron leave was given to St. Hyacinthe election committee to adjourn till the 8th inst.

The following bills were introduced and read a first time:—

Mr. J. S. Smith—To enable the executors of the late Mr. Thomas to sell his estate and pay his debts.

Mr. A. Dufresne—To amend the Fishery Act.

Mr. Ford Jones—To amend sections 75 and 79 of the Municipal Act of Upper Canada.

Mr. Bellerose—To amend the Municipal Act of Lower Canada.

Mr. Wilson—To amend the law relating to municipalities holding stock in joint stock companies.

Mr. Wallbridge—To enable the trustees of the late David John Smith to wind up their trust.

Mr. O'Halloran—To incorporate the Clarenceville Academy.

M. Bourassa—To amend the act respecting weights and measures.

Mr. Abbott—To amend the Insolvency act of 1864.

Mr. Abbott—To incorporate the Mount Royal Railway Company.

Mr. McKellar—To make Reeves and Deputy Reeves elective by the people in Upper Canada.

Mr. Carling—To amend the act respecting railways.

Mr. McConkey—To amend the Act respecting the indemnity of members of the Legislature and to reduce the amount of such indemnity.

On motion of Mr. John A. Macdonald the House went into committee of the whole on the Alien Bill.

Mr. Dunkin asked if the Attorney General was determined to oppose all the amendments, even those of a practical nature.

Mr. John A. Macdonald—No; but it is desirable to make the act conform to the words of the English act of 1848.

Mr. Dunkin said the amendment which he would suggest would do so. He wished to follow the English act, and exempt from the bill aliens who had been three years in the country and were residing here in good faith.

Mr. John A. Macdonald said he would take time to consider that point, but thought there might be persons three years in the country who would be as obnoxious to the complaints the law was intended to meet as those here for a shorter period.

Mr. Abbott while ready to give the executive an augmentation of powers in the right direction wished to infringe as little as possible on known constitutional maxims. Now it was somewhat revolting that such power as was given by this bill should be exercised by any men upon an almost anonymous information. The object was of course prompt action, and if this could be obtained without doing away the right of being heard before a man is condemned, he thought this might be obtained by giving the governor in council power to summon any person and the accused at once to appear and answer. And if they shall, having heard him, think there is reason to send him out of the country, let them order his extrusion, instead of first gibbeting him in the Offical Gazette as a turbulent and dangerous person, and only hearing him after he should have been thus condemned. Having heard the man he would leave the government just as wide a discretion as they now asked for.

Mr. J. A. Macdonald could not accept his amendment, repeating his objection to depart from the Imperial enactment. To bring a man before the government, for a trial, implied an accusation of offence; whereas the order to go, merely indicated, that for political reasons it was felt to be dangerous to allow him to stay in the country in the present unhappy state of the continent. If a man warned to go left that he had done wrong he would go quietly. If not he would appeal, and all this would be done with much less noise than a trial before the Governor in Council. Besides, when this law was passed the persons affected by it would go into concealment, and it would be impossible to find them to serve them with a notice. Whereas these advertisements published in the Gazette would be copied by all the press in the country, and must become known to the persons ordered to withdraw. The Hon. Attorney General then read an extract from Hansard, to show that when a similar motion was made in amendment by Mr Hume to an alien bill, it was lost by a large majority in the British Parliament.

The committee rose without making any amendment. Mr. Hillyard Cameron gave notice of a number of amendments which he said he would move at the third reading of the Bill.

In reply to Mr. Dickson, Mr. John A. Macdonald stated that in consequence of recent fires on the Grand Manitoulin Island, sales of land there could not now be effected. The Government however proposed to have an examination made in spring with a view to sales. Whatever action the Government might take with regard to individual cases they could not be influenced by any rights of squatters.

Mr. Wood moved an address for a return of the appointments of Crown Counsel in Upper Canada for the years 1863 and 1864, and the written applications and recommendations of persons for such appointments; also the names of the county attornies of the counties superseded by such appointments; also the amounts respectively paid to each Crown counsel and the county attorney, for business done at each assize where such counsel were appointed. He conceived that for some years past these appointments having been conferred on improper persons had led to the escape of criminals. He mentioned a number of examples of the gross incompetency of persons who were employed to prosecute for the Crown, and called attention to the injustice done to the county attornies by depriving them of the criminal business in favor of mere sucklings at the bar. After the county attornies, men sometimes of Provincial reputation had prepared all the papers for the trial. He condemned the system of making these appointments because striplings at the bar had aided members of the House to secure their election, and thought the county attornies should be employed wherever they were competent.

