

and there marked with shot, but most unquestionably, as defences, they are still unimpaired. One large barrack inside the walls against which our fire, as against a government building, has been particularly directed, is riddled in every part, and most of its roof destroyed. The same is the case with about 60 or 70 of the houses nearest to the walls, but beyond this nothing has been done. Had any of the principal mansions more to the centre of the town been injured, it would be easily seen, as most of them are detached, and all are white as snow, and instantly show a shot-mark. The splendid structure which we call the "Parthenon"—the Government House—and indeed, 19-20ths of the buildings, show no trace of injury. The streets which I could see, and which, of course, were those nearest to our batteries, were all in a most enviable state of cleanliness and good order. In these were numerous bodies of troops lounging about unconcernedly, with their muskets piled upon the pathways. Many civilians passed constantly to and fro, and now and then an ammunition wagon; but I saw no trace of either women or children, or vehicles of the ordinary description. Most of the houses in the Crimea—even peasants' cabins—are built with stone, and of extraordinary thickness, for the purpose of resisting the tremendous gales which sweep this part of the world in winter. So much for the aspect of the town. Of the earthworks round Sebastopol it is more difficult to speak with accuracy. So numerous are these defences that of them it is quite impossible to gain at once a near and extensive view. As far as I can judge from traversing nearly two-thirds of the allied lines, the enemy's batteries appeared generally in good working order. Only in one or two instances were their embrasures masked—that is, closed up when a gun is dismounted—and these maskings I was informed by our officers would be merely temporary, as the enemy always managed to replace their artillery in 12 or 15 hours. I myself have seen them do so within three. The whole of the enemy's batteries are now protected by a deep ditch in front with regular abatis and rows of stockades and chevaux de frise. From this fact alone it is quite evident that they are guarding against, and, therefore, fear an assault. But it is principally of the north side that I wish to speak. I know something of the nature of Russian works and the energy of Russian perseverance, but still the tremendous extent of new redoubts and batteries which I then saw thrown up all round the city did, indeed, astonish me. Every space from the circular earthwork and martello tower (the latter now a mere pile of rubbish), round to the sea near Cape Constantine, is one long line of redoubts and batteries. Malta, Gibraltar, or the lines of Chatham—all in one, would be far more vulnerable than these formidable entrenchments, covered with infantry, pits, and deep ditches in front, and protected with scarped banks, stockades, and masses of cannon. I have seen many of what are called first-class fortresses, but the present aspect of Sebastopol might vie with any. That which struck me more than all was a certain coxombry of finish about these works which I have never yet seen attempted elsewhere—no, not even in the elaborate redoubts of Chobham ridges. Every bastion was lined with stone; every embrasure perfect; every angle and scarp smoothed off with beautiful regularity; and as if the whole was rather an architectural embellishment, than one of the most formidable kinds of defence known to modern warfare. It will scarcely be credited, but inside these lines were regular footpaths and made roads, covered with gravel and loose stones, and laid out with as much neatness as if intended to pass through private gardens. It must have taken the enemy nearly as much time to make them as the batteries, and as a matter of course, beyond the mere effect of the bravado—such as it is—they are utterly and entirely useless. Yet, unless as yet, they have been made as if to show how little the progress of our siege employs or impedes their numerous garrison. On our extreme left the French push the enemy closely. They have not lately advanced their works, but the third parallel is still within 200 yards of the Russian batteries, and only 400 or 500 from the houses outside the walls. The part of the town opposed to the French is certainly more injured than on our side—of course, because of their being nearer their guns have longer range. The mud fort, which at the commencement of the siege mounted nearly 40 guns, is now almost untenable, and rarely fires. The Quarantine Fort of stone is almost ruined, and is certain to be completely destroyed the instant we resume our fire, but the Flagstaff earthwork, which did the French so much injury, is still, I regret to say, almost as strong as ever. However, with regard to this latter opponent, our allies speak most confidently of being able to dispose of it when they wish. On this point I shall only say that I think their conjectures are well founded. In spite of the wet weather and heavy state of the roads, the French have managed somehow or other to replace their old siege guns with fresh, and throw up several new batteries of considerable strength. They have 147 new guns and mortars already placed, and only wait until our fresh ordnance is in position to recommence their fire.

