

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, MARCH 23, 1850.

VOL. I.—NO. 15.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

DEBATE ON THE AMENDMENT TO THE ADDRESS.

AFTERNOON SITTING.

(Debate concluded.)

FRIDAY, March 23d.

Mr. LEAD observed, that it was unnecessary for him at that time to enter at length into the reasons which induced him to give his support to the motion under consideration; as they were to be found in the exposition of his general political principles which he had made both before and at his election. He stood up with a firm determination to lend all the support he was capable of giving, to the endeavours which were then being made for the introduction of Responsible Government, because he thought that the introduction of that system would be beneficial to the whole body of the people of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. MOONEY thought no system of Government could be much worse than the one in operation in Prince Edward Island; and that, therefore, any change therein could scarcely fail to be for the better. He was, however, fully convinced of the general and very extensive benefits which would be derived to the people from the adoption of Responsible Government in the Colony; and he was, therefore, prepared, independently of all personal considerations, to go any constitutional lengths, however extreme, to secure so great a boon to the people.

Mr. WARBURTON pronounced the contemplated measure to be so just, that no conscientious sensible man could speak against it. At the opening of the Elections he had fully explained the political principles by which, as a public man, he meant to regulate his conduct. He was fully prepared to support the adoption of extreme measures, for the attainment of the great object which the Liberal Party had then in view.

Mr. DAVIES was of opinion that the arguments which had just been adduced by Mr. Coles and Mr. Pope were so conclusive, in favour of the necessity which existed for the introduction of Responsible Government, that he thought it quite impossible for any sensible man conscientiously to resist them. He knew that he had very much disappointed and displeased many of his friends by his having identified himself with the Liberal Party; but, convinced as he was, of the justice of their cause, he would not, on account of the disapprobation of his friends, seek occasion to desert them; but would, as he was fully prepared to do on the present question, support them with whatever ability he possessed, so long as he should be of opinion that their measures were for the general good.

Mr. McNEILL said the question was one of vital importance to the best interests of the Colony; and his constituents being of opinion that Responsible Government would essentially promote those interests, they had sent him to the Assembly to throw in his might for the furtherance of its attainment, and he would by no means withhold it.

Mr. FRASER observed, that the people, through the instrumentality of their Representatives, had, year after year, been begging and praying for a reform in the mode of their Government; and had, year after year, been put off with insincere professions and clumsy excuses, the Land Question having been generally dragged in, as the best to fall back upon. Such a system of Government as that which now prevails in the Colony should have no support from him, but, on the contrary, his most hostile opposition. The patience of the people was fairly exhausted, and nothing less than the most determined action on the part of their Representatives could give them satisfaction; and he, as one of them, would not hesitate to go to any extreme length for the attainment of the popular object.

Mr. MONTGOMERY would support the Amendment to the Address. He had always been favourable to a change in the mode of administering the Government, and had supported the moderate measure to that end advocated by the majority of the last House: that, however, having been refused by the Home Government, he was now prepared to support the measure before the House.

Hon. E. PALMER then spoke to the following effect: He would offer a few words before the question should be put—and they would be few; for he well knew that nothing he could say in opposition to the course which the majority of the House had indicated as that which they intended to pursue, would induce one of them to forego his pre-conceived opinion. Not one of them had taken his seat in the House that day, without having

had his mind fully made up as to the vote he would give. He (the honorable and learned member) thought he knew too much about members, whether old or new, to entertain a hope that any arguments of his would be found sufficiently powerful and convincing to make converts of them to his opinions. If the question touching the adoption of Responsible Government were to be discussed at all, he thought the party favourable to its establishment had not chosen either the proper time or proper mode for its introduction. In his opinion, the proper and parliamentary manner of proceeding with reference to the question, at that time, would have been, in the first place, to take up, in a formal manner, the Despatch of the noble Secretary, and then to enter upon the consideration of a Civil List, with a view to ascertain how far it would—both with due regard to the resources of the Colony, and the services to be performed by the public officers—be right and just to go, with respect to the amount of salaries; and also to ascertain how they might be able to obviate or overcome what they conceived to be the difficulties lying in their way. It ought to have been first clearly stated how far they proposed to carry their measures of reform, and what would be the permanent provision for the payment of the Civil List: but this had not been done. The hon. member who had taken the lead had set his course and taken his departure, and must therefore expect to arrive where such course alone could and would carry him. That course, however, appeared to him (the honorable and learned gentleman) to be a very improper one. By the motion submitted by that honorable member, the House were called upon to request His Excellency to adopt a course of action from which the instructions of Her Majesty's Colonial Minister entirely precluded him. To proceed in so irregular and unprecedented a manner, was to give the Government a decided advantage. In answer to the compliance urged upon him by the Address, might they not expect His Excellency to reply, "Here you require me to give an unconditional consent to the introduction of Responsible Government. How is it possible for me to comply, when I have the commands of my master to the contrary?" Surely it would be much better to adopt a more courteous mode of proceeding respectfully to remonstrate, and, after having explained how far they were prepared to meet the requirements made by Earl Grey in his last Despatch, then to say, "So far—with a due regard to the extent of our financial resources, and a fair estimation of the claims to be satisfied out of those resources—we are prepared willingly to go; and the nature and the extent of the concessions we expect in return, we have also clearly set forth in our remonstrance." But such a course, the majority, in their wisdom, thought it would be unworthy in them to pursue; and all attempts to convince them of the impolicy of that upon which they were entering would, he was convinced, prove altogether useless. A report, he believed, was current, amongst the advocates of Responsible Government, that His Excellency was in the possession of a private Despatch, authorizing him to concede the measure, should it appear to be desired by the great body of the people. With respect to this rumour, he could only say that he knew nothing of the existence of any such document, and firmly believed that there was none such in existence. So far as his knowledge went concerning them, every Despatch relative to the question had been laid before the House. Any busy-body might take it into his head to fabricate and circulate such a tale, and, with the credulous and suspicious, it would find a ready reception. The advocates for Responsible Government were, perhaps, endeavouring to copy the proceedings of the House of Assembly in Nova Scotia, in their Session of 1848; there, however, it was well known that the Governor, by a Despatch in his possession, was invested with a discretionary power to deal with the question. But here, on the contrary, it appeared by the Despatch just laid before the House, that Her Majesty's Minister was persisting in his refusal to allow Responsible Government, or to make any concessions towards the establishment of the Responsible system. How absurd, then, was it in the House, knowing this, to attempt to coerce the Governor, in the situation in which he was placed, into a compliance with their wishes touching the question. Proceeding as they proposed, and seemed determined to do, what answer could they expect from the Colonial Secretary? Would he not be ready to say, "You have thrown aside my Despatch, in which I laid down the terms, on your compliance with which I would have been prepared to advise Her Majesty to resign to the Colony, in perpetuity, the whole of the Crown Colonial Revenues; but a full compliance with those terms I will insist upon, and, until it shall have

