

# 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 13, 1850.

VOL. I.—NO. 12.

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

FRIDAY, MARCH 8.

### HOUSE IN COMMITTEE UPON THE ADDRESS IN REPLY TO HIS EXCELLENCY'S SPEECH.

The draft of the Address which had been prepared by the Committee appointed for that purpose, was unanimously adopted. It is merely an echo of the Speech; and it has, therefore, been thought unnecessary to insert it in this Report.

**AMENDMENT TO THE ADDRESS.**—The House having been resumed, and the Address reported agreed to, as the honorable Speaker was about to put the question thereon, Mr. COLES rose to propose an addition to the Address. The honorable member commenced by observing that the time was arrived when it was become necessary for the Legislature to speak in more positive terms to the Executive than they had hitherto done. It was long since the popular Branch of the Legislature had ceased to have any confidence in the Executive, although they had continued to do business with it. The honorable member then read the amendment which he proposed to submit, and which appeared in Saturday's "Examiner."

The honorable member then proceeded to observe, that in proposing the amendment, he was actuated by a desire to give a Constitution to the Government of the Island. That the Colony, he continued, had had a Government without a Constitution had long been felt; and it was long since the Representatives of the people set themselves seriously to work to remedy the defect. Their success, indeed, he admitted, had fallen very far short of what they sought to accomplish: they had, however, achieved something. The separation of the Executive and Legislative Councils, formerly united in one body, he considered to be the first partial triumph. The honorable member then proceeded to show how House after House had been baffled in their attempts to effect a reformation in the Government by means, at one time, of a vote of want of confidence in the Executive, and, at another, by an Address to the Sovereign, setting forth the grievances of the people, and praying for redress. Their Addresses, he remarked, were indeed replied to, but the answers were always indefinite; and could not, therefore, possibly result in any effect beneficial to the people, in fact they never effected any thing, but merely left the state and management of the affairs of the Colony as they were. The honorable member then proceeded to take a comprehensive and general review of what had been vainly, in a great measure, although strenuously and consistently attempted by the Representative body, for the introduction into the Colony of a truly British Constitutional form of Government, in opposition to the parties in power here, who had, up to the present moment, been always too successful in procuring the aid and countenance of the Imperial Government, in support of the exercise and maintenance of their unconstitutional authority and privileges. The honorable member commenced his review by reading the fourth, fifth, and sixth of a series of Resolutions agreed to by the House of Assembly in 1840, and afterwards carried into effect by an Address to Her Majesty on the state of the Colony, and expressive of want of confidence in the Executive and Legislative Councils, agreed to by the House of Assembly in 1840, and duly transmitted home.

The first paragraph read by the honorable member (the fourth in the Address) is as follows:—"Resolved, That the people of this Island can have no confidence in the Executive Government of this Colony, so long as the Agents of Proprietors are appointed to fill the principal offices therein, such as the Colonial Secretary, Treasurer, Surveyor General, and Attorney General, (all of whom possess, besides, a large family influence in the Executive Council) and also such as the Solicitor General—because it is well known that Land Agents derive the greatest personal benefit from the large proprietary grants, and, in consequence thereof, is naturally the interest of the Executive Council, by its unfortunate construction, to misrepresent to the Home Government, and even to the absentee Proprietors, the true state of this Colony, and thereby prevent an equitable settlement of the inhabitants thereon, upon just and proper principles."

The honorable member then read the principal part of the Despatch which, in answer to the Address, was sent but to the Lieutenant Governor, Sir C. A. Fitz Roy, by Lord John Russell. The portion read by the honorable member is as follows:—"I have also received the Resolutions of the Assembly, complaining of the construction of the Legislative and Executive Councils, together with the counter Resolutions of the Legislative Council to that complaint. Having laid before the Queen the Address of the House of Assembly, Her

