

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.

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HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 12th March.

STOPPAGE OF SUPPLIES.

(Continued from our last.)

Mr. POPE said the answer which they had received to their Address had not disappointed him; it was not the practice of the present day to make any concession to the people with a good grace; but the signs of the times indicated that the reign of arbitrary and irresponsible government in the Colonies was nearly at an end, and the tenacious grasp by which it was now held might safely be taken as the expiring effort to prolong a petty and vexatious system that would soon be known only as a matter of history. Doubtless Earl Grey had been informed, and believed, that the Executive Council enjoyed the confidence of the people of this Colony, when he stated that "the Lieutenant Governor is assisted in the performance of his duties by gentlemen selected from those of the inhabitants of the Colony who were considered to be the most capable of performing, with advantage to the public, the duties of their several offices;" but surely His Excellency, after the almost unanimous vote of want of confidence by the Assembly in the Executive Council, could no longer entertain such an opinion. Nor did he believe that either Lord Grey or the Lieutenant Governor would be prepared to despoil the constitutional right of the Representatives of the people to pronounce that judgment. He (Mr. Pope) was glad that the Government had been afforded a fair opportunity of carrying out their own principles, which Lord Grey had so strongly recommended the House to adopt, viz., to separate the question of the Civil List from that of Responsible Government—the one being financial, and the other political; as the House of Assembly did not now ask His Excellency to dismiss any paid officer from his situation, and had not manifested any unwillingness to meet the wishes of the Government with respect to a Civil List, to the utmost extent that the means of the Colony would enable them to do. He thought that His Excellency had shewn a great want of judgment and sound policy, as well as a manifest disregard to the wishes of the people, by refusing to re-construct his Council, who had lost the confidence of the people, until the question of the Civil List—which they (the Government) had declared was purely financial, and had no connection with the other, which was political—should be finally approved of by Lord Grey; particularly as the former might, under the vexatious system pursued at the Colonial office, be protracted to an indefinite period. When His Excellency dissolved the last House, what was his object? Ostensibly it was to test the opinion and wishes of the people with respect to Responsible Government, and the separation of that question from the Civil List; and, if that were in reality the object of His Excellency, it had been fully accomplished; for the people, by the large majority of members they had returned to the Assembly, pledged or known to be favourable to the adoption of that system of government, had left His Excellency without any reason longer to entertain a doubt concerning their wishes or opinions. At the Hustings, a majority of the Candidates who were returned to the Assembly had, he believed, pledged themselves to support any constitutional measures which might be brought forward in the Assembly for the introduction of Responsible Government into the Colony. The several constituencies throughout the Island, with perhaps one or two exceptions, had required Candidates to make a full exposition of their political principles on the nomination days. With respect to himself, he had not been required to pledge himself to his constituents; because his sentiments were sufficiently well known to them, and approved by them. Had he been opposed to that measure, he would not have been returned as one of their Representatives to the Assembly. On the day of nomination at St. Eleanor's, he had, to a very numerous assemblage of people, explained his sentiments touching Responsible Government. He then told the Electors that, if returned to the Assembly, he would refuse to grant one farthing of their money for carrying on the Government unless Responsible Government was granted, and that they must be prepared for any consequences that might ensue. This determination they highly approved of, and if we should be returned to them on this question, they would sustain us. It was indeed, they were well aware, urged that the people of Prince Edward Island were not yet sufficiently advanced in population, wealth, or intelligence, to justify their being entrusted with the exercise of a full measure of self-government in their own affairs. Many persons besides thought, or pretended to think, that the object of the

party who sought to introduce Responsible Government, was to degrade the present office holders, bring in confusion, and open the door to a set of needy adventurers. He believed that the introduction of any extreme measure, for the bringing about and establishing a change of Government, was calculated to open the way for the operations or practices of political adventurers; but such was the inevitable consequences of all great changes in the Government of a country, of whatsoever nature the change might be, whether for good or for evil—but it would correct itself. With respect to the objections made to the concession of Responsible Government to the Colony, on account of the smallness of its population, its present limited resources, and the want among the people of that knowledge and information which was acquired from books or imparted by a course of educational training; he would refer the objectors on that score to the history of the early settlers in North America, who were driven from their native homes in Great Britain by the force of political and religious persecution, and compelled to seek a refuge and to build their huts in the wilderness. How came these men to be the framers of the best laws that have ever originated in mere human wisdom, and the founders of the most prosperous Government in the whole world? Was it owing to their numbers, to their wealth, or to the great extent of their erudition? No, it was not; for, in these respects, their advantages and pretensions were confined and insignificant. The wisdom of their fundamental laws, which far exceeds that of the Old Constitution under which they were born, and the success which accompanied their exertions, and the present crowning prosperity of the United States, had their origin in the independent spirit, the conscientious motives, the sound heads, and sound hearts, and freedom of action of a band of bold self-elected men, who never yielded their inherent rights to local self-government. Such an example was quite sufficient to encourage, in reasonable and unprejudiced minds, the belief that—freedom of action being first conceded—the people of Prince Edward Island, with all the elements of social order and prosperity, would not long remain far behind the neighbouring Provinces, as respects general improvement and prosperity. There was nothing in the "external circumstances" of Prince Edward Island to render its inhabitants inferior in any degree to their neighbours of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, who were only distant from them some twelve or twenty miles—Earl Grey's opinion to the contrary notwithstanding; but His Lordship's fears were not to be taken as the measure of the rights of the people of this Island. Long experience had shewn that no concessions were made to the Colonies by the British Government, unless they were absolutely wrung from it. With respect to the independence of mind which should ever be the chief characteristic of public functionaries, appointed as constitutional advisers of Her Majesty's Representative, where was it to be found in this Colony? Could any honorable member name one such public functionary at once independent and responsible? There was not one of them who dared to exercise an honest, a conscientious independence, without endangering his situation or losing caste. In recommending the introduction of Responsible Government, he was not by any means advocating that levelling system by which Jack would be made as good as his master. On the contrary, no man was more anxious than he to preserve the just—because necessary—distinctions of society, and due subordination to those in authority; but he had always held that that state of society and that form of Government were best, in and under which the rights and privileges of all classes throughout the several grades of society, were equally respected and equally sacred. He stood alone, independent, and unconnected with any party, and offered no suggestions or advice, except upon the floor of the House; and the advice he would then give was to proceed, without fears or misgivings, to adopt the course which they thought most likely to lead to the attainment of the legitimate object which they had in view. He hoped they would not suffer themselves to be intimidated by either a threat of a Dissolution, or of annexation to Nova Scotia. The latter was a dodge of at least forty years standing in this colony—whilst the former would only add another £400 to that so needlessly squandered by the last Election. There was no occasion to dread the displeasure of Earl Grey. Why should they fear his Lordship's displeasure? Let the House pursue the proper course, and appeal, if necessary, to the people of England, in Parliament, by whom alone they could be coerced; by such an appeal they would gain more than by any application to the Colonial Officer or Petition to the Queen, which is one and the same thing. Let them agree upon a proper Civil List, as evidence of their

