

On the 9th January 1786, the first General Assembly met at St. John ; in his speech at the opening of the session, Governor Carleton said :—A meeting of the several branches of the Legislature for the first time in this new Province, is an event of so great importance and must prove so conducive to its stability and prosperity, that I feel the highest satisfaction at seeing His Majesty's endeavors to procure the inhabitants every protection of a free Government in so fair a way of being fully successful. The preceding winter was necessarily spent in guarding the people against those numerous wants incident to their peculiar situation, and the summer has been employed as well in the prosecution of this essential business as in dividing the Province and establishing the several officers and courts of justice requisite for the security of the farmer, while engaged in raising a support for his family; and now that the season of the year renders travelling commodious, and allows you leisure to attend to the public business without interruption to your private affairs, I have called you together in compliance with the King's instructions that you may put the finishing hand to the arduous task of organizing the Province by re-enacting such of the Nova Scotia laws as are applicable to our situation, and passing such Bills as you shall judge best calculated to maintain our rapid advance toward a complete establishment in the country."

After directing the attention of the Legislature to various important objects, His Excellency concluded his speech as follows :—"It is with real pleasure I declare that our prospects are so favorable, that your exertions for those significant purposes can scarcely fail to render this asylum of loyalty the envy of the neighboring States, and that by exercising the arts of peace, they who have taken refuge here will not only be abundantly recompensed for their losses, but enabled to enjoy their connection with the parent state and retain their allegiance to the best of kings, which their conduct has proved they prize above all other considerations."