

PARLIAMENTARY REPORTER,

SESSION, 1860.

OPENING OF THE LEGISLATURE.

The Legislature having, by Proclamation, been summoned to meet for the dispatch of business on this, Thursday, the 16th February, His Excellency GEORGE DUNDAS, Esquire, was pleased to open the Session with the following

SPEECH

Mr. President and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly:

It affords me great satisfaction to meet you, assembled as you now are, for the discharge of your important duties.

In alluding to those subjects to which I would more particularly direct your attention, I am persuaded that you will, on entering on their consideration, do so with the sole desire to further the best interests of this Colony.

I would direct your attention to the necessity which exists for perfecting the present system of Education throughout the Island; and more particularly would I invite you to consider the propriety of reconstructing the arrangements on which the Central Academy is now based, in order that the increasing requirements for instruction in the higher branches of learning may be met, and the usefulness of that establishment augmented.

The arrangement, under which the Public Roads, Bridges and Wharves, are at present maintained and repaired, is somewhat irregular and unsatisfactory. This subject is well worthy of your notice, so that you may concert and mature a more efficacious method.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly:

The Address which, last Session, you submitted to the Crown, praying that a Commission be appointed to investigate and settle the whole question of Land Tenures, was graciously received by Her Majesty; a considerable delay has occurred at home in arranging the preliminaries of the Commission, but that delay was unavoidable. A very short time will now suffice to complete the formation of a Commission, from the labours of which I anticipate the best results.

I have directed the Accounts of the last year, and the Estimates for the present, to be laid before you. These have been prepared with every attention to economy, and with a due regard to the efficient performance of the public service.

Mr. President and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council:

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly:

I rejoice to be able to announce to you that the

Revenue, at the termination of the Financial Year, exhibits a very satisfactory appearance; still, as the public debt is considerable, it will be your duty to use your best endeavour to maintain, and if possible, augment the income of the Island.

In this direction much may be accomplished by a greater attention being bestowed on the manner in which the Duties on Foreign and Home made Spirits are imposed and collected. The Laws, also, regulating the issue of Tavern Licenses, I commend to your consideration, for revision.

The want of Light-houses on the East and North Capes of the Island has been, long seriously felt, and their absence has occasioned great loss of life and property. I have communicated with the Governments of the adjoining Provinces, with the view of obtaining their assistance and co-operation with us to make good this deficiency. On receiving replies, I shall direct them to be laid before you. The method, at present, adopted for the collection of Light duties, appears defective, and is capable of being advantageously readjusted.

A preliminary arrangement has been made, by the Government, with the Bank of Prince Edward Island, by which, for the future, Treasury Warrants can be at once exchanged for cash. The absence of this facility has long been felt as a great inconvenience. To confirm this arrangement an Act of the Legislature is required.

I have received from His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, a Despatch, which shall be laid before you: it relates to the subject of the pre-payment of Letters addressed to England. This system prevails in all the other North American Colonies, and is productive of much convenience: I therefore feel assured you will give the matter your consideration, with the view of complying with the wishes of Her Majesty's Government, that it be adopted in this Colony also.

The several Acts of the Legislature of last Session have received the approval of Her Majesty, and are now in operation.

From the Statute Book of the Island not having been revised for some years, much benefit would result from the consolidation of the Laws, to the propriety of which I would direct your notice.

We have reason for deep thankfulness to Almighty God for the bountiful harvest and general prosperity with which, during the past year, this Colony has been blessed; and I fervently pray that His favour may be continued to us, and that His wisdom may direct your deliberations, for the advancement of the welfare of this Island.