

THE house resolved itself into Committee of the whole on Mr. Johnston's resolutions, which were read by the Clerk, as follows:—

Whereas, The self Government extended to the British North American Provinces by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, having placed the Local affairs of the Province in the hands of the Executive Council unrestrained by any control on the part of the Lieutenant Governor or the Imperial Government, it is necessary to correct the anomalies and inconveniences unavoidable in the application of Imperial usages to a Colony; and a common duty is created, irrespective of party interests, to cast the Institutions of the Province into such forms as may unite the freest operation of the public sentiment with the most efficient, upright and economical exercise of the Executive, Legislative and Municipal functions; nor is it less obligatory on this house to obtain more perfect stability and certainty for the principles of Provincial Government than can now be relied on—the present Secretary of State for the Colonies having both in declarations and acts, shewn that a Minister of the Crown in the administration of Colonial affairs may hold himself free to disallow what a predecessor in the exercise of his official functions had established.

And whereas, First: As regards the Lieutenant Governor—This officer while in theory possessed of the Executive authority has been in reality denuded of all power, and should he attempt to exercise an independent control over the affairs of the Province he would disturb the principle of responsibility under which the Executive Council are now called to administer the functions of Government. Hence so long as the Lieutenant Governor shall continue to be viewed as the head of the Provincial Administration, he must either sink into insignificance or become the instrument of Executive obstruction; in the one case the reverence due the Sovereign being insensibly diminished by the contempt engendered for the office of Her Representative; in the other the harmony of the Province being endangered by the violation of a principle which the British Government in the last two years has affirmed, and Earl Grey as Colonial Secretary has sealed by acts of unmistakeable significance:

Resolved therefore, That to avert the evils of renewing questions of Government which, after years of agitation and uncertainty, have been established by Imperial authority, it is proper that the Lieutenant Governor of this Colony should be unquestionably recognised as an Imperial functionary, charged with the protection of national interests and as the official agent of communication between the Parent State and the Colony, but holding no relation to Colonial affairs beyond the ceremonial of Office.

Resolved further, That to fix this character to the Office it is proper the Lieutenant Governor should be paid entirely by the Imperial Government.

Resolved further, That if this Province shall be required to contribute any portion of the Lieutenant Governor's Salary, the sum of £1000 would fully meet the just proportion of this Colony and the value of his services under the present system—this House deeming it unjust that so large a sum as £3000 Sterling should now be paid by the Province, and absurd that

£250 Sterling, or any sum should be granted for the Private Secretary of an Officer who himself has but to subscribe the documents that others are required to prepare.

And whereas, Secondly: As regards the Legislative Council—The construction of the Legislative Council is inconsistent with the harmonious working of the present mode of Government and its useful influence as a Legislative Body. With a majority created by the Government of the day for securing party measures, the Legislative Council is for most essential purposes but the subservient instrument of the Provincial Government. The same majority on a change of parties would make it an obstructive Body, opposed to the existing Administration and wishes of the people as expressed by their Representatives in this House.

Resolved, That the most efficient remedy is to be found in the Election of the Legislative Council by the people for a limited period—the Members going out by Sections periodically: Thus the body would be brought nearer to the feelings and would more perfectly reflect the opinions of the Country, while the periodical infusion of new members would enable the people to correct the inconveniences that occasionally might arise from its composition, and tend to weaken those influences that result in merely party adhesions.

Hon. Mr. JOHNSTON, said:—Mr. Chairman, I rise for the purpose of explaining my reasons for offering for the approval of this Committee, the resolutions just read. In taking the steps I have, I am fully sensible that I have assumed no small measure of responsibility. The hon. Provincial Secretary lately intimated that this was rather an act of a party nature—than one having for its high object—the elevation of the people. It is impossible to discuss such a question as this without in some measure touching upon the relations in which parties stand to each other in Nova Scotia; but Mr. Chairman, I would not have troubled you to day—had no higher motives—no more elevated reasons—than such as find their origin in mere party spirit, influenced me in submitting the resolutions I am about to explain. I believe, sir, that Nova Scotia is now in a situation that demands the serious attention of all concerned in its welfare—and that the state of transition is of much importance through which this country is passing. We may differ as to the attributes and forms which constitute a good Government, but none will deny that such a Government is among the greatest of earthly blessings. I aim at no unattainable heights. What I understand by a good Government,—what I do desire for my country, is a system that shall foster and promote the moral qualities and develop the industrial resources of the people. One that shall give to the popular voice the utmost influence consistent with the efficiency of the Executive; to the Executive an effective authority that shall not control the just power and privileges of the people. But it is also deeply important that the principles of Government, should be well defined, clearly understood, and securely established. And let it be remembered by every man in Nova Scotia that our present system of Government has sprung into existence at the fiat of a Colonial Minister and