

brought forward, and so careless are the people about the matter, that not a complaint relative thereto, by petition, has ever been laid before the House; and yet one hon. member (Mr. H. Macdonald) boldly asserts that he believes there are not five in a hundred that would not be glad to see the measure carried. But if this is so—seeing the mass of petitions, and the variety of subjects that yearly come before us—is it not very surprising that no one should before have moved in this matter. The hon. member, Mr. D. Maclean, some years ago, once mooted the question, but he found no support from any quarter. As I have before said, it is useless to argue upon the question. I will not, therefore, take up the time of the Committee, well knowing it will be of no avail as to the result.

Mr. Palmer. I know not of what the hon. member has to complain in the reports. I think his speeches are as well and as fairly reported as those of other members. It is thought, and said out of doors, that there are party reporters here, one on one side and another on the other; but I expect that, were the question put to the reporters, they would tell you that, as reporters, they know no party, and stoop not to the degradation of giving to the public false or partial versions of our debates. If his complaint respecting misreporting is to be submitted by the hon. member as his reason for not stating his reasons of opposition to the resolution under consideration, I suppose his mouth will be closed for the remainder of the Session. If gentlemen on the other side mean to say that they wish the present Governor to do as the late one did, and to fill up the Legislative Council with strangers just arrived, let them say so, and let their constituents know that such is their meaning. Some say they know their constituents will never agree to this measure; others again say, they will not give it their support till they have consulted them; and then again others say, the Council have never asked for the change. All these, Sir, I call weak and poor excuses for their opposition. It is not at all likely that the Council would petition us. The present is a very favorable time for the introduction of the contemplated change,—which, notwithstanding what some assert, I have no doubt would be gratefully received by the people from one end of the Island to the other—there being only one gentleman in the Council who would be affected by it, and that one, I may observe, was not previously aware that this measure was coming on. But another member of the Legislative Council has told me that he thinks the measure will be well received by that body, and prove very acceptable to them. I am not in the habit of consulting any of the members of that body; and neither ought we, for a moment, to consider in our deliberations the probability of what may or may not be approved by them. I only became possessed of this information by mere casualty. Neither ought we to lay so much stress upon what may have been the opinion of the Home Government with regard to such a measure in another Colony. For my own part, I think the representations which have been sent home by this House, relative to the construction of the Legislative Council, must have had considerable weight with the Imperial Government; and I incline to believe that, if the measure pass here, it will meet with a ready sanction at home.

Dr. Conroy then followed in a speech of some length. The learned gentleman, in the first place, with much earnestness, directed the artillery of his sarcasm against the observation of Mr. McIntosh, in which that hon. member had asserted, that "every law not required for the protection of the people's rights, ought to be regarded as a restriction upon their liberties;" and excited a good deal of merriment in the Committee, by the mode in which he dealt with the assertion. The learned gentleman then proceeded to observe that the introduction of the resolution was merely an attempt to carry out the instructions of the Queen with respect to the Legislative Council; Her Majesty having said, "Choose the members of that body from all parts of the Island." He next took the liberty to hint, that the members of the Assembly were, all of them, ready enough to pocket the money when they could; directly observing to the hon. Chairman, that he (the Chairman) would not consent to aid in the furthering of the business of the country without pay. Then suddenly calling himself to order, the learned gentleman upbraided the opposition with lukewarmness in the cause of reform, and charged them with making an attempt to arrest its progress at the very first step proposed to be taken for its introduction; and concluded by disavowing all party feeling upon the question, and declaring that his only object was to bring about a right construction of the Legislative Council, by securing to the people a fair representation therein. (The learned Doctor sat down amidst loud cries of "Hear! hear!" and much laughter.)

Mr. Mooney said the learned Doctor had convinced him that he was not mistaken in his suspicions about the existence of the snake; and he then saw clearly where it lay. There are, pursued the hon. member, too many friends of the late Governor in the Legislative Council, and this resolution seems to be brought forward as a side-winded way of stinging them.