been made, it will be quite impossible for me to make the concessions, on the part of Her Majesty, which have been promised to you in return for that compliance." The hon. member who had submitted the motion, and all those who had spoken in support of it, had expressed themselves in very strong and threatening language, declaring that, should not the concession which they sought be immediately made to them, they would put on their hats, turn their backs upon their duty, and return to their homes without either passing a Revenue Bill or granting the annual supplies. Surely in making such a declaration, they could not have well considered who would be the sufferers from the execution of their threat. The consequences would be that the public roads, bridges, and wharfs, would remain unrepaired, to the great inconvenience of the country; the pauper poor would be left unrelieved; goods would be imported, duty free, to the amount of many thousands of pounds; and the Treasury Chest would soon be completely exhausted. If hon. members thought that, by withholding the Supplies, they would so far embarrass the Executive, as to make it impossible for them to carry on the Government, he could assure them that many individuals whose judgment and opinions were generally to be depended upon, were of a quite contrary opinion. The stopping of the Supplies was, by no means, an unconstitutional proceeding; and it had not unfrequently been had recourse to by the House of Commons. But it ought to be borne in mind, that the stopping of the Supplies in a country like Great Britain—the resources of which were so immense—could, in its direct and immediate effects upon the great interests of the people, have no such disastrous consequences as would be caused by a similar measure in a country so poor as Prince Edward Island. The hon. and learned member then concluded by saying that, brief as his observations had been, he had gone further than he intended to do on his rising to address the Committee. He knew it was in vain to attempt to turn the majority from the course which they were bent upon pursuing; and, without troubling them with any further observations, he would leave them to take their own way.

Hon. E. THORNTON said, he rose to oppose the Resolution before the Committee; but, as his views fully coincided with those which had just been expressed by his hon. and learned friend the member for Charlottetown, he would not needlessly consume the time of the Committee by a repetition of them. There was one thing, however, which he would beg leave to say, which was, that, at a proper time, he would be found prepared to go as far, perhaps, for the introduction of Responsible Government, as any hon. member of the majority.

Mr. HAVILAND declared that he would be ready to support preliminary measures for the introduction of Responsible Government, whenever the question touching the adoption of that system should be brought before the House on its own merits and its own proper footing.

After a few further brief observations from Mr. Pope and Mr. Le Lacheur, in support of the course which it appeared the majority of the House were determined to pursue, the Chairman put the question on Mr. Coles's amendment, when the Committee divided:

AYES.—Messrs. Coles, Le Lacheur, Warburton, Whelan, Pope, Mooney, Davies, Beaton, Flynn, Lord, McNeill, Fraser, Laird, Clark, Macdonald, Jardine, Montgomery, Mr. Speaker—18.

NAYS.—Hon. E. Palmer, Hon. E. Thornton, Mr. Haviland—3.

REPORTER'S SUMMARY.

THURSDAY, March 21, 1850.

CIVIL LIST BILL.—On motion of Mr. Coles, the Civil List Bill was read a second time, and then committed.

HOUSE IN COMMITTEE ON THE CIVIL LIST BILL.—By the first enacting Clause, the provision made for the Chief Justice is £700 Currency, per annum during his incumbency, or so long as he shall hold office.

By the second the provision made for any person succeeding the Chief Justice in his office, and to his successors the sum of £600 Currency per annum.

By the third, for the Master of the Rolls in Chancery and Assistant Judge of the Supreme Court, the sum of £500 Currency annually so long as he shall hold the said office.

By the fourth, unto the successor of the present Master of the Rolls and Assistant Judge, and to his successors in office the sum of £400 Currency annually.

By the fourth, for the present or any future Attorney