

THE

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTER.

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MEETING OF THE LEGISLATURE.

On Thursday, the 14th February, 1856, His Excellency the Lieut. Governor came down to the Council Chamber, and with the usual formalities, opened the Second Session of the Twentieth General Assembly, with the following Speech:—

Mr. President and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly:

I have called you together at the period which experience has shown to be most convenient for the ordinary course of public business.

Under the blessing of Divine Providence, the late harvest has proved abundant, and will, no doubt, stimulate those engaged in agricultural pursuits to perseverance in the habits of industry and order which have marked their course during the past year, and which cannot fail to produce the happiest results.

I am happy to be enabled to inform you that the decrease which I anticipated in the Revenue of the past year is unimportant, and that in this slight fluctuation, which may be easily accounted for, there is nothing to apprehend for the stability and soundness of the resources of the Island, the Revenue being more than equal to the ordinary expenditure.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly:

The Public Accounts shall be submitted to you as speedily as practicable, and I rely upon your readiness to make provision for the efficient support of the public service.

The Laws for the collection of the Revenue, as well as for its protection from the baneful effects of illicit traffic, appear to me to be liable to serious objections; to remedy which their careful revision and consolidation has become necessary; and in directing your attention to this important branch of the public service, I cannot doubt that it will receive all the consideration which the extended commercial relations and increasing importance of the trade of this Island demand.

Mr. President and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly:

I feel assured that the interest you have manifested in the events of the War is undiminished, and that, although exempted from the great sacrifices which it entails, you are not the less solicitous for its early and satisfactory termination.

The Act of the last Session "to impose a rate or duty on the Rent Rolls of the Proprietors of certain rented Township Lands in this Island," and also the "Act to secure compensation to Tenants," have not received Her Majesty's confirmation.

The grounds upon which the decision of Her Majesty's Government regarding those measures is founded, shall be communicated to you.

I am happy to inform you that the transactions respecting the sale of Public Lands, which will, in due course, be submitted to you, have, in their progress, fully justified the expectations formed of the effects to be derived from the Land Purchase Bill, in the desired conversion of Leaseholders into independent Freeholders, advantages which are only limited by the small amount placed by that measure at the disposal of the Government.

The great advantages, moral and social, which are derived from the constant extension of Free Education, are appreciated to a very gratifying extent, as the rapidly increasing number of schools, already amounting to 268, and attended by above 11,000 pupils, fully testifies.

The agricultural portion of the community continue to derive substantial benefits from the operations of the Royal Agricultural Society, whose judicious importations supply those necessary articles, which could not be rendered available by unassisted private enterprise.

Closely bound up with the success of Agriculture and Trade, is the state of the Island communication with the neighbouring Colonies; and no more judicious application of the public resources can be devised than such as may be required to render this communication more secure, as well as frequent and expeditious. Any expenditure with this very important object, cannot fail to be repaid by the increased benefits which it will confer on every class of the community.

These, and all other objects affecting the public interests, will, I doubt not, receive your fostering care and attention; and you may always rely upon my cordial co-operation, in every well directed effort, to promote the welfare of the people and the prosperity of Prince Edward Island.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

Monday, February 18.

The Address in answer to the Speech of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor being reported from the Committee by the Hon. Attorney General, who moved that it be referred to a Committee of the whole House—

The Hon. Colonel SWABEY, in seconding the motion, said—It has often fallen to my lot, to make a similar motion, but never did I on any previous occasion feel more sincere gratification in doing so, than I now experience. It is not my intention to allude to any topic calculated to excite angry feelings, or provoke a protracted discussion; but I shall confine my observations to one or two subjects alluded to by His Excellency. With reference to that part of the Speech which alludes to the Bills of last Session, which did not receive the Royal assent, I think that any discussion on that question would be premature, as His Excellency states that the reasons which led to their disallowance will be submitted to your Honors. But that part which alludes to the operation of the Land Purchase Bill, as it is a subject more particularly within the sphere of my own knowledge, from my official position,