

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, February 26, 1857.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES.

After the members of the House had returned to their own apartments, the following Committees were appointed:—

To provide Stationery—Hon. Col. Treasurer, Messrs. Clark and Munro.

To receive Tenders for Printing the Journals—Messrs. Clark, Muirhead and H. Haviland.

On Expiring Laws—Hon. Col. Treasurer, Muirhead, and H. Haviland.

To prepare an Answer to His Excellency's Speech—Mr. Macdonald, Hon. Mr. Whelan, Messrs. Muirhead, Cooper, Munro, Perry and Dingwell.

Good Correspondence with the Legislative Council—Hons. Col. Secretary and Wightman, Messrs. Dingwell, Macdonald, Hons. Longworth and Haviland.

To examine Bills to be Engrossed—Messrs. Clark, Macdonald, Munro, Perry and H. Haviland.

To revise Journals—Messrs. Muirhead and Perry, and Hons. Messrs. Montgomery, Longworth and Palmer.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

On Hon. Mr. Wightman being nominated a member of a committee on Public Accounts—

Mr. H. HAVILAND said, surely a Member of the Government would not be appointed a member of that committee.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY wondered where the hon. member obtained his information, that a member of the Government ought not to be on that committee. No hon. member was fitter to be on that committee than a Member of the Government; and he did not see how that committee could get on without such a member on it. Having a member of the Government on the committee, instead of writing letters requesting information on the subjects referred to them, the Committee could obtain the information they required from him. In the other Colonies, members of the Government, such as the Financial Secretary and others, were appointed members of the committee on the Public Accounts.

Hon. Mr. WHELAN, alluding to the other Colonies, said, he saw that on some occasions the chairman of the committee on Public Accounts was a member of the Government. The observations made by the Hon. Col. Secretary were very much to the point. The Financial Secretary, in the other Provinces, examined the public accounts; and he trusted the day was not far distant when the House of Assembly of this Colony would resort to the practice of having an officer to undertake that laborious duty—when that duty would be discharged by an officer who would require to be on the floor of the House.

Hon. Mr. LONGWORTH thought it was probable a member of the Government would refuse the appointment; and doing that, of course the majority of the House could not oblige him to accept it.

Hon. Mr. WIGHTMAN said, if it was not the practice in the neighboring Provinces, he certainly would decline the appointment; but as it was the practice there, and he had been nominated a member of the committee, of course he would act.

Hon. Mr. PALMER said, an hon. member had stated that a member of the Government was the most fit person to be put on the committee of public accounts; but in that case members of the Government had better compose that com-

mittee altogether. He did not rise, however, to make any objection by a motion to Hon. Mr. Wightman as a member of that committee. He did not see any great difference between a member of the Government being on that committee and a member of the House who was in the habit of supporting the Government.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY said, perhaps it would be better to nominate the seven members of the minority members of the committee in question. He thought it was time the majority looked very narrowly after the business devolving on that committee, and not allow such proceedings as took place last year. Perhaps the minority desired the privilege they had enjoyed then; but he thought the country would look at the majority with a very scrutinizing eye, if they allowed the public accounts to be falsified, as had been done last Session.

Hon. Mr. LONGWORTH said, the minority did not make a false statement of the public accounts last year. He asked the hon. member to show where they had been falsified. As far as he could judge, they had not been falsified. [Hon. Col. Secretary: they were falsified by the comments.] If the original document were produced, it would appear there that they had been modified.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY said, the hon. member was mistaken. The original document referred to was merely a statement sent into the House, giving a probable estimate of the property on the Worrel Estate, if it should be sold. But if the public accounts were not correct, who was to blame? The Auditors of the public accounts were gentlemen who supported the present minority. He did not fear the investigation of the public accounts; and the Government had appointed two gentlemen Auditors of those accounts, who were directly opposed to them; but those gentlemen had failed to discharge the duty properly. He could tell from the statements made what was not true. Had it not been stated that he had received £15 for going to Fyfe's Ferry Bridge? but he had received no such sum. It had also been stated that his friend on his right (Hon. Mr. Whelan), had received a certain sum for printing; but it also included charges for stationery. The people, however, were now becoming aware that the statements put forth by that newspaper (*the Islander*), were not to be relied on; and he believed now, that tho' it should publish the truth, the people would not believe its statement.

Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY said, the hon. member was making statements that were not true; the minority never did anything of the kind. He had been on the committee; and as far as he knew, there was nothing of the kind done. If the accounts furnished to the committee were correct statements of what was laid before the House, and if they had been commented upon, why attack the minority for it? He contended that the statements published in the newspaper alluded to were a true copy of the accounts. [Hon. Col. Secretary: I beg to say, it was not true; there was no such statement in the public accounts.] He could tell the Hon. Col. Secretary the statements he had made were not correct; and he trusted hon. members would confine themselves to facts, and such statements as would not excite angry feelings between them. The statements just made were not correct; let the accounts be produced.

Hon. COL. SECRETARY asked who took the public accounts from the desk containing them? had the Editor of the *Islander* a right to go and ransack that desk? Did he think the public were fools?

Mr. COOPER said there was an unfair advantage taken last year, but who was to blame he could not say. He thought the minority would have a good opportunity to