

S P E E C H .

Mr. President and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council ;

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly ;

I have summoned you for the Despatch of your Legislative Duties ; and I have great satisfaction in meeting you at the Opening of another Session.

Since the close of the last Session the Queen and the Nation have sustained an irreparable loss in the death of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort.

I feel sure that none of Her Majesty's subjects sympathize with their Sovereign in Her affliction more deeply than you do.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly ;

The Estimates for the Service of the ensuing Year will be laid before you—they have been framed with due regard to Economy.

The Public Accounts for the past Year will, also, be presented to you.

Notwithstanding the serious embarrassments, which the unhappy condition of a neighbouring People has occasioned to our Foreign Trade, I am glad to find that there has been no remarkable decrease in the Revenue of the past year. I regret, however, to say, that the Expenditure during the same period, though it shows a considerable decrease, as compared with the Expenditure of the preceding twelve-months, has not been covered by the Revenue.

Mr. President and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council ;

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly ;

Thirty-three of the Acts, passed during the last Session, have received the Royal Allowance.

I presume that the Act for taking a Census has also been left to its operation.

The remaining three, viz—the Elective Council Act ; the Act for the organization of the Volunteer Force, and that for the Incorporation of the Roman Catholic Bishop, have not as yet, received the Royal Allowance. Despatches from Her Majesty's Colonial Minister, containing suggestions on the subject of the two last-mentioned Acts, will be laid before you.

An Act passed in the Session of 1860, authorizing the Issue of Fishery Licences to citizens of the United States, for vessels built in this Island, and owned by them, has lately been specially confirmed by Her Majesty. I trust that it will have a beneficial effect on the Trade of this Country.

The Commissioners appointed to enquire into the Land Question have completed their laborious task, and have forwarded their Report to His Grace the Duke of Newcastle.

I have not as yet received any communication from His Grace on this important subject ; but I am confident that he will not allow this Session of the Colonial Legislature to pass without communicating to me Her Majesty's Commands on a question in which the people of this Island are so generally interested, and in regard to which they are known to feel so much anxiety.