THE EXAMINER.

CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. I., FEBRUARY 12, 1855.

THE SESSION OF 1855.

The Legislature will meet to-morrow to resume the transaction of the public business with which the Session was commenced in September last. Indeed to-morrow's meeting will have all the appearance of the commencement of a new Session, for the principal business remains untouched, only that the formalities incidental to the opening of Parliament will not be repeated. There will be no gubernatorial speech—no ministerial programme; but the fourth estate may, nevertheless, offer its suggestions as to the nature and extent of the business that may or ought to be transacted.

We cannot help noticing the singularity of the contrast between the state of the public mind now and what it was this time last year. Now scarcely twenty people seem to know that the Legislature is on the eve of meeting—we don't hear a single remark about what is to be done, or if there is any thing to be done—there appears to be no great care, certainly no excitement in anticipation of the sessional proceedings. But last year heaven knows there were anxiety and excitement enough. Then the party of the *Outs*—who are the *outs* still—were furiously impatient to supplant the party of the *Ins*. The latter had reasonable grounds indeed to be apprehensive for their position, but relying on the general integrity of their public conduct, they scarcely believed that treachery and intrigue had become so strong in the then new House of Assembly as to give their opponents a temporary ascendancy in that House. While the most intemperate language marked the opposition press, and the fiercest hatred swelled the breasts of their leaders in the Assembly, the Government calmly awaited the crisis of the storm, but anxiety filled the minds of its adherents out of doors. The Opposition triumphed—they overturned the Administration—they might have been apparently strong in office yet had they rested here; but not satisfied with supplanting the Government, they sought to destroy the Constitution as well. Had Mr. Holt's party not attempted to force their absurd and anti-British theories through both Houses of Legislature, but on the contrary had they frankly and honestly given proof of their determination to carry out those principles of Government which had been put in practice by the Liberals—instead of foolishly talking about remodelling and purifying the Constitution, when their real object was to go back to the corrupt and irresponsible regime of former times—it is not too much to say that they might still be at the head of affairs.

But they would not, or they could not follow in the footsteps of the Liberals. The country had, however, derived too many advantages from the administration of this latter party to be satisfied with any other line of policy than that which they pursued; and the public indignation at once became universal and deep-rooted when a totally different line of policy was announced. The popular excitement which rose from the first week of the installation of the Holt Government, and became intense and uncontrollable until after the expiration of about twenty-four weeks, it totally swallowed it up—is yet too recent to require any lengthened notice. The Government, suffice it to say, is again in the hands of the same party, who had the direction of affairs at the commencement of the last Session. But their position and prospects are materially different. They have now no reason to be apprehensive regarding their influence in either House; for it is, we presume, an indisputable fact, that no Government ever established in the Colony had so many supporters in the House of Assembly and Legislative Council as will flock to the standard of the Government so ably administered by our present ruler and his advisers, during the forthcoming, or more properly speaking, the current Session. In the Assembly we can count only six members who are likely to offer any thing like systematic or sustained opposition to the Government; indeed it is a matter of doubt whether these six will have pluck enough to keep up a constant fire for the whole period of the Session; while in the Council we know of one gentleman only who may be expected to raise his feeble voice in opposition to the Administration. In fact, the absence rather than the presence of an effective opposition is now the thing chiefly to be deplored. No matter how honest a Government may be, and how indefatigable in the discharge of its high functions, it would be all the better for being watched and spurred by a lynx-eyed and austere opposition.

On the whole, no party in power ever met the Legislature under more favorable circumstances. The opposition will not only be weak in point of numbers, but it will be weak for the want of some apple of discord—some *casus belli*; while the country at large is tranquil and prosperous to an extent unexampled in its history. The extraordinary increase of our revenue—having more than doubled in the four years that have elapsed since the Liberals first took the reins of office—is pretty conclusive proof of the general prosperity and consequent contentment. Merchants are widely extending the basis of their operations—capital and labour are everywhere exercising their salutary influences—in short every thing appears to be forgotten which is calculated to divert the public mind from the development of our resources and the improvement of our social condition. The destroying spirit of Faction seems to have thrown aside its fiery sword, and the tracks over which it passed give promise of a more luxuriant verdure than ever blossomed there before.

