

The Examiner.

AND SEMI-WEEKLY INTELLIGENCER.

"THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY WHEN FREE-BORN MEN—HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC—MAY SPEAK FREE."—MILTON'S EURIPIDES.

New Series.

CHARLOTTETOWN, MAY 18, 1850.

Vol. 1: No. 31.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

SATURDAY, 27th April.

DUTY UPON FLOUR.

(Concluded.)

Mr. CLARK was of opinion, that a duty of five shillings per barrel on American Flour would afford a sufficient protection to the Island farmer; and he thought, that if the higher duty of eight shillings and sixpence per barrel were carried, it would amount to a prohibition of the importation of the article, and would be most severely felt by the people, in the event of a scarcity. He would be willing to admit the products of the United States duty free, provided they would reciprocate with us as respects our agricultural produce. As to our trade with the neighbouring British Colonies, he thought it would be greatly for the benefit of this Island, that it should be carried on upon reciprocal free trade principles: still he thought it might be necessary to impose a small duty upon flour imported from Canada.

Mr. DAVIES observed, that from what had been said by the honorable member from Bedeque, (Mr. Pope,) it seemed to be his opinion that Ship-wrights might be sufficiently well fed upon Indian meal: he would, however, assure that honorable member that, from his (Mr. D's) experience as a Ship builder, but little work would or could be done in a ship yard, unless the workmen were allowed something much more conducive to vigor of body than a diet of either Indian or Oat meal.

Hon. Mr. THORNTON thought there would be as great a scarcity in the Island this year as in the previous one: he was, therefore, in favor of a low duty. He thought a duty of five shillings per barrel would afford a sufficient protection to the farmer.

Mr. WARBURTON stated that in the section of the Island in which he resided, the wheat crops were good last year. In saying so he meant that the return from the seed sown had been an abundant one; certainly sufficient to satisfy reasonable expectations. But he ought also to state, that many farmers had not had sufficient seed to commit to the ground; and that, consequently, their wheat harvest had been very limited. Owing to the failure of the hay crops, there had not been a sufficiency of fodder, and many of the people in his neighbourhood had been obliged to feed away both their oats and potatoes, to keep their cattle alive. He, therefore, thought it very probable that, although the grain crops of last year had been good, there might be a scarcity of Flour and even Oatmeal in some parts of the country.

Mr. LAIRD said he would go along with Mr. Davies, provided the United States would admit our agricultural produce duty free into their markets; but as they did not, he thought it would be very injurious to the Island farmers were United States Flour admitted duty free into our market.

After a motion by Mr. Longworth, that a duty of 3s. per barrel be imposed upon all Flour imported into the Colony, had been submitted to the vote, and lost, the Chairman put the question upon another motion for 5s. per barrel, which was agreed to.

MONDAY, April 29.

DEBTS DUE TO GOVERNMENT FOR SUPPLIES OF SEED GRAIN.

Mr. POPE said he rose to move that an Address be presented to His Excellency, respecting the advances which had been made, during the last four years, to numerous poor settlers, to enable them to purchase seed grain and potatoes; and for which advances they had given their Notes of Hand. Of these notes there remained uncanceled, he believed, to the amount of something like £3000 or £4000, or perhaps nearly £5000, which, it was well known, the people could not redeem by cash payments. Such being the state of the business, and as it was not likely that any special appropriation would be made for the Road Service in the present Session, he thought it would be very proper and advisable, both in charitable consideration of the poverty of the people, and with a view to the making of the needful repairs upon the roads and bridges, respectfully to request His Excellency, through an Address, to give directions to the several road Commissioners to receive labor on the highways, bridges, and wharves, during the present season, in liquidation of the obligations now in their hands for monies due to the Government. Such an arrangement would, he thought, under the present circumstances of the country, afford much relief to the parties so indebted to the Government; and the amount due, if so paid and properly expended, would, he believed, be more than necessary to effect all ordinary

repairs and to keep up uninterrupted the necessary communication between different parts of the Island. He, of course, did not include repairs or improvements for which special grants would be required; nor the construction of new roads or new bridges; and even if these were required, he would be inclined to restrict the outlay upon the road service this year to repairs absolutely necessary. The honorable member then read the draft of an Address (as published) which he had prepared in accordance with the opinions which he had just expressed, and moved its adoption and presentation to His Excellency by the House.

Mr. WHELAN thought it was in contemplation to vote about £100 to each of the counties for the road service, to be applied to special purposes, which with what was due to the Government on account of seed grain and potatoes, would, perhaps, be sufficient to put the roads and bridges into such a state of repair as would obviate any inconvenience in travelling through the Island.

Mr. POPE replied that he knew of no such intention as that to which the honorable member alluded.

Mr. WHELAN said that if it could be shewn that the monies due to the Government would be sufficient to make the repairs upon roads and bridges which were required to render travelling safe and easy, and to keep up a free and uninterrupted intercourse between the different parts of the Island; he would not, under the present unusual circumstances in which the House was placed, consent to vote one shilling for any other purposes than those for which they had already acknowledged it was absolutely necessary that they should provide.

Mr. COLES said that, judging from the returns of the road commissioners, he thought the amount due on account of the advances which had been made to the people by Government, if taken in labor, as proposed by the hon. members from Bedeque, would be found sufficient to effect all repairs absolutely necessary upon the roads, bridges, and wharves. The whole amount of the people's obligations to the Government, proposed to be so expended, would, he believed, amount to about £3000.