Mr. J. A. Macdonald admitted that he was in a certain extent to blame for submitting to pressure in these appointments, and thought that the county attornies should be employed as much as possible. He however thought it would be admitted that there were some county attornies who were not competent to act as crown prosecutors. He hoped these officers would gradually become more fit to fulfil their duties. He condemned the unprofessional conduct of some legal men who had solicited business from the Crown, a line of conduct he thought as improper as it would be to importune private persons for business. He then read a letter from a Judge in Upper Canada complaining of the present system, and suggesting, as a remedy, the laying down of some rules as a guide to which the Attorney General might refer his conducts. These were—1st, the printing of the number of Q. C.'s; 2nd, employing none but Q.C.'s to prosecute; 3rd, always employing a non-resident—giving him a circuit like that of the judges of probate substitutes; 4th, under no circumstances leaving the prosecutions to the county attornies. Having commented on these suggestions, and stated that he did not approve of the first or last, he assented to the motion for papers.

The motion was withdrawn.

Mr. Dunkin moved an address for correspondence relative to the establishment of a passport system in the United States, and with reference to the rights conferred by naturalization papers. Carried.

Mr. Ford Jones moved an address for papers and correspondence concerning the navigation of Gananoque river. Carried.

The following bills were read a second time and referred to the committee:

To encourage the planting of timber, fruit and ornamental trees upon the public highways—Mr. T. C. Wallbridge.

To afford relief to the original owners and protection of the purchasers of lands sold prematurely for taxes in Upper Canada under a misinterpretation of the consolidated assessment act—Mr. McConkey.

To prevent the spread of Canada thistles on Upper Canada—Mr. Stirton.

To secure to wives the benefit of assurances on the lives of their husbands—Mr. Munro.

To amend Chapter 57 of the consolidated statutes of Upper Canada respecting line fences and water courses—Mr. Auti.

To improve the proceedings in prohibition and mandamus in Upper Canada—Mr Wood.

To provide for the preservation of standing timber—Mr. Joly.

To amend the municipal laws of Upper Canada, as regards statute labor on country roads, and for other purposes—Mr. D. A. McDougall.

To amend the municipal act of Upper Canada—Mr. J. S. Ross.

To amend the municipal act of Upper Canada—Mr. Powell.

To amend the act respecting railways—Mr. A. McKenzie.

To authorize township municipalities to purchase lands from the Crown—Mr. McKellar.

To amend the act respecting municipal institutions in Upper Canada, so that in townships divided into wards, each election may have as many votes as there are Councillors to be elected—Mr. Wright (York.)

To amend Chapter 15 of the consolidated statutes of Lower Canada respecting education—Mr. Taschereau.

To remove doubts respecting the limits of certain counties in Lower Canada—Mr. Beaubien.

To amend the municipal law of Upper Canada relating to lock up houses in townships—Mr. Biggar.

Bill respecting the qualification of Reeves—Mr. Biggar.

The Military Command in Canada.—The London Globe, in the course of an article in which it calls to mind the fact that the staff appointments in the English army are held only for five years, says:—

"In the colonies, the chief command in Canada, the military post of Governor of Gibraltar, and the command in Ceylon, will be transferred to other hands. From this formidable list it may be seen that there must exist a very considerable amount of excitement among the members of the military profession which supplies the candidates for these appointments. We believe that, so far as the arrangements are known, they have given satisfaction. For the most of the vacancies men of undoubted, and well-tried ability have been chosen, and it cannot be said of one of them that nepotism has been at the bottom of the selection. There is scarcely an appointment abroad which may prove of greater consequence than the Canada command; and the officer who is to fill it, Sir John Michel, has earned the thorough respect and confidence of the army by the manner in which he has discharged responsible duties under trying circumstances, at the Cape, in India, and in China successively.

PEACE.

The news is confirmed that certain prominent Confederates, among whom is notably Mr. Alexander H. Stephens, the Vice-President, are on their way to Washington to see what can be done towards effecting a settlement of existing difficulties; or, according to the Richmond Sentinel, "to see whether it would be possible to place a conference for peace on any basis which may serve for attaining so desirable a result." It appears authentic that Mr. Seward is on his way to meet the Southern representatives.