Majesty has commanded me to instruct you to acquaint the House, that she learns with regret that the question of the Lands in Prince Edward Island continues to disturb the peace of the Colony." (Here the honorable member begged the Committee to observe how artfully the vote of no confidence was set aside to introduce the distracting subject of the Land question; and again resumed his reading.) "Although this question originates in motives of private interest, shared equally by Landlords and Tenants, it assumes, in effect, the character of a public question, and as such must be treated. It is Her Majesty's earnest desire to remove every just cause of complaint in all parts of her dominions. Her Majesty has been accordingly pleased to desire me to enter into communication with the resident Proprietors in this Country, with a view to learn whether, by any further proposition on their part, means may be found to determine a question which has for so long a period agitated the Colony. After a careful examination of the several Resolutions which accompanied your Despatch, it is my duty to declare that I do not see that adequate reasons exist for the immediate reconstruction of the Councils." The honorable member continued to read to the end of the Despatch, which thus concludes: "The allegation of undue weight in the Council, in favor of the landed Proprietors, thus appears to me not to be sustained. On that ground, therefore, I would not desire that any alteration should be made in either of the Councils." The honorable member then observed that this Despatch, and many similar ones, by which it was clearly shewn that the counter Resolutions of the governing and obstructive party were always sufficient to render nugatory the Resolutions and representations of the popular branch of the Legislature in favor of constitutional reform, either in the Legislative or Executive departments, or for the redress of any of the grievances of the people; and ought surely to be sufficient to convince the House and the people that they could have nothing to expect from any further trial of that civil, tame, and submissive policy which dictated, as the only proper course to be pursued, the reiteration of appeals to the Crown, through the office of the Colonial Secretary, in the shape of respectful Addresses and humble Petitions. Such Addresses and Petitions the House and Country well knew, by woful experience, had never been allowed to have their due weight in the estimation of the Colonial Secretary, whose judgment respecting them had always been biased by the counter representations of parties, both here and in the old country, the maintenance of whose private interests depended upon the maintenance of the abuses, vainly, although loudly complained of by the people and their Representatives. Now, however, was happily arrived the time when the House of Assembly, supported by the people, were, almost to a man, prepared and determined to take new and more commanding ground, and with firm resolution and an imposing front, to demand for this Colony, as its undeniable right—based not only upon their claim to the birth-right of British subjects, but also resting upon the amount of its population, and the intelligence of the people—the advantages of such a Constitution as that which had been granted to Canada. The House, he rejoiced to know, were fully convinced of the inutility of seeking redress of grievances for the people, or reform of government, by means of Addresses; and were determined that—should their plain and direct, but respectful remonstrances and most reasonable demand for that measure of substantial justice, lately awarded to the neighbouring Provinces by the Home Government, be disregarded and denied—they would withhold the supplies and cease to do any business with the Executive; fully convinced that the issue of such a proceeding, on their part, would be the full recognition and establishment of the constitutional rights and privileges of the people of Prince Edward Island. The honorable member then referred to the two Resolutions adopted by the House of Assembly in the Session of 1846, and to an Address to Her Majesty, founded thereon, and transmitted Home by the Lieutenant Governor. By the first of these Resolutions, the House declared that "The advisers of the Representative of the Sovereign, constituting a Provincial Administration under him, ought to be men possessed of the confidence of the Representatives of the people;" and the second was, "That in order to preserve, between the different branches of the Provincial Parliament, that harmony which is essential to the peace, welfare, and good government of the Colony, the advisers of the Representative of the Sovereign constituting a Provincial Administration under him, ought to be men possessed of the confidence of the Representatives of the people." Now, continued the honorable member, these Resolutions were most respectfully submitted to and enforced upon the consideration of Her

Majesty; but with what little success, appeared by the Despatch addressed in answer thereto, by the Colonial Secretary, the Right Honorable W. E. Gladstone, to the Lieutenant Governor, Sir H. V. Huntley.—That Despatch, like every other received from the Colonial Office in Downing Street, was indefinite, obscure, and contradictory. The honorable member then read the second paragraph of the Despatch which is as follows:—

"I have received the Queen's commands to direct you to convey to the House of Assembly the assurance, that it is Her Majesty's desire, that the officer administering the Government of Prince Edward Island, and that all the subordinate officers of that Government, should merit and obtain (as it is her Majesty's injunction that they should cultivate) the confidence of the Representatives of the people inhabiting the Island, by every measure which can be pursued for that purpose, consistently with their duty to the Crown, and the colonists at large."

Now, said the hon. member, bearing in mind that this was an answer to an Address to the Queen, praying that Her Majesty would be graciously pleased to give directions to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, to carry into effect the principles of Responsible Government; who can be found to maintain that there was not therein an express sanction and authority to the Lieutenant Governor to introduce the system of Responsible Government as a measure which might be pursued consistently, with his duty to the Crown and the Colonists at large; and by furthering the establishment of which, he might justly hope to merit and obtain the confidence of the Representatives of the People. But was Responsible Government either granted or intended to be granted to the Colony by that Despatch? No, it was not; and the next paragraph would clearly prove that nothing could be more foreign to the intentions of the Right Hon. Secretary for the Colonies, than that the benefit of the Responsible system should be extended to the people of Prince Edward Island; however he might flatter them with assurances of Her Majesty's desire that the government should be administered in accordance with the well-understood wishes of the people, as expressed through their Representatives in Colonial Parliament assembled. The hon. member then read the third paragraph of the Despatch as follows:—"Referring to those passages of the Address, in which certain claims are founded on principles said to be admitted, and usages which are said to be observed in the administration of the Government of Canada, Her Majesty further commands me to direct you to call the attention of the House of Assembly to the fact of the wide distinctions subsisting between Canada and Prince Edward Island, both in what regards the fundamental rules of the constitution of the two countries, and in what regards the sources whence the charges of their respective Governments are defrayed—a dissimilarity which Her Majesty considers as conclusive against the general inference or assumption, that either Colony is entitled to claim the benefit of any particular usage, which it may be desirous to adopt and borrow from the other."

This paragraph observed the hon. member, is directly contradictory of the former, and clearly proves the insincerity with which the former was penned; but he would let that pass without further comment: the insincerity and duplicity which had dictated the generality of the Despatches, addressed to the successive Governors of this Colony, and affecting the general interests of the people, was a fact clearly deducible from an attentive perusal of them; and it required no great exertion or prolixity on his part to prove that the acknowledged privileges of the House of Assembly had been continually assailed, by a party long dominant in the Colony, and that their measures for securing the rights, removing the grievances, and furthering the improvement of the Colony, had been thwarted by their influence at the Colonial Office in Downing Street. Up to the date of the Despatch which he had just read, the 28th May, 1846, the replies which had been transmitted to the Colony, in answer to the Addresses of the Representatives of the people to the Sovereign, praying for a redress of the people's grievances, were all, indeed, sufficiently vague, indeterminate, tantalizing, and irritating; but not one except that addressed by Earl Grey to His Excellency on the subject of Responsible Government, bearing date 1st January, 1849, could bear the interpretation which had indignantly and justly been put upon it by the late House of Assembly, and he believed, by nearly every man of the Colony who had read it—according to which it had been pronounced a studied and direct insult to the whole body of the inhabitants of the Colony, to the People at large and their Representatives, without distinction. By that Despatch, the people of the Colony were plainly told