But if it is to be all sunshine and no storm with the Administration within the walls of Parliament, shall it likewise be all play and no work with them? If there is to be no angry debates—no discredit collisions—no scenes to give employment to the reporter's pen and piquancy to the columns of the newspaper, are no measures to be introduced still further to improve the condition of the country? Yes, yes, by all means yes. We are far from thinking that we have attained to any thing like a state of perfection in legislative matters. Indeed, we are almost inclined to think that what remains to be done in the way of reform exceeds what has been accomplished in that direction during the last four years. We do not mean to insinuate that the Liberal party have been wasteful of their time, and that their promises and principles have been barren of fruit. The Statute Books for 1852 and 1853 furnish glorious evidences of their skill, activity and comprehensive knowledge of the wants of the country. But the sterile *expansio* of time—stretching from the establishment of the old regime down to its overthrow in the Spring of 1851—showed that a fearful amount of labour had to be performed by those into whose hands the country was then committed, before they could change its dreary aspect, and make it appear to blossom as the rose, for overgrown with poisonous weeds, scarcely a plant of beauty or utility arose to meet the eye of the observer. It was no small work, in two short sessions, to put a new face upon the country, and arouse the energy and ambition of its people. And now that we have learned to stretch our vision, to use a familiar, if not elegant expression, a little beyond our nose—that we have experienced so much of the benefits of good legislation as to give us a taste and capacity for the enjoyment of more, we naturally look around and ask, at this important period, when Parliament is on the eve of resuming its duties, what are the measures which should most particularly challenge the attention of the Legislature, as they may most essentially promote the prosperity of the country? It is true, as we said before, we have no ministerial programme to guide us in this enquiry. This is to be regretted. It is the duty of those who are at the head of affairs to give direction to the important legislation of the country committed to their charge; and we do think, with all proper respect for the Government, that it would not be amiss to give the country some idea of what that legislation shall be, before honorable members are required to pronounce upon it. So long as our representative body may be said to be the offspring of public opinion, we cannot see why public opinion should not be liberally consulted about every important question that is likely to engage the attention of the representative body. We are sometimes designated by the opposition press the organ of the Government. The compliment, in the sense in which it is tendered, is quite undeserved. We are rejected to be able to speak well of and for the Government, when there is occasion to do so, but we do not knowingly echo their sentiments. What we write we write independently and irrespectively of the opinions of the gentlemen who compose the Executive. Let no one, therefore, suppose that we are proclaiming the views of the Administration in submitting to our readers the following subjects as likely to become the basis of legislation during the current session:—

1. A Bill to secure compensation to tenants for their improvements in cases of ejection, was passed by the House of Assembly on two occasions, but rejected by the Legislative Council. Notwithstanding that a large tract of country has since been emancipated from proprietary influence, a tenant compensation bill is still a necessary and important measure. Its principle has been too often explained and discussed to require any particular notice here. As the personnel of the Legislative Council has undergone a material change since the measure was rejected in the session of 1853, we hope it will be introduced again, and we have no doubt it will receive the sanction of the two Houses.
2. A proprietary rent roll tax. The Liberal party have more than once intimated their intention to introduce a measure of this nature. A more favourable time for its introduction could not occur. The principle is apparent enough, and one in which we fully concur. The opposition press has repeatedly declared that the Liberals in the House are the hired servants of the proprietors. If this can be shown to be the case, that press can consistently offer no opposition to any fair tax upon the proprietors' rent roll. The necessity for a measure of this kind, however, we have not the time at present to discuss. If it be proposed by Government, as we have no doubt it will, we will take an early opportunity to give our readers our views regarding it.
3. An amendment of the Jury Law has been rendered necessary by recent proceedings. The power with which the Grand Inquest is invested, is entirely too great for so irresponsible a body.
4. An act to alter the mode of appointing High Sheriffs, is a measure which ought to receive early consideration. We have for several years entertained the opinion that the nomi-

nation or appointment of High Sheriffs should rest exclusively with the Executive; or, as is the case, we believe, in Canada, that two members of the Government with the Chief Justice, should make the selection. It is rather odd that we should constantly be favoured with Tory Sheriffs, especially for Queen's County. There are as good men in the ranks of the Liberals for this service as their opponents can produce. Why should a Liberal Government be always required to take a Tory Sheriff, when the Tory Government never had to take a Liberal Sheriff?

