

# The Examiner.

"THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY, WHEN FREEBORN MEN—HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC, MAY SPEAK FREE."—EURIPIDES.

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## THE LEGISLATURE.

### House of Assembly.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12.

#### THE EMBARGO QUESTION.

(Continued.)

Mr. Mooney said he entertained an opinion very different from that of the hon. speaker, who seemed to think of nothing besides seed; but he would like to know if no more grain should be kept in the country than would be required for sowing the ground, upon what the people would have to depend for subsistence, during the long interval between sowing-time and harvest. He hoped the hon. Speaker did not imagine they could do so solely upon the air they breathed. As to the confidence expressed by the hon. Speaker with respect to the quantity of grain now in the Island, he (Mr. M.) wished he possessed any data whereon to form a similar opinion; but it was quite the reverse, for he knew not a single instance of a farmer's having one surplus bushel of Oats; but, on the other hand, unfortunately, he knew too many who had neither Potatoes, nor Oats, even at the present time, and if exportation were allowed to proceed, and the land were not planted, what would be the consequence next year? If they turned to Ireland, and contemplated the dreadful calamities experienced there in consequence of bad crops; if they did not forget—and forget, they could not—the millions of human beings who had so recently perished from starvation, was it not due to their Sovereign and to their Sovereign's God, that they should make sure that death from such a cause should not happen to Her Majesty's subjects in this Island? The hon. Speaker spoke confidently; he happened to be correctly informed upon the state of the Island when he negatived the question of an Embargo upon a former occasion; but, about that time, as he said, he represented the whole Island, he perhaps had greater opportunities of acquiring information than he now possessed. It ought to be remembered, that there has been a succession of bad crops, and that the people, to discharge their rents, had drained their resources, and, from what the hon. Speaker had just said, it appeared to him (Mr. M.), that the fifty thousand of whom he then boasted he was the representative, had nearly all forgotten to remind him of their grievances, and their actual want of common necessities. His (the hon. Speaker's) constituents, it would seem had made no complaint, had presented no Petitions; and, therefore, there he said there was no want. The Merchants appeared to be the peculiar care of the hon. speaker, and the people and their Representatives, were, according to his views, to be no more thought of than so many serfs, easily persuaded and as easily kept in order. He thought but little personal inconvenience could arise from the carrying out of this measure: he was not of opinion that it would cause any loss to the speculators in grain; but, even if it did, of what consequence was that consideration, when weighed against the probability of actual starvation to numbers. In conclusion, he would not hesitate to say that he (Mr. M.) believed the hon. Speaker, in his capacity of a Representative of the people, seemed to be unacquainted with their present destitute state, or, what was worse, if he was acquainted with it, would not acknowledge it.

The hon. Speaker said, the picture of distress, painted by the hon. Member who had just sat down, was highly coloured; but there was little doubt that the blood relations, to whom the hon. member had the other day alluded, could assist those who were in want, and to whom they should therefore go for immediate help. None more than himself could feel for the really necessitous, and especially for such as had become so through the dispensations of Providence. The sympathy of the House for the distressed had exhibited itself in the ready assistance provided by the appropriation of the large

grant of £3000, in the first instance, for the road-service, and subsequently by adding thereto £900. This grant he doubted not would go far to relieve the destitute; and, he hoped, the people would appreciate the boon, and not copy from those of Ireland, who, in return for the enormous sums which had been raised for their relief in England, were ready to bite the hands of their benefactors. As a farmer or merchant, or in any other way, he was not in the least degree interested in the question, but was perfectly independent in his consideration of it. Embargo or no Embargo, he had nothing to export; for, in his capacity of Agent, he had not taken a single bushel of Grain or Potatoes from his Tenants since last harvest; and, therefore, his opposition must be viewed as being perfectly disinterested, and solely confined to public grounds. The hon. Member who had last addressed the Committee had unblushingly accused him of want of wisdom, and hinted at his lack of knowledge with respect to the extent of destitution which existed in the Colony. Such an accusation, from such a quarter came with a very bad grace. ("I can learn you," interrupted the hon. member alluded to.) For the hon. member to speak of the want of wisdom in others, and propose to instruct them, was, indeed, most ridiculous; for, if the whole amount of knowledge which he possessed upon all subjects, were to be summed up, the total would be found quite inadequate for the supply of his own wants.

