

*Mr. President, and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council :*

*Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly :*

I feel much satisfaction in now meeting the Legislature for the despatch of public business.

Some months after the General Election last summer, a Requisition was addressed to me by several of the members of the Assembly, to summon you to meet on an early day, they considering that no time should be lost, in order to exclude, by legal enactment, Departmental officers from occupying seats in the Legislature. I did not think it expedient to accede to that request, because it occurred to me, that such a departure from the usual course would have been construed into an admission on my part, that evils had arisen demanding an immediate change, for one of your own Statutes, passed six years ago, is in force (as it was at the time of the election) defining what are Departmental Offices, and it provides, "that any Member of the Assembly who shall accept of any such office of profit or emolument, shall be incapable of taking or holding his seat in the General Assembly of this Island, unless re-elected after his acceptance thereof."

In regard to the Legislative Council, I do not understand why members of that body should be excluded (if such be really the intention), from participating, as they have hitherto done, in a share of the salaried or departmental offices of government.

Three years have nearly passed away since I was instructed to introduce what is termed Responsible Government, in accordance with the often repeated solicitations of many of Her Majesty's subjects here. Since that time, the Colony has been prospering, tranquil and contented; and judging from my intercourse with the people, they are well entitled to the concession they asked for. If, however, they now seek for changes in the Constitution, I hope they will be such as may contribute to the welfare of the community at large; for while I feel confident every favourable consideration will be given to the wishes of Her Majesty's loyal subjects, I am equally certain, that no Colonial Minister, unless for very cogent reasons, will deem it expedient, at least by Imperial interference, to narrow or diminish the principles of self-government now established in this Island. Since its introduction, all the Acts which have been passed by the Legislature, with the exception of one (still under consideration), have received the Royal assent—a circumstance, during a period of three years' legislation, which I believe, never before occurred in any North American Province.

You are aware, that the Education Bill, which was described at a public meeting by one of your learned Judges, "as the wisest, the noblest and the best that ever graced your Statute book," came into operation last Spring. At that time there were of existing schools about one hundred and ten—the number contemplated by the Act was two hundred, all of which have been applied for and recorded in terms of its provisions, and many more are earnestly desired. The Government has secured the services of Mr. Stark, an efficient inspector, thoroughly qualified for the task, and who is also prepared to carry out the views of the Royal Agricultural Society during his visits to the different districts of the country. He comes from the Normal Seminary, in the city of Glasgow, most strongly recommended by Mr. Stow, the philanthropic individual by whose exertions that Seminary has attained its eminence; being known in distant quarters of the globe, where the system introduced by him is spreading its beneficial influence. Mr. Stow takes a lively interest in your Christian and benevolent exertions in the cause of Education, and has urged on me to call your attention to the importance of perfecting your good work, by the establishment of a small Normal School, under the direction of the Inspector, where your teachers would be taught to practice an uniform system of training, which has proved so successful wherever it has been tried. If this can be accomplished, and I believe it can at a moderate expense, this Colony, small in extent, will become great in the estimation of all who value the blessings which society must derive from an improved method of training the hearts and minds of the rising generation.

*Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly :*

The oaths appointed by law have been administered to you to-day, in virtue of a Commission issued by me in the same form which has been used on all similar occasions, narrating that the High Sheriffs have returned all of you duly elected and qualified to serve in the Assembly. I observe, however, that the High Sheriff for Queen's County has returned one of the Members for that County, "duly elected, subject to the determination of the House of Assembly on the scrutiny, and of the facts set forth in respect thereof." This is an unusual return, and as such I notice it—its legality is a matter entirely for you to decide.

I am happy to say that the financial state of the Colony is very satisfactory. On the 31st January, 1850, the balance of the Debt against the Colony was £28,579 11s. 0½d. On the 31st January last