

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

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

Our especial gratitude, as a people, is due to the Almighty for our exemption from pestilence during the year that has past.

To that source we must also gratefully ascribe the success which, in the last season, has attended the industry of the husbandman, and rewarded the toils of the fisherman.

The revenue, though somewhat diminished in productiveness, when compared with that of the preceding year, as was anticipated, from the reduction of duties, and the first effects of suddenly expanded commercial freedom, is nevertheless, amply sufficient to meet all demands upon it, and affords satisfactory evidence of the increased energies, and growing prosperity, of the people.

The Normal School—opened at Truro during the past Autumn, under circumstances most auspicious—is now in efficient operation.

A measure, having for its object the improvement of the general educational condition of the country, will be submitted for your consideration.

Our Railway system is progressing favorably, and I trust that, when the accounts of the expenditure and liabilities, connected with it, are laid before you, the utmost prudence and economy will be found to have been observed by those to whom the legislature has entrusted the conduct of this important branch of the public service.

The reports and accounts respecting St. Peter's Canal, and the Lunatic Asylum, when submitted to you, will show you that those public works have advanced satisfactorily during the past season :

On the subject of the Mines and Minerals, in connection with the claims of the General Mining Association, an opinion of the Imperial Law Officers of the Crown, and a correspondence with the Colonial Secretary, will be laid before you, which will doubtless engage your most earnest attention.

A measure will be submitted to you, founded on the example of the mother country, and on our local experience, for facilitating the collection, and improving the administration, of the revenue.

The substitution of a simpler and more economical process for re-vesting forfeited lands in the Crown, in place of the existing system, will be proposed to you by my government.

The selections of Stock, which I have made, in accordance with the desire, expressed in the closing session of the last Parliament, will, I trust, commend themselves to your approval.

I venture to indulge a confident expectation that the further promotion of Agriculture, in its various relations, will, in the present session, command the interest of the representatives of a people thoroughly capable of appreciating the importance of that great object.

Some modification of the existing Laws for protection of the River Fisheries appears to me imperatively called for, and I trust that your local experience will suggest such improvement of them as will ensure the attainment of the purpose for which they were enacted.

You will be gratified, I am sure, to learn that I have resumed the occupation of Government House, seriously injured by the late fire, but renovated and refurnished in a style that be-

speaks your munificence, whilst it demands my grateful acknowledgements.

CHIEF CLERK.

Dr. Webster moved that Alexr. James, Esq., be First Clerk, which was seconded by Mr. Morrison.

Hon. J. W. Johnston—It has been usual, in the practice of this House, to re-elect the incumbents of the Clerkship. I regret that any deviation from this course has been attempted, more especially at this session, for the House never was in a position when such a course was less called for. The gentleman who held the situation of First Clerk to the last House is singularly distinguished in the performance of his duties for diligence, industry and capability—by his urbanity and general courtesy of manner; and I am quite sure, sir, that in your own person, having occupied the Speaker's Chair but for a short period, you must have experienced the advantages to be derived from having an officer in that position practically acquainted with the duties he is called on to fulfil, and able to afford information whenever necessary. The Clerk being the officer of the whole House, should be a partizan of neither side, more especially when so large a proportion of the members have been newly elected, and occupy seats for their first time. All these circumstances concur to make any change inexpedient. Mr. Twining informs me that he has not requested any honorable gentleman to nominate him, and I regret that I am under the necessity of doing so—not that I have any objection to proposing him, but because that, coming from me, his nomination may be supposed to flow from considerations of party. To remove any such impression, I may at once state that it is my intention to vote for the re-election of both the old officers. With these views, I beg leave to propose Mr. Henry Twining as a candidate for the office which he has previously filled with such ability and so satisfactorily.

The proposition was seconded by Mr. McFarlane (Cumberland.)

Hon. Attorney General—The clerkships in the Commons of the mother country are patent offices, to which appointments are made by the Crown, although they are supposed to be with the approval of the Lower House. This, however, is not the practice here. The House of Commons of this Province has always claimed and exercised the right of selecting and appointing their own clerks—a course, in my view, wiser and more correct than the practice in England. It is the privilege of each member of this House then to propose such candidates as his own feelings dictate. By a wise regulation adopted in many successive Parliaments, the votes upon the appointment of these officers are taken by ballot—so that each member may, after he has exercised his undoubted right in secret, approach the table of a clerk against whom he may have voted without inducing ill-feeling on his part. In justice to Mr. Twining, I may say that no complaint has been or can be preferred against him for the manner in which his duties have been performed; in all respects, his diligence and ability have given entire satisfaction. With respect to Mr. James, I have to reiterate the same tribute to his abilities and industry.

Mr. Wade—I feel called on, Mr. Speaker, to make a few remarks. This is no party question. I look to the clerks as officers who owe equal duty to both sides, and I exceedingly re-