

From the Novascotian.

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT.

Council's Message—Structure of the Council.

It being the order of the day, Saturday, Feb. 11, to go into this question, the House, on the motion of Mr Doyle, proceeded to take it up, and the Clerk having read the order of the day, and the Message of the Council, Mr John Young, after some preliminary observations which we did not distinctly hear, submitted two resolutions (the substance of which we gave in our last number.) Mr Young followed them up by some remarks in justification of the course pursued by the House, and illustrating the reasonableness of its demand by reference to the established usage of the House of Lords, and to that of the Upper Branch of many Colonial Legislatures. He concluded by saying that whatever might be the fate of his resolutions, he wished them to stand on the Journals, as a vindication of the conduct of the House in the matters to which they referred.

Mr Howe then rose and spoke to the following effect, I wish, Mr Speaker, either that I had the abilities, the eloquence, and the logical mind of the hon. gen. from the County of Sydney, or that he had taken the same views that I do of the present question. Or, Sir, I wish that I possessed your fine talents, and graceful oratory, that, on a former occasion, rescued this House from the degrading position in which it was sought to be placed by His Majesty's Council; or that having to rely upon the feeble powers of my own mind, it was less clouded by sad thoughts than it is now. The subject before us is in itself sufficiently serious and depressing—and I beg to assure Gentlemen all around, that it has been to me a source of infinite anxiety and solicitude. I feel that, not only this House, but the Country it represents, is placed in a position the most degrading—that we are cursed with a form of Government which is not that under which we can ever hope to prosper. Some Gentlemen may perhaps imagine, that I and others have sought the necessity which now forces us into this discussion—that we intended it from the outset; but I beg to assure them that nothing was further from my thoughts. I felt anxious that the doors of the Council should be opened—and intended, some time before the close of the Session, to invite the attention of the House to what I conceived to be imperfections in the structure of that body; but I had no idea that the two questions would have been blended; and when my hon. and learned friend from Isle Madame consented to strike out of the Resolutions the only words that could, by any possibility, be deemed offensive, I felt assured that the Council would yield to our reasonable demand, and that that branch of the subject was forever set at rest. I knew that it was the right and the duty of this House to represent to either Branch of the Legislature the views and wishes of the People—and, as we had sent up a temperate and respectful remonstrance, one with which the Council might, with a good grace, comply, I hoped that there would have been an end to the matter—and that we were rid of a vexed and troublesome question. I need scarcely turn your attention to the character of the answer; if I was more than ordinarily excited when it was read, it was because I felt indignant at the treatment which the whole Province, in our persons, had received; and I appeal to the hon. and learned Gentlemen who opposed those resolutions, whether the answer, read by the Deputy Clerk at the Bar, did not make their blood boil with indignation? Sir, I know they felt as I—as all who sincerely love the country in which we live, must have felt—that the people of Nova Scotia, and their Representatives, were placed in a perilous and degraded situation, if such in-

sults could be offered unrebuked. That while we possessed the name of Britons—that while we were accustomed to read British books, and study the British Law—we were without either the spirit or the forms of liberty enjoyed by the great country to which our affections cleaved. Then it was that the conviction flashed on my mind that the time was come—earlier it is true than I had expected—when we would be compelled to revise our local government, and mould it to a form more consistent with the rights and liberties of the People.

Sir, when I listened to that message, I could not but reflect how exalted must be the opinion entertained by those who sent it, of their own impunity and power, and how contemptible an estimate they must have formed of the dignity and privileges of this House; and, when I turned back to the numberless insults which this Assembly had received in former times, I could not but feel that the time had indeed arrived for advocating an entire reconstruction of the Upper Branch.