5. The Election Laws require amendment and consolidation. Those sections of the old Act which gave rise, last year, to so much contention—lawyers on the Tory side in this Island interpreting them in a manner totally different from the way in which they were interpreted by the Attorney General of Nova Scotia, when referred to him for his opinion—should be simplified and divested of all obscurity, and care should be taken, in any amendment which may be proposed, that no High Sheriff shall have the shadow of authority for usurping, as Mr. Binns did, the power of the Assembly in deciding upon the return of a member. The clauses imposing a penalty for a wilfully false return, require revision—the penalty should be made payable whether the return is wilfully false or not.

6. The Act for the vacation of seats of members in certain cases, requires also revision and amendment. There are some petty offices, the emoluments in connection with which, perhaps, are not worth over thirty or forty shillings a year—as, for instance, a Treasury Note Commissionership—which could not be taken by a member of the Assembly without subjecting him to a new election. The Act, as originally passed, contemplated that an office, the salary or emoluments of which amounted to twenty pounds, should vacate a member's seat—and a Road Commissionership was such an office; but a Road Commissionership was the worth about twenty pounds. Now the whole allowance is only ten pounds—there being no per centage on the money expended—and yet the acceptance of such an office by a member would vacate his seat. But there are worse features than this in the old law. As for example: if a member is sent back to his constituents upon taking a Collectorship of Excise, he cannot be subsequently appointed to discharge the very analogous duties of the Customs, when there is any emolument attached to those duties, without rendering it necessary for him to go through another election, if he desires to retain his seat in the House. Besides, an Act of this kind should embody the principle of the Nova Scotia law: that a member of Assembly can exchange one office for another, without rendering a new election necessary.

7. Payment of Legislative Councillors. On this subject we have frequently given our opinions, and we need not repeat any of them here. We have heard nothing in reply to those opinions, to alter our conviction, that no Government—Tory or Liberal—will ever be able to secure a country representation in the upper House, unless the members of that House are paid like those in the Assembly.

8. An Act to transfer the jurisdiction of the Chancery Court to the Supreme Court. This was the subject of an address from the Assembly last session to the Lieut. Governor, and Commissioners have been appointed to report upon the practicability of the measure.

9. Incorporation for Charlottetown. We discussed this subject at considerable length some months ago. We hope it will not be lost sight of; but the Town members, whose duty it is more particularly to bring the question forward, seem to be strangely inert, if not careless about it. We think the constituency of Charlottetown ought to be fully consulted, previous to the introduction of any Bill, regarding a matter which will so materially affect their interests. We will venture to give them this piece of advice—that no Incorporation Bill is likely to receive general support in the Assembly, unless based upon the most liberal principles. There must, particularly, be no haggling about the franchise for the election of civic officers. Nothing short of universal suffrage will, we are convinced, meet with general support. If the Town members are afraid of this, they had better not introduce the Bill at all.

10. We can hardly hope for the introduction, during the present session, of a country municipalities bill, under which all petty larceny, assault and small debt cases might be tried—poor rates levied and expended; and in short, a great deal of that troublesome business transacted which is now left to the House of Assembly and the Superior Courts. But we hope the time is not very distant when this important matter will engage the attention of the Legislature. This subject involves important considerations, and we will embrace an early opportunity of placing them before our readers.

11. An alien act appears to us to be a necessary adjunct to our reciprocity treaty. To enjoy all the privileges which that treaty is calculated to confer, we should extend to foreigners the power we possess ourselves, with regard to the transfer of real estate.

