

*Thursday, 14th December, 1848.*

FIRST SESSION, FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 12TH VICTORIA.

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His Excellency's Speech. although so large a mass of the population were dependant on the Government for their daily subsistence.

The subject that has mainly occupied my attention has been the extension of the field of labour for our increasing population, the fisheries alone being now inadequate for their support ; and the promotion of Agriculture appears to me not only the surest but the sole course now remaining for us in the attainment of this end ; for the increased cultivation of the soil will not only carry with it the germs of future comfort and happiness to our population, but will directly contribute, as a most powerful auxiliary, to the great staple Trade of the Colony—the Fisheries, which first laid the foundation of its commercial greatness, and must ever be the source of its prosperity.

Our financial condition will not, I fear, admit of a large appropriation for the advancement of the most important part of this undertaking—the extension of Roads ; but there are some of the provincial main lines on which a comparatively small expenditure will be attended with great benefit to the Colony, and for which I hope some provision will be made ; I would particularly invite your attention to the great main lines of Conception Bay, St. Mary's, and Placentia.

I would also suggest for your consideration whether any expenditure on this branch of the public service will be most satisfactorily made under the control of Local Boards or the employment by the Government, during the autumn, of persons whose fishery has been unsuccessful, and who may thus provide something for their families for the approaching winter ; which latter system was attended with much success, both as regards the persons employed and the labour performed, during the last year.

Among the subjects requiring legislation I would particularly call your attention to that which relates to the condition of the Poor, dependant on the Government for support.

The rapid increase in their number and the consequent pressure on the Revenue, are such as, unless checked by some improved system, will involve us in much financial difficulty ; and therefore I would urge upon you the propriety of revising the mode under which relief is at present administered throughout the Colony.

The appearance in Europe of that fearful scourge, the Asiatic Cholera, and the probability of its extending its ravages to this side of the Atlantic, make it my duty to recommend to you the adoption of measures best calculated to mitigate its severity should it unhappily visit us ; and in your Legislature I would direct your attention to the adoption of similar measures to those now in progress in England, for improving the Health of Towns.

To meet expenses of this nature a moderate Assessment on houses