Mr. Le Lacheur had been often heard to say that when the hon. Speaker had once given his opinion,—let that opinion be ever so erroneous,—it was no easy matter to convince him to the contrary. But he (Mr. Lacheur) had no sooner taken his seat in the House this session, than he sounded the alarm; he prophesied what he regretted to say had already come to pass; he said, that he then knew of forty families so destitute that they knew not one day, where their next day's food would come from; and he was ridiculed as an alarmist, and told that he was merely blowing his old trumpet for the poor Tenantry: he was laughed at for telling Gospel truth. The hon. Speaker would not allow that he did not know better than all the rest of the world. There is plenty, said the Speaker, only it is kept back, and there is no necessity for an embargo: and all this he advanced in the face of representations, daily reaching His Excellency, of the most alarming destitution prevailing in various parts of the Island. Despite of the hon. Speaker's opinion, he (Mr. Le Lacheur) trusted, there would be evinced in the House independence and good sense enough to throw to the winds the plausible sophistry of the hon. Speaker, and prevent the risk of the direful calamity of starvation, to perhaps hundreds of our fellow-men.

Mr. Douse exceedingly regretted having to address the House upon a subject so painful as that of the distress which prevailed in the country, and to ameliorate which the House was then called upon to legislate. The question of an embargo was, at all times, one of great importance, and demanded the most mature consideration. He (Mr. Douse) knew full well the injurious effects that invariably resulted from an interference by Parliament with the commercial regulations of any country; and, did he entertain any doubt of the actual scarcity of food, consequent upon a bad harvest, the benefit of that doubt would be given to the Merchants and traders. But, convinced as he was that destitution existed to an unprecedented extent, he considered it his bounden duty to legislate for the welfare of the many, in preference to the interests of the few; and he should, therefore, give the resolution for an Embargo his hearty support. The little inconvenience which this measure would no doubt occasion to the merchants, would be of a temporary character, and not at all to be put in comparison with the vast inconvenience which must fall upon a very large portion of the population, if the exportation of grain be not prohibited; and this inconvenience would, it is not improbable, be felt, to some extent at least, by

many others who object to an embargo. Some persons question the utility of cultivating the potatoes as an article of food for the people; but he had no misgivings about the benefits yet to be derived from the growing of this hitherto useful esculent. He believed it would after a time become as good as ever, and that, although the potato, as a root, had been subject, for the last few years, to great fatality, there was no more reason to apprehend its complete extinction, than that of cattle, grain, &c. which are occasionally subject to disease and similar dispensations of Providence. In England and in the United States, in which he had travelled during the last autumn, the root was good, though the crops were far from being abundant; but as the seed would recover from disease, it was reasonable to expect that the crops would become more abundant, and therefore, he should be sorry to see this most useful food given up as lost altogether. Such being his opinion, he considered it the bounden duty of the Committee to keep the Potatoes in the Island, and to encourage the people to try them again. From the small quantity left, there was no fear of their experimenting on too large a scale. At that very time, he was told, that vessels were being loaded with produce, and the House ought to use all possible dispatch in coming to a conclusion, for he was satisfied a single bushel ought not to be exported. Hon. Members should consider the responsibility that rested upon them. They should think of the deplorable consequences that must arise, if a sufficiency of seed be not retained to put into the ground, and then they would see the urgent necessity for carrying the measure then under consideration, which should have his hearty support.

Mr. Palmer had never before been an advocate for Embargoes, disliking to interfere with commercial pursuits; but for several weeks as, from time to time, the accounts from the Country came in, he had perceived the absolute necessity of adopting the measure; for none could deny the existence of most pressing want. If the ports were allowed to remain open, he much feared the high prices in some of the neighbouring colonies would be a strong inducement to shippers to export; and the consequence would be, that much of the land would be unproductive for the want of seed; the sad effects of which would be severely felt for years to come. The Committee, therefore, were loudly called upon not to make themselves a party to the creating of so grievous a calamity, by which the future interests and well-being of the Island would be so injuriously affected. He much regretted that it should be necessary to interfere with business regulations; but he trusted that those few, who had bought up produce for the purpose of exportation, would merely suffer a little inconvenience and disappointment; for the prices they would obtain here would afford them a profit, and, therefore, they would not have reason to complain of experiencing any great or serious injury. Were it even otherwise, the few should not be so selfish as to complain of a measure which contemplated the affording of relief to so many of their destitute fellowmen. He, therefore, most willingly and fearlessly gave his support to the Bill under consideration.

Mr. F. Longworth was not of the same opinion as his hon. colleague, whom he considered as having taken an erroneous view in this instance. What took place at an early period of the Session, was almost a guarantee to the Merchants, that they would not be interrupted in the prosecution of their business; and, unless they were indemnified against loss, he would consider the imposing of an embargo as nothing more or less than aiding and assisting in a legal robbery. If the Government would take the produce from the purchasers; if they would rebuy it of them for the use of the poor, then he might withdraw his opposition; but, unless something of that nature were agreed to, he could not but consider the measure as arbitrary, and a breach of faith with the purchasers of produce. He did not wish to be misunder-