desire to provide for the Government of the Colony, and doing injustice to nobody, provide for the due administration of the Laws; and then, as certainly as they did so, would the people of England compel Earl Grey to acquiesce in the just demands of the Colony. In the meantime he would not grant one farthing to carry on a Government which opposed with all its power a just concession to the wishes of the people. The honorable member then commented upon the conduct of certain gentlemen, with reference to the popular movement. These gentlemen, said the honorable member, had represented themselves as leaders of the Reform movement begun under a late reforming Lieutenant Governor, as whose residuary legatees and administrators they had been regarded. They had accepted the trust which he bequeathed to them; and had distinguished themselves as the most determined opponents of what was styled the Family compact policy, until they had worked themselves into power, and so soon as they thought themselves secure therein, they adopted the very same policy which, whilst out of power, they had most loudly decried. They seemed to say to themselves, "We have now all we wish. We have supplanted the old Family Compact. We must preserve what we have gained, and not endanger our possession of it, by urging reform by any extreme or even unusual means. We must seek it by prudent legislation. We must proceed cautiously to remove obstructions and repress abuses. We must guard against precipitancy and the introduction of crude and hasty measures of reform; we must patiently persevere in the old path of Remonstrances and Addresses, and Reform we shall have." Have, indeed! exclaimed the honorable member, but God knows when! if this course were to be followed!

The system of "Remonstrances," "Addresses," and "take my Lord Grey along with you," was all quite right in theory, but in practice it was merely carrying out the fallacy of delay, and meant nothing. Reforms we shall have, but we must "wait a little longer." The "good time," however, was "coming," notwithstanding the obstacles now thrown in the way by those great reformers who, unfaithful to their many professions, had in the time of need been found wanting. He was well aware that all sorts of unjust imputations had been alleged against them. When they spoke of withholding the People's money from a Government in whom they had no confidence, they were said to be disloyal. If they alluded to the public patronage, or the conduct of a public officer, it was of course with the view of displacing the present officers to make way for themselves. Such might be the object of some, for aught he knew. Conscious of his own integrity, he would disregard the imputation of sordid and unworthy motives. He had no desire for office, although he believed his claims would not be disputed; but he was seeking to carry out a great public principle, by fair, just and constitutional means. Let them, he again repeated, pass all laws requisite for the preservation or protection of life and property, and a Civil List Bill, which—having regard to the limited means of the Colony—shall provide for the due and efficient discharge of the Public Service, in all its departments; and, having done this, if His Excellency shall then refuse to recognize our inherent right as British subjects to a Responsible Government, we will return to our constituents; and the country will hold His Excellency and his advisers accountable (notwithstanding their irresponsible character) for the loss of its revenue, and the ruinous consequences that must ensue; remembering that Lord Grey and the Lieutenant Governor are not the Constitution, and that loyalty to the Colonial Office does not, in reality, mean a surrender of the well defined and constitutional rights of the People, whom we represent. The hon member then concluded by saying: "I shall therefore, Sir, from a conviction that I am discharging a duty which I owe to the People of this Colony, give my support to the Resolution."

Hon. Mr. THORNTON defended the views of the Lieutenant Governor with respect to his reading or interpretation of Earl Grey's Despatch of the 27th December last. He thought with His Excellency that, by that Despatch, he was bound to one line of action, as respected the movement in favour of Responsible Government, and had no option in the matter. With respect to the seventh and eighth paragraphs of that Despatch, it ought to be borne in mind, that Earl Grey was not aware, at the time it was written, of the dissolution of the former House. He, with other members, had very carefully perused and considered the Despatch, and they were decidedly of opinion, that it left open to His Excellency no other course than that upon which he had entered. The hon. member then read the fifteenth paragraph of the Despatch as follows:

"But even were this otherwise, it would evidently be