The hon. Speaker felt surprised—as, no doubt, also did the learned gentleman who had submitted the resolution—at the opposition offered to it by the country members; for he thought they ought to be the very first to support it. The object of the resolution was the carrying out of the instructions of the Home Government, relative to the construction of the Legislative Council; to which, since they were received in the

Colony, all the Governors, with the exception of the last two, had endeavoured to give effect. An hon. member near him had been, he believed, some years ago, offered a seat in the Legislative Council; but, rightly judging the honor not worth the expense consequent upon sustaining it, he had declined to accept it. The hon. Speaker then continued: The hon. member for Prince County (Mr. Rae) declines to state his reasons for his opposition to the resolution, because he has not, as he says, been correctly reported in the Gazette. His adherence to this resolution may effect a saving of time; for, if it hold, we shall not have so many long speeches from him as he has been in the habit of delivering. The hon. Speaker then adverted to the fact that, some years ago, Mr. Duncan McLean had introduced a measure similar to that contemplated by the resolution before the Committee, which was supported by the gentlemen who were opposed to the motion of the hon. and learned member for Charlottetown. Such a change was to him, quite unaccountable. It seems as if the Chartists were become Tories. As to the feeling of the people with respect to the measure, he was satisfied that, if they were fairly canvassed, it would be found that nine-tenths of them were in favor of it. Some few, assembled in holes and corners for the purpose of having it dinned into their ears, that the measure would tend only to the increasing of their burthens, might, he was aware, be brought to express disapprobation of it; but, otherwise, it would meet with the general approval of the country.

Mr. Montgomery wished to see the measure take effect only as vacancies in the Council should in future occur. He had no desire to deprive any of the present members of their seats therein; and it was obvious that no immediate interference with the construction of the Council was contemplated by the resolution.

Mr. D. Macdonald. It is said that country members ought to support the resolution. But this, Sir, to me appears to be strange doctrine; for had country members seen any necessity for such a measure as that which is now proposed, they would neither have been slow to move in the matter, nor have left it to be introduced by the hon. and learned member for Charlottetown. This side of the House have never considered that any just complaints against the Legislative Council, could be remedied by granting them legislative pay, or that any wrong in their construction originated in the absence of such pay. The addresses and complaints formerly made to the Home Government, touching the Legislative Council, did not allude to any such matter as pay.

Mr. Palmer thought that his being a member for Charlottetown should not, in any way, prevent his having a regard to the interests of the country; for the interests of the Town and of the Country, he held to be inseparably connected. It would, said the hon. and learned gentleman, be very easy to prove that many measures for the good of agriculture had not proceeded from country members. The hon. and learned member then concluded by saying, that for such foul-mouthed allusions as that of a snake in the grass, he had no reply: it was his practice to treat them with the silent contempt they deserved.

Mr. Mooney explained that he had not compared Mr. Palmer to a snake in the grass; but he said he was always very much at a loss to reconcile the strong professions of regard for the agriculturists, which so frequently fell from the lips of the hon. and learned member, with his recorded votes, which so often spoke a quite contrary language.

Mr. Thornton spoke against any thing like precipitance in the urging on of the measure; observing that much time and consideration were frequently given to less important questions. He then said, he would ask honorable members from the country who talked so much about their constituents, whether they thought that if their constituents were to be consulted with respect to the present question, they would reply that they wanted no change in the Legislative Council, but were perfectly well satisfied with its present construction. Whatever these hon. members were ready to assert, he was persuaded the reply would be of a character directly opposite. He knew many of the members in the Legislative Council were gentlemen possessing great talents and abilities; but yet he could not admit that, even with these qualifications, they were capable of representing the local interests of the remote parts of the Island; and, so long as that body should continue to be composed, almost exclusively of gentlemen residing in or near Charlottetown, he would consider that, through such a composition of it, most manifest injustice was done to the people at large, and to the agricultural population of the Island in particular. The hon. gentleman concluded by saying, that the contemplated measure, if carried out, would give, to qualified persons in the rural districts, an opportunity of saying whether they would serve their country or not.

Mr. Le Lacheur thought that if either the hon. member who had just sat down, or himself, were to ask his constituents what good the Legislative Council had done for them, they would reply, "Not much." But let that hon. member bring forward some measure, the passing of which would be of unquestionable service to the country, by which to test the present feelings and character of the Legislative Council, and he was much deceived if it did not then appear that the composition of that body had, of late years, been much improved.