Mr. CLARK said he would support the motion. He thought that to allow the people to cancel their obligations to the Government in the manner proposed, would be the conferring of an especial favor upon them. If they were not allowed to redeem their Notes of Hand by labor, they would certainly be unable to pay them in any other way; and if the Government should authorize the Commissioners to sue for them, the consequences, to many who were so indebted, would be truly calamitous. He thought the House in the unusually trying circumstances and difficult position in which they were placed, were bound to withhold any Supplies beyond those contemplated as absolutely necessary in the Resolution to which they had already agreed, and beyond them he would not consent to vote a single sixpence for the road service or any other purpose; assured as he felt that the people fully appreciated the motives which determined the action of the House, and gave their entire approbation to their guarded proceedings.

Mr. MOONEY said he was sorry to find that his convictions would compel him to oppose the majority of the House, and to vote against the views of the honorable members with whom he had felt proud to act. The House had already come to a determination to transact no business with the Government in consequence of the determination of His Excellency to oppose their wishes with respect to the construction of his Council; and to adopt the Address to His Excellency which had just been read and proposed by the honorable member from Bedeque, calling upon him (His Excellency) to issue certain instructions to the road Commissioners for the recovery, by labor upon the public roads, of the monies due by the people to Government for seed grain and potatoes, would be a direct departure from the determinations to which, in support of their principles, it had justly been held so necessary that they should strictly adhere. He was rather surprised to find that, with reference to the value of the Notes of Hand which had been given by the people for the advances made to them by the Government, some honorable members had quite changed their opinions. Last year, when a claim of the honorable member for Prince County (Mr. Yeo) for compensation on account of loss on a certain contract, was under consideration, so little was expected by some honorable members to be realized upon those Notes, that, in ridicule, they proposed to compensate the hon. member, (to whom they, however, considered no compensation to be due,) by causing to be handed over to him the amount of £100 in those Notes: but now, those honorable members seemed to have fully satisfied themselves that the Notes of Hand, then spoken of by them as almost altogether valueless, were now quite good for

the whole amount necessary to be expended this year, upon the road service; and that, if they were not cancelled by labor upon the public roads, bridges, and wharves, this season, the individuals who had given them would be sued for them. The adoption of the Address and the proceedings which might be consequent upon it, would, he begged leave to tell the majority of the House, be nothing less than the putting of weapons into the hands of their opponents (the minority) by which to effect their own overthrow. They (the minority) would go among the people, and, with crocodile tears, they would pretend to bewail the hardships of the people, imposed upon them (as they would take care to tell them) by the majority of the House in whom they had confided, in calling upon them to perform the usual amount of labor upon the roads, bridges, and wharves, without having made any appropriation for the road service, whereby they would have been afforded an opportunity of acquiring a little ready money to afford them a partial relief from the pressure of their burthens. The honorable members constituting the majority might depend upon it, that, if they adopted the scheme proposed in the Address, their enemies among the people would contrive, by their skilful and malignant misrepresentations concerning it, to persuade the people that they had, in that particular, rather been oppressed, than benefited by the consideration of their Representatives forming the majority of the House; and the consequence would be that the fruits of the labors of the Liberal Party in the cause of the people, would be gathered by those who had opposed them. The minority might think, said the honorable member, that because he had taken upon him to censure and warn the majority, upon this occasion, he was about to "rat." If they did so, however, they were mistaken, for he would consent to pass through many ordeals before he would do that. When he came to town to attend the present Session, it was his intention to vote against a Revenue Bill, and in consenting to do the contrary, he acted against his own judgment. The House, in the last Session, had properly, he thought, agreed to withhold all Supplies; and now, according to his own free judgment, he thought they ought to adhere to the determination which they had formed, or to abandon it altogether. If they made an appropriation for one purpose, they should make appropriations for all the purposes for which they were usually made—for the road service and for every other. It was not his wish that the individuals who had given their Notes of Hand for the Supplies granted to them by Government for the purchase of seed grain and potatoes, should be exonerated from their obligations without any payment at all; but it ought to be considered how wretchedly poor some of the individuals were who had been so relieved, and that to extort payment from them in any shape could not but greatly aggravate their distress. He thought it quite as necessary to consider the people, by an appropriation for the road service, as to consider the public creditor, by making provision for the payment of the interest on outstanding Treasury Warrants. The hon. member concluded by saying that he would vote against the motion.

Mr. COLES said he strongly suspected that the Government would be glad to have any countenance afforded them, by the measures of the House, for adopting such executive proceedings as might afford them (the Government) a hope that, thereby, they should be able to cause the People to murmur against their Representatives, and shake their confidence in the wisdom and integrity of their purpose and character. As the majority of the House seemed determined to make no appropriations but such as were imperatively demanded by the exigencies of the country, such a proceeding as that proposed by the hon. member from Bedeque (Mr. Pope) seemed to be the only prudent and efficient one to which the House could consistently have recourse, to prevent the Government's taking advantage of the absence of an appropriation for the Road Service, to harass the People by suits in the Small Debts Courts; and thereby to irritate them against their Representatives. Should the House adopt the Address submitted by the hon. member (Mr. Pope) as he (Mr. C.) fully trusted they would do, the Government would be left without any excuse for instituting proceedings in the Small Debts Courts against the People; in fact, they would not dare, after the presentation of that Address to His Excellency, to sue any of the individuals whose obligations they held. He felt satisfied that, with very few exceptions indeed, all who were indebted to the Government, on account of the advances which had been made to them, would consider it in the light of a boon to be allowed to cancel their debts by their labour expended upon the Roads and Bridges. Many of the