These are, by no means, all the questions which should, and may come under the notice of Parliament. The Education Act is susceptible of improvement, and will no doubt receive it.—It is about seven years since the Census was taken. A Bill in reference to this subject will probably be submitted.—Revenue appropriations will give rise to many important questions; we might allude to some of these, but the topics which they suggest are so varied and interesting, that should we go into detail upon them, we would not only exhaust the patience of our readers, if we have not succeeded in doing so already, but we would find that the whole space of our paper would be insufficient to embrace all our observations. Let the members of Parliament set about the performance of their high duties with an earnest and persevering spirit. There is abundance of work for them to do. The public mind is happily tranquil now. It is no less their duty than their privilege to keep it so. The surest way to attain this object is to promote such measures as will secure the progressive advancement of the country—now so buoyant in its energies and so full of promise for the future. May wisdom and moderation guide their counsels, and may they have a happy deliverance from all their labours.

THE WINTER MAILS.

HASZARD'S *Gazette* and the *Islander* have frequently amused themselves, of late, in attacking the Hon. Mr. Lord for an alleged interference between Mr. John Bell and Mr. James Irving, of Cape Traverse, when they contracted, some time ago, to carry the winter mails. The burden of the complaint amounts to this: Mr. Bell, who was the principal contractor, and who was to furnish the capital and every thing required, appears to have withdrawn or cancelled the tender, furnished in his own name and that of Mr. James Irving, when it had been accepted by Government—that in doing so, Mr. Irving was not consulted by Mr. Bell, and that Mr. Lord was the agent through whom Mr. Bell's wishes were made known to the Government. Whether Mr. Lord acted as an agent in this matter for Mr. Bell, we do not know; but supposing he did, what wrong has he thereby committed? He had surely a right to communicate the intentions of any friend to the Government, in reference to any subject whatever. If Mr. Bell's relinquishment of the contract was prejudicial to his partner—then let him and that partner settle the matter between them. As for the *Islander's* attacks, the character of that paper is such, that it is far better to have its abuse than its praise. But as regards *Haszard's Gazette*, we cannot help thinking that its strong denunciations of Mr. Lord spring from some private motive, and not zeal for the interests of Mr. Irving—in favor of whom, by the bye, an impression is sought to be made, that he is the Mr. Irving who formerly

carried the mails. He is quite a different person, *Haszard's Gazette* has put some questions to the Secretary and Deputy in reference to this matter, and calls for answers through the press. The editor is a simpleton if he thinks that Mr. Coley or Mr. Mitchell has nothing else to do but satisfy his impertinent curiosity. We have no doubt that Mr. Lord will give all the information on the subject which may be required, in his place in Parliament, when the House of Assembly will be called on to vote the supplies for the mail service.

"Nor can we perceive the least real love to Britain in any Editor, considering the doubt, at least, of the truth of such accounts, who would aid in giving currency to them. Our contemporary of the *Examiner*, in its last issue, contains the statement of the *Times*, at the same time, in quite an article on the subject, endeavouring to make people believe, that the Editor hoped the statement would prove untrue. Perhaps he does hope so, at least we do not see why he should not."

The *Advertiser* meant that the above lines should be a rather clever hit at us for transferring to our columns, as we did last week, the remarks of the London *Times* regarding the Crimea expedition. We have no real love for Britain, forsooth, because we gave currency to such remarks! What does this paltry nonsense mean? Does the *Advertiser* mean to insinuate that we are disloyal? If he does, let him out with it manfully—we hate any such beating about the bush; and then we shall tell him that we do not care to the value of one farthing whether or not he measures our loyalty by his clumsy gauge. We have yet to learn that loyalty or "love to Britain" consists in writing or printing nothing but what shall be all *couleur-de-rose*, wherein the proceedings of Cabinet Ministers and Military commanders are referred to—we have also to learn that editors ought to be held responsible for every article which they transfer to their columns from other journals. Persons who know nothing about the real responsibilities of the editorial office may entertain that silly notion, but we did not believe that a man who pretends to be an editor himself should be infected with it. We are very far from wishing that the gallant soldiers—who have performed such prodigies of valour in the East, and who have given every British subject reason to be proud that such soldiers can be found at this day to fight the battles of freedom, and that they are, moreover, his own countrymen—we are very far from wishing, we repeat, that they should be left in the condition described by the *Times*—and not by the *Times* only, but by many other journals of great respectability in the metropolis, such as the *Morning Herald*, the *News of the World*, the *Standard*, and others. Indeed, there is scarcely a paper we look into, but declares that the condition of the army is not such as it ought to be. We certainly would prefer the bright side of the picture; but if there be any mismanagement in the Crimea, is it not infinitely more honest and independent to say so than to keep the public in ignorance of the sufferings of the brave fellows whose gallant deeds we so much admire, and in whose welfare we all take so lively an interest? We pity the blockhead who would insinuate from this that there is sympathy with Russia, or a disposition to underrate the merits and achievements of the British army.

