

Resignation of
a Member.

Mr. Speaker communicated to the House, a Paper purporting to be the resignation of *Joseph Webster*, Esquire, Member representing the County of *Waterloo*, which is as followeth:—

To the Honorable the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of *Canada*,—

As empowered by 4 & 5 Vic. cap. 4, I hereby declare that I resign my seat as Representative in this present Parliament for the County of *Waterloo*.

Witness my hand and seal, at *Fergus*, in the said County of *Waterloo*, District of *Wellington*, and Province of *Canada*, this eighth day of January, 1849.

JAMES WEBSTER.

In presence of

Thomas W. Valentine,
Gilbert Hunter.

Justices of the
Peace Oath of
Office Bill.

Ordered, That the Honorable Mr. Attorney General *Baldwin* have leave to bring in a Bill to provide for the administration of the Oath of Office to persons appointed to be Justices of the Peace in this Province.

He accordingly presented the said Bill to the House, and the same was received and read for the first time; and ordered to be read a second time.

Mr. Speaker
reports His
Excellency's
Speech.

Mr. Speaker reported, That when the House did attend His Excellency the Governor General, this day, in the Legislative Council Chamber, His Excellency was pleased to make a Speech to both Houses of the Provincial Parliament, of which Mr. Speaker said he had, to prevent mistakes, obtained a copy, which he read to the House, as followeth:—

Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council,

Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly,

I have much satisfaction in informing you, that uninterrupted tranquillity has prevailed in the Province during the Recess.

The proofs which the people of *Canada* have furnished during this period of general excitement and disquietude, of their love of order, and of the attachment they bear to their institutions, will tend, I trust, to establish the credit of the Province on a firmer basis, and to promote its prosperity.

I am authorized to state for your information, that it is Her Majesty's purpose to exercise the prerogative of Mercy in favour of all persons who are still liable to penal consequences for political offences, arising out of the unfortunate occurrences of 1837 and 1838; and I have the Queen's commands to invite you to concur with me in passing an Act to give full effect to Her Majesty's most gracious intentions.

It affords me much pleasure to state, that in compliance with the desire of the local Legislature expressed in a joint Address of the two Houses of the Provincial Parliament, the Imperial Parliament has passed an Act repealing the Clause in the Union Act which imposed restrictions on the use of the French Language.

I have been in communication, during the Recess, with Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, and with the Lieutenant Governors of *Nova Scotia* and *New Brunswick*, on the subject of the Provincial Post Office, and I am enabled to inform you, that on the meeting of the Imperial Parliament steps will be taken for conferring on the Provincial Authorities the entire control and management of this Department. I trust that when the necessary arrangements for effecting this object shall have been completed, it may be found practicable to establish a low and uniform Rate of Postage for the British *North American* Provinces.

I am disposed to believe that an increase in the Representation would be attended with considerable advantage to the public interests; and I recommend this subject, which is one of no ordinary importance, to your best consideration.

It gives me much gratification to state, that the opposition manifested at one time in certain parts of *Lower Canada*, to the School Act, has in a great measure subsided. I am of opinion, nevertheless, that this Act may, with advantage, be amended in some of its details, and I feel confident that you will readily consent to make such alterations in it as shall render it as little as possible onerous to the Rate-payer, without, however, compromising the important principle which it has consecrated, in securing for all the youth of this section of the Province, the blessing of Education.

Among the subjects which will probably engage your attention, are the system of Judicature in both sections of the Province—the Laws for the regulation of Municipalities, and the Constitution of the University of King's College.

The Officers employed in exploring the Country between *Quebec* and *Halifax*, with the view of discovering the best line for a Railway to connect these two points, have presented a Report which contains much valuable information, and sets forth in a strong light the advantages of the proposed undertaking. I shall lay it before you, together with a Despatch from the Secretary of State for the Colonies expressive of the interest taken by Her Majesty's Government in the execution of this great work.

Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly,

I shall direct the Public Accounts, with the Estimates for the year, to be laid before you.

I rely on your readiness to grant the Supplies which are necessary for the Public Service.

Honorable Gentlemen, and Gentlemen,

I have observed, with much concern, that *Canada* has participated largely in the Commercial depression by which the past year has been so unfavorably characterized.

I have not failed to impress on Her Majesty's Ministers the urgent necessity which exists for the removal of such provisions from the Imperial Statute Book, as may tend to restrict the Commerce of the Province, by checking the resort of foreign Shipping to its Ports in search of freight; and I have much satisfaction in stating that my representations on this head have been cordially responded to by the Queen's Government.

Among the measures which seem to merit the attention of the Provincial Parliament at the present time, as being calculated to raise the credit of the Province, to extend its trade, and to contribute to the developement of its resources, I recommend to your consideration the following as specially important.

The provision of such funds as may be required for the completion of the *St. Lawrence* Canals, at the earliest period. These great works may, it is believed, be so far perfected at a small additional expense as to permit vessels drawing nine feet on the outwards, and eight feet on the inwards voyage, to pass from Lake *Erie* to the Ocean, soon after the opening of the navigation. When this object shall be accomplished, *Canada* will possess an Inland Navigation unparalleled in capacity and length, and connecting the marts of a Commerce to the growth of which it is impossible to assign limits.

The enactment of a Law authorizing the alienation of works of a purely local character which have been executed at the cost of the Province, and giving the Government such powers as may be necessary for the re-organization of the Provincial Debt, and creation of an efficient Sinking Fund. This Debt has been contracted not in the prosecution of costly wars, whether of defence or aggression, but in the construction of works of utility, the more important of which can hardly fail, when completed, to prove remunerative. The existence of a large revenue derived from Customs, places the creditor of the *Can-*