The fact that President Davis has consented that Mr. Stephens should begin the work is significant. Mr. Stephens entered upon the rebellion unwillingly, and since the Confederates began to turn longing eyes toward peace, he has been counted the head of the malcontents who have disturbed Mr. Davis' equanimity. It may be true that his journey northward is a sign that the President of rebeldom has yielded. But, on the other hand, it may be foreseen at Richmond that all his efforts to this end will prove unavailing, unless the South consents to the Union, or in other words, unless she is prepared to lose all for which she has been fighting. Should this be the case, Mr. Jeff. Davis may count upon receiving support which will enable him to continue the struggle still further. That this idea does exist is shown by the article from the Sentinel which will be found in our telegraphic columns.

Still, the fact that Mr. Seward is on his way to meet the Commissioners, would indicate that considerable importance is attached to the matter. On the strength of the rumors set afloat, gold experienced a heavy decline.—Globe.

NEWS OF THE DAY.

A GREAT SALE.

Mr. Devany, the Montreal Auctioneer, has finished his great sale and gone home. When he left Montreal with so large a quantity of goods he expected to have visited more places than Kingston; but he was so successful here, even beyond his hopes that he had no necessity to travel further. Taking into consideration that he sold occasionally in small quantities, it is surprising how he could have got rid of nearly $20,000 worth of goods in so short a time, and at a season when money is so scarce. But he has a peculiar way of getting along, his audiences are always large, and he is sure to sell everything he puts up.

Militia Matters.—New uniforms for Volunteer Companies Nos. 1 and 6 left Quebec yesterday for Kingston. As soon as the clothing rolls are completed, new uniforms will be despatched from Quebec for the Volunteers who have filled up the vacancies in the several companies in the 14th Battalion, caused by those who joined the Company for the frontier, and by absentees. New uniforms for Nos. 1 and 6 were much wanted, and it will be a sort of stimulous to them to have decent clothing. It is necessary that the Battalion should be supplied with the same kind of arms and accoutrements, as well as clothing, for as the men are now promiscuously clothed it is morally impossible for the Battalion to turn out respectably, and we hope that the Government will take some steps to supply the deficiencies. While speaking of the Volunteers, it would be as well to state that the new drill shed will be ready for the Volunteers for drill purposes some time next week, the Brigade Major having made satisfactory arrangements with the contractor to have the companies drill in the shed till it is fully completed and handed over to the Government. The Board of Examiners for Volunteer Officers meets in this city about the middle of next month.

Swearing In.—No. 3 Company, Captain Phillips, to the number of 44 men, met for drill on Wednesday evening in Wesley Hall, and were put through a regular course of drill before Lieut. Colonel Shaw, Brigade Major, and afterwards were called upon to take the militia oath. The Company responded with the exception of two men who wished to have the militia law read to them before they took the oath. It is probable they will take the oath sometime during the week. The company now numbers 65 men having filled up the quota since the company for Niagara was formed. All of the city companies are now sworn in and it is likely that the remaining companies of the Battalion will be requested to swear in also.

Festival.—A Fruit Festival was held on Wednesday evening at the Orange Lodge Rooms in Murvale. About three hundred persons were present, including a number from the city and adjoining townships.—John Flanigan, Esq., County Master, was called to the Chair. After full justice had been done to the good things of this world, the Meeting was addressed by Mr. Samuel Shaw, Mr. Babcock and Mr. A. Dawson, Deputy Grand Chaplain. The Odessa Brass Band was present and filled up the spaces with appropriate music. After a vote of thanks had been tendered to the Chairman, the Band and the Speakers, the company dispersed, well pleased with the evening's entertainment.

School Board.—The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Common School Trustees will be held this evening in the City Council Chamber.

Meeting this Evening.—The meeting of Roman Catholics to take into consideration the present state of the laws respecting Separate Schools of Upper Canada, will be held this evening, in the Christian Brothers' School. The meeting is one of importance, and a large attendance is expected.

[For the British Whig.]

MEMORANDUM—LIQUOR LAWS.