BANK BILL.

We are sorry to learn that this important measure has been refused the royal assent, owing to the insertion of the clause, we understand, which provides that 12 per cent may be exacted from the Bank when it refuses to cast its own paper. This clause is the one which gave rise to most opposition in the Legislature.

THE LAND PURCHASE.

We are happy to learn that the Commissioner of Public Lands, in the course of his recent visit to the *Worrel Estate*, has received application from settlers on that property for the purchase of about 16,000 acres. This is a very good beginning.

LATEST NEWS FROM THE SEAT OF WAR.

The English Mail arrived here on Thursday night about half past ten o'clock. The news from the seat of war is not important; but it is gratifying to perceive that there is a disposition on the part of the Emperor of Russia to listen to the overtures of the Western Powers for an honourable and satisfactory termination of the present sanguinary war. We give some extracts from our latest files; amongst these is the London *News of the World*, which has hitherto given reliable accounts of the progress of the allied movements in the Crimea.

News by the English Mail.

PROGRESS OF THE SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL.

Something decisive from Sebastopol was expected, but we have little more than repetitions of a dismal past. The weather has been again bad; the rain has been renewed; and sickness is too prevalent. Even the horrors of the hospital at Scutari have been aggravated by that malady which results in premises crowded with sick and wounded patients. Still something has been done to hasten the final catastrophe of the siege. More guns have been got into position; more reinforcements have arrived. The troops are less exposed, rations are more regularly delivered, and means have been adopted for supplying the camp with fresh meat and plenty of vegetables. The French and English governments are anxiously providing against contingencies for the fall of the place, and against all subsequent attacks. The Imperial Guards and several regiments have just left Marseilles and Toulon for the Crimea, and troops are being daily expedited from England and Ireland to the seat of war.

The Russian troops, like our own, are suffering from the severity of the weather, sickness, and scarcity. Reinforcements are impeded by bad roads, and the same cause prevents a sufficient supply of provisions. Owing to the necessity of watching Eupatoria, the force about Sebastopol has been weakened; and two reconnaissances, one by French and English, and one by French alone, under General Bosquet, succeeded in destroying such shelter and comforts as the army of observation had provided for itself. Delay has certainly rendered the result of the siege more secure, provided the assault is made on the return of favourable weather. Bad as the season has been, it afforded time for the arrival of reinforcements, while it kept succour from the garrison. Our heavy guns, too, have been nearly all properly placed, and the men are more eager for the final attack. These advantages, however, will be neutralised unless that attack is made before relief is afforded; for as yet the Turks at Eupatoria are not in a condition to dispute the march of an enemy from Perekop, or the *Patrid Sea* to Sebastopol. A battle on the ground between Balaklava and Alma might certainly increase our advantage, but nothing would gratify so much as the speedy fall of Sebastopol.

In the meantime, war, on a small scale, has been renewed on the Danube. The Russians crossed over into the Dobrudsha, surprised a few Turkish troops, and then, it is said, re-crossed. Their object, it was supposed, was to deter Omar Pasha from proceeding to the Crimea, for he was then at Varna; and it now appears that the Turko-Austrian treaty obliges Austria to protect only the Principalities. Were the Russians wise enough, or strong enough, they could march through Bulgaria on Constantinople, and either seize that capital, or compel the allies to raise the siege of Sebastopol. When the treaty was made, Bessarabia was obviously overlooked. The Turks have now only 40,000 men on the Danube.

Ministers, however, are obviously full of care, in other