

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

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

A Bill for the Recovery of Small Debts will be submitted for your consideration.

I shall not further trespass on your time at present, than by directing your attention to a question which has become of great importance to Prince Edward Island. In 1849 its Legislature passed an Act for Reciprocal Free Trade with the United States, in certain enumerated articles. That Act has remained a dead letter, and we have no right to complain of the policy which may prompt the United States Government to adopt such legislation as they may think most conducive to the interests of the citizens of that great Republic, with whom, I trust, we shall always continue on terms of amity and friendship. But while concessions are sought for, advantageous to the United States, we have a right to expect, before they are granted, to be met in a corresponding spirit of reciprocal advantage. And I am induced to express that opinion, because I observe, during the same Session of 1849, the Legislature of this Colony agreed to a joint Address to Her Majesty, apparently unconditionally, praying for the abrogation of the Treaty of 1818, which prohibits others than British Subjects from prosecuting the Fisheries at a less distance from the shore than three miles ; the construction put upon that Treaty being, that the distance shall be computed from the head lands. The Address to which I have alluded was very graciously received by Her Majesty, and was to meet from Her Government with that earnest consideration which so important a subject demanded. But no further correspondence seems to have taken place with my Predecessor. The importance of the Fishery, and the magnitude of the United States fleet of Fishermen may be estimated, when I inform you that upwards of two hundred sail were at one time in one of our harbours in the autumn, and no fewer than seventy-two of their vessels were cast ashore or were more or less damaged on the Shores of this Island during the disastrous gale at the beginning of October last. I have, therefore, considered it to be my duty, with the advice of the Executive Council, to renew the correspondence with Her Majesty's Government on the Fishery question. Negotiations, I am informed, are now pending, which, I trust, will terminate to the mutual advantage of both Countries. But if no concessions can be granted by the United States, I hope you will direct your energies to induce British Capitalists to prosecute that important branch of trade and industry, and afford every facility to erect fishing stations along the shores of this Island.

With the blessing of God, I trust that your endeavours to promote the welfare and prosperity of the Colony, and the happiness of the People, may meet with success.

The Speech being ended, and the House of Assembly having withdrawn, His Excellency was pleased to retire.

Prayers were then read.

Mr. President reported His Excellency's Speech, which being read by the Clerk —

*Resolved*, That an humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, to return the thanks of this House for his Speech delivered this day.

*Ordered*, That Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Swabey, and Mr. Birnie be a Committee to prepare a Draft pursuant to the above Resolution.

*Resolved*, That a Committee be appointed to revise the Journals of this House each day, and that it be an instruction to the Committee to require that a printed Copy be laid on the Table daily.

*Ordered*, That Mr. Holl, Mr. Attorney General, and Mr. Hensley, do compose the said Committee.

*Resolved*, That a Committee be appointed to examine into and report upon such Laws as are near expiring.

*Ordered*, That Mr. Attorney General and Mr. Birnie do compose the said Committee.