

TUESDAY, 31st DECEMBER, 1839.

Who, being come with their Speaker, His Excellency was pleased to make the following

S P E E C H :

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

Speech

I have been principally induced to call you together at this early period, from its having come to my knowledge, that the requisitions of the Act for the Regulation of Juries, which passed in the Session of 1838, have not been duly attended to, whereby important criminal proceedings have been already delayed for the want of legal Grand Juries, and great public inconvenience must necessarily follow, unless a speedy remedy shall be afforded by the Legislature. I therefore most earnestly request your immediate attention to this subject so important to the administration of Justice.

I shall take an early opportunity of laying before you the Despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, in reply to the Addresses and Resolutions adopted by you in the last Session, and to the various other communications on the State of the Province, which were recently brought under the notice of Her Majesty's Government, by the Delegates selected from both Houses to proceed to England for that purpose. But I cannot forego the pleasure of immediately quoting the following expressions of the Right Honorable Secretary:

"In discussing the subjects adverted to, it has been my anxious endeavour to arrive at the conclusion most calculated to meet the wishes and promote the interests of all classes of Her Majesty's Subjects in Nova-Scotia. The attachment which they have invariably displayed to the Mother Country, the liberality and gallantry with which on a recent occasion, at a crisis of peculiar difficulty, they came forward to tender to Her Majesty their personal and pecuniary assistance, in the maintenance of Her authority on the North American Continent, entitle them to every consideration which it is in the power of the Crown to bestow."

At the commencement of the last Session, I informed you that it was contemplated to substitute Steam Packets for the sailing vessels now employed in the conveyance of the Mails, between Great Britain and Halifax, and I have now the gratification to acquaint you, that an arrangement has been concluded, (at the annual charge of £60,000 sterling to the Mother Country,) for the running of Steam Packets, twice in every month, between Liverpool and Halifax, and also between Halifax and Boston, and between Pictou and Quebec, as long as the St. Lawrence is navigable; and I have peculiar satisfaction in adding that this arrangement, which must be attended with such important benefits to all these Colonies, was brought about by the enterprising spirit of a Nova-Scotian Merchant, at a time when difficulties had unexpectedly occurred which might have otherwise prevented its early accomplishment.

In my former Address to you on this subject, I intimated the expectation that was entertained, that this Colony would, as far as depended upon it, further the general object by improving the several Mail Routes to Quebec; and I have reason to believe, that, had there been any certainty that the scheme would be carried into effect in the ensuing season, ample provision would have been made by the Assembly in aid of the liberal views of Her Majesty's Government.

The same expectation is repeated in the Despatch announcing the completion of the arrangement, which reached me some time after the close of the last Session. It thereupon became my duty to lose no time in endeavouring to prevent the disappointment of that just expectation, and the question arose whether I should convene the Legislature for the purpose of laying the Despatch before them, or, anticipating their appropriation of money, at once proceed with the necessary improvements, and thus save a year without putting the Province to the expense and inconvenience of an extra Session.

On consulting with my Council, I was induced to adopt the latter course; and though to draw money from the Treasury, without the sanction of a Law, is rarely justifiable, still I feel