

*Mr. President, and Honorable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council ;
Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly ;*

A Despatch which I have recently received acquaints me, that the Colonial Minister gladly acknowledges the promptitude with which the Legislature of this Colony hastened to give effect to what they supposed was the desire of Her Majesty's Government, that the award of the Commissioners, when given, be rendered valid and binding. The Colonial Minister did not, however, anticipate that the Legislature, with this object in view, would have proceeded to pass an Act of Assembly antecedent to the making of the award. As it, therefore, appears to His Grace the Duke of Newcastle that such legislation is premature, His Grace does not consider it advisable to submit, at the present moment, this Act for Her Majesty's assent.

You will be gratified to learn, that the purchase of the Selkirk Estate—sanctioned by you last year—has been attended with the most satisfactory results. The great majority of the Tenants on that Property have, in a manner highly creditable to themselves, come forward and paid the deposit of the purchase-money requisite for the redemption of their leaseholds. The large amount of the sum deposited, is an earnest of the self-sustaining character of the transaction.

In consequence of a clause in the Land Purchase Act, restricting the Interest on Debenture Loans to five per cent., it was found impossible to negotiate these while Treasury Warrants yielded six per cent. I was, therefore, compelled, in order to meet our engagements, to avail myself of the temporary expedient of issuing Warrants to the amount required. A considerable proportion of these Warrants has been redeemed, and I confidently look for your approval of the course I adopted.

In the absence of all Military Force for the protection of the Colony, I have endeavoured to organise, through the Island, Volunteer Rifle and Artillery Companies. My efforts have been seconded in a praiseworthy manner, by numbers of spirited young men, who have enrolled themselves in these corps. I trust that a patriotic feeling, similar to what prevails at home and in the adjacent Provinces, will prompt you liberally to support the movement, and enable me to complete the efficiency of these Volunteers. As the present Militia Law is not applicable to them, I would direct your attention to the necessity of legislating in reference to this valuable acquisition to our Military Forces.

The past year will be long remembered as that in which our Queen sent her eldest Son to visit Her North American subjects. In your reception of the Prince of Wales, you testified an attachment to Her Throne as gratifying to His Royal Highness as it was characteristic of the deep-rooted loyalty and fidelity of those whose pride it is, that they form a portion of the Great British People.

May your counsels be guided by an All-Wise Providence, that the prosperity of this Colony may be advanced, and the happiness and contentment of its people secured.

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