Sir, I had hoped to be able to bring this subject before the House in a manner suited to its importance, but my time and thoughts have been much occupied with other affairs. I have, however, drawn up some Resolutions that embody my own views, which I shall endeavour to explain as I go along. But that Gentleman may not suppose I am anxious unnecessarily to excite their feelings—that I am not enlarging on grievances which exist only in my own imagination, I shall take the liberty of quoting your own words on an occasion similar to this—and, though I possess not your ready eloquence and clear perspicuous mind, I trust that I feel as deeply as you did the situation in which we are placed. You, Sir, on the 1st of April, 1830, characterized the Council's interference with the Revenue Bills as "a new lesson of degradation to be taught to this assembly." A "new lesson"—you, Sir, and the older members of this House, know how many had gone before. "When," said the Speaker, on that occasion, "we return to our homes, we should tell our constituents not to be deceived—that their Representatives possess neither power nor influence—to address no more idle petitions to us, but, to alter the address, and send them to the other end of the building." And again, "tell not the Inhabitants of Nova-Scotia that they enjoy a free Government—they have it not—the voice of their Representatives is outborne and rendered of no avail, when it militates in the slightest degree with the views of His Majesty's Council." Sir, what was true then, is true now—the species of insult which called for that indignant language, has but assumed another form—what you felt then, members all around feel at the present time—and for myself, I cannot disguise the fact, that if this House submits tamely to the recent insult; nay, if it allows the body which has offered it longer to distract the peace, and encumber the legislation of the Country, it will be indeed degraded; and a seat upon these benches, instead of conferring an honor, will be a mark of disgrace.

I have listened with attention to the language and the Resolutions of the hon. Member from Sydney—and I fully appreciate the love of peace and the desire for conciliation, which he has displayed. But I am sorry that I cannot support his proposition—because it neither meets the difficulties of our position, nor sustains the dignity of this House. The result would only be to induce a second insult—because, if the Council are consistent, they will either hold no communication with you on the subject, or send down their Deputy Clerk with another insulting Message. With them I would, on this subject, hold no further intercourse—the ordinary business of the Session must be gone through with them, that the re-

venue may not be lost or the Country injured, but let us seek redress elsewhere—let us go at once to the foot of the Throne, and ask His Majesty not only to open the doors, but to reconstruct the Council. Let this be our answer to their message—I am content that no other should be given. I am willing to let that document circulate as freely as the four winds of Heaven over the Province—to have what effect it may—I know that it will be rightly estimated by the people; they will weigh it against our firm but temperate resolutions, and not be deceived. Let us then leave it to its operation—let us be careful not to court further insult—but let us at once go to the very root of the matter, and present a comprehensive address to the Crown. With this object before me I have drawn up these Resolutions, which, if they are not as perfect as they might have been, had I had more leisure for reflection and research, express my own views, and trace out the line of conduct which I trust this House will be disposed to adopt. There may be errors, but, at all events, they embody and state those grievances which press most strongly on my own mind; and I wish to go at once to the fountain head for justice, to appeal from the Council to their Master—to ask him who should be the father of his People, wherever their lots are cast—and who has no more interest in refusing his rights to a Colonist than to an Englishman, and for a revision of our local government; we may bandy words with His Majesty's Council—we may send a saucy message by our Deputy Clerk, but to what end? At last we must resort to what I now propose, and therefore I trust that Gentlemen will see the propriety of doing it at once. Mr Howe then turned to the string of Resolutions, (noticed in the last Bee, page 324) and reading that marked No. 1. for the appointment of a Committee to draw up an address to His Majesty—and No. 2. referring generally to the choice of all the members of the Council from the Capital, he descanted on the absurdity of selecting an entire branch of the Legislature, that was to pass upon the business of the whole country, from one particular town. This was no new complaint—it had been constantly urged. Mr Stewart in March—33, had in his place declared that, besides its own representatives, Halifax had many non-resident Members, and had besides an entire Branch of the Legislature, sitting in secret and exercising a controlling influence over the Assembly.

Though he differed with the hon. and learned member from Cumberland in many things, he admired his fine talents, and had often listened with pleasure to his indignant denunciations on this and other subjects on which they agreed. Was there not good reason to complain on this head? He had travelled perhaps as much over the Province as any person of his age—but how could he pretend to represent distant counties, the high roads of which he had only ridden over once or twice, but of whose local wants and wishes he knew absolutely nothing—and yet, here was an entire Branch of the Legislature, almost every member of which knew comparatively less. Some persons may, Sir, be surprised, that being myself a resident in the town, I am anxious to do this justice to the Country—they may suppose that it is the interest of those I represent to accumulate in the capital all the honors, and power and patronage, of the Government—but, for myself and my constituents, I disclaim any such narrow and illiberal feelings. We seek for no advantages but such as arise naturally out of our situation—we repudiate the ancient prejudice that the town and country have separate interests—we wish equal justice and a fair participation in the influence and advantages of the Government to be extended to all. And we know that it is practically absurd that