1. The Act of 1st July, 1800, (40, Geo. 3, c. 4), referred to by Mr. O. R. Gowan, License Inspector of Toronto, as in force, is repealed. See Schedule C, Consol. Stat. U. C., p. 1105, 16 V, cap. 184, § 1. Index to the U. C. Statutes in force to the end of Session, 1854 5 (2nd part, supplement). p. 414. between said 16 V., c. 184, and the Municipal Act, 21 V., cap. 90, § 403 and 404 (1858), (Consolidated at chap. 54, U. C.) all the Provincial Liquor Acts were repealed which interfered with municipal powers given to city, town, village and township. In such repeal were omitted to be re-enacted, the clauses in the previous acts, whereby unlicensed parties could be fined and punished for selling ale quors.

2. The only law at present in Upper Canada appears to be the Imperial Act 14, Geo. 3, c. 88, § 5, whereby unlicensed parties can be punished who sell (or retail) "wine, brandy, rum, or any other spirituous liquors." Fine is ten pounds (sterling) and no less. Said Imperial Act is referred to at § 247 of said chap. 54, and very fully cited in preamble to 23 Vict., cap. 6 (Unorganized Tracts.)

3. There does not appear to be any power given to any Municipal Council in Upper Canada to make By Laws to punish unlicensed parties, unless such has a Parliamentary Local Act (as at St. Hyacinthe, 27 V., c. 22). There are sufficient powers given as to licensing by said chap. 54 & 25 V., chap. 23.

4. There does not appear at present to be any law, Imperial or Provincial, for Upper Canada, to restrain any person without a license from selling by retail, ale, porter, beer or cider, and there does not seem to be any power given to Municipalities to make By-Laws regarding the same.

5. Exclusive of Brewers and Distillers, the Liquor Laws of Upper Canada seem to be as follows:—(1) 14, Geo. 3., cap. 88, § 5. (2) Chap. 20 of Canada, amended by (3) 25 V., ch. 6. (4) Chap. 54, § 246, &c. of Upper Canada. (5) 25 V., ch. 23. (6) 23 V., ch. 53. (7) 27-28 Vict., ch. 18. (8) 23 V., ch. 6. (9) Chap. 30 of Canada. (10) Indiana—ch. 9, § 3 & 4 of Canada. (11) Gaols in U. C., ch. 127, §4 &c. (12) "All Common Gaols" in Canada, chap. 110, § 22, &c., of Canada.

J. J. E. L.,
Clerk of the Peace.

Stratford, C.W., January, 1865.

MORE FIRES.

Montreal, Feb. 1.

On Monday night, about 11 o'clock, a fire was discoverd in the office of James A. Watt & Co., hardware agents. It was discovered before it had made much progress. The building was well insured. Watt, with his clerk Taylor, was arrested this forenoon on a charge of arson. When his office was entered on Monday night, there was scarcely an article of value in it although it was insured for $400.

Large Fire at Collingwood.—Collingwood, Feb. 1.—A large fire occurred here at two o'clock this a. m. Five houses were totally consumed and one pulled down to arrest the progress of the flames. The fire originated in the back part of the drug shop of Mr. Joseph Greaves; his loss is estimated at $4,000, insured for $2,000; on Mr. T. Florence's shoe store there will be a loss of $1,000—no insurance; on Mr. William Kelly's hotel, loss $2,500—no insurance; on Mrs. Colgrave's saloon, loss $2,500, insured for $400. David Kelly's loss is about $1,200; insured for $500.

Fire at Clinton.—Clinton, Feb. 1.—The barn sheds belonging to Mr. James Churchhill of Goderich township were burnt last night, and doubtless by an incendiary. This is the fourth of the family who have suffered by incendiary fires since March last, supposed in consequence of their having been witnesses in a case of murder and robbery.

During the last month the losses to Insurance Companies in Canada are estimated at over $300,000— two thirds computed to be from incendiarism.

LATEST FROM THE SOUTH.

New York, Feb. 2.

A rebel despatch dated Wilmington, Jan. 28, says:—

About 400 bales of cotton were destroyed by fire on the custom house wharf at that place, and two car loads, four miles from town on the Wilmington road on the 28th ult. Whether the burning was accidental or was the commencement of carrying out the reported rebel design for to destroy all the staple in that vicinity does not yet clearly appear.

New York, Feb. 2.

In connection with their announcement of the departure of their peace agents for the North, some of the journals in Richmond give a rumor that bearers of despatches from the English and French governments had arrived in that city, but add that they could trace it to no authentic source.

The Despatch has a report that the French Minister of War at Washington has demanded his passports.

A Petersburg despatch in the Richmond pap