Mr. Thornton replied, that it was quite useless to bandy words, on the subject of patriotism, with the hon.

member (Mr. Le Lacheur,) who knew very well, that neither he himself, nor any other hon. member of the House, had the interests of the people more at heart than he (Mr. Thornton.) Enough, he thought, had been said at that time; and he would, therefore, move that the Speaker take the Chair, the Chairman report progress, and ask leave to sit again. Motion agreed to.

On the following Tuesday, the House again went into Committee on the same question, which was then disposed of as noticed in the Examiner of the 19th February.

SUMMARY OF LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS. SATURDAY, MARCH 4.

IMMIGRATION BILL.—On motion of Mr. Thornton, the House again went into Committee to resume the consideration of the Immigration Bill; which, as during its previous progress, met with but very little opposition except on the part of Mr. Mooney, who opposed it on account of its not having a suspending clause,—contending that persons intending to emigrate will not know that an increase of head money has taken place, and will, consequently, enter into engagements with the Shipowners, which they may not be able to fulfil. He, therefore, considered that it should not come into operation till after due notice had been given, and concluded by moving that a suspending clause be added to the Bill; which, on the question being put, was negatived without a division. The Bill was then reported agreed to, and ordered to be engrossed.

Several Bills passed a stage, and the remainder of the day was consumed in the consideration of Petitions.

MONDAY, MARCH 6.

GEORGETOWN AND ROYALTY ROADS.—Mr. Haviland moved the second reading of the Bill to appoint Commissioners for Georgetown and Royalty Roads. Mr. Palmer took the opportunity to express his disapprobation of the present system, and hoped a Bill would be introduced to reduce the number of Commissioners very considerably, and to give them sufficient remuneration to enable them to devote their whole time and attention to the Roads and Bridges.—The hon. member's opinion was approved by a majority of those who spoke.

Mr. Rae wished him to introduce a Bill to that effect, he (Mr. Rae) having his hands full of business.

Mr. Le Lacheur moved that the House go into Committee of the whole to-morrow, to take up the consideration of the question.

Mr. D. Maclean thought there was sufficient business already mooted to make a long Session; and the question being put, it was negatived.

Mr. Haviland's Bill was then read a second time, submitted to a Committee of the whole House, and reported agreed to.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.—Mr. Rae, as chairman of the special committee, made his report on the Public Accounts, and moved that the House go into Committee on the same, on Friday next.

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS.—This Bill, originally introduced by Mr. J. Longworth, to amend the Act passed the Committee and was ordered to be engrossed. The remainder of the day was taken up in the consideration of Petitions.

TUESDAY, MARCH 7th.

IMIGRANTS.—On motion of Dr. Conroy, the order to engross the Imigrants Bill was discharged, and the Bill was re-committed to a Committee of the whole House; when the clause imposing an additional Tax on children, under ten years of age, was struck out, and those under eighteen months old were exempted altogether.

TEMPERANCE.—Mr. Palmer presented a Petition from the Office Bearers of the Total Abstinence Society, praying the House to adopt certain measures relative to distillation and the sale of Spirituous Liquors, in order to check the use thereof. A short debate ensued, in which it was contended, that it was useless to Legislate further than had already been done; the present act containing no less than thirty-four clauses, drawn by the learned member for Charlottetown and the late Mr. Binns, and passed only two years since. A motion that the Petition be rejected was met by an amendment from Mr. Palmer that it be referred to a special Committee, to report thereon. The House divided—ayes 8 nays 13. So it passed in the negative. The original motion for rejection was then put and carried.

PAUPERS PETITIONS. The Chairman of the Special Committee on Paupers Petitions made his first report, recommending, instead of the present mode of distributing relief, the voting of a certain sum to each district. Considerable discussion ensued, and the report was ultimately laid on the table.

An adjournment having been moved—

TREASURY.

Mr. Whelan rose and said, that, before the motion of adjournment should be put, he wished to put a question to the hon. member for the First District of Queen's County (Mr. Coles), as a member of the Executive. He had heard, he said, with a good deal of surprise, within the last two or three days, that the Treasurer had refused to receive, in payment of Merchant's Bonds, Notes issued by the Banks of the neighbouring Provinces. His (Mr. Whelan's) object in rising, was, to ascertain whether he had received correct information in refer-