

Enclosure 2, in No. 1.

Copy of Lieutenant-Governor Sir F. B. Head's Speech on closing the Session of the Legislature of Upper Canada, on the 20th of April 1836.

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Lieut.-Governor's
Speech on closing
the Session.

Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council: and

Gentlemen of the House of the Assembly:

BEFORE I release you from the legislative duties in which you have been respectively engaged, I consider it necessary to recapitulate the principal events of this Session.

You are perfectly aware that for many years the House of Assembly of Upper Canada have loudly complained of what they term their "grievances," and that at the end of your last Session these complaints having been referred to a "Committee of Grievances," were, by the Assembly, "ordered to be printed in pamphlet form." In pursuance of this order a volume, containing 570 pages, was forwarded to, and received by His Majesty's Government, as containing the sum total of the complaints of the people of this province.

Whether the mere order for printing this report of the Committee could be legally considered as sanctioning it with their opinions, I have no desire to discuss; because no sooner did the said report reach His Majesty's Government, than it was determined that the grievances it detailed should immediately be effectually corrected; and, accordingly, instructions were drawn out by His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, in which each subject of complaint was separately considered, and a remedy ordered for its correction: and I have only to refer to those Instructions to prove the generosity with which His Majesty overlooked certain language contained in the report, and the liberality with which he was graciously pleased to direct that impartial justice should be administered to His subjects in this province.

His Majesty's Government having determined that I should be selected to carry these remedial measures into effect, I waited upon the Colonial Secretary of State, (to whom, as well as to almost every other member of the Government, I was a total stranger,) and respectfully begged leave to decline the duty, truly urging as my reason, that having dedicated my whole mind to a humble but important service, in which I was intently engaged, it was more congenial to my disposition to remain among the yeomanry and labouring classes of my own country, than to be appointed to the station of Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. His Majesty's Government having been pleased to repeat their request, I felt it impossible not to accede to it; and I accordingly received the instructions which had been framed; and having had the honour of an interview with His Majesty, during which, in an impressive manner which I can never forget, he imposed upon me His royal commands to do strict justice to his subjects in this province, I left England with a firm determination to carry the remedial measures with which I was entrusted into full effect.

I arrived at this capital on the 23d of January last, and on the 27th I delivered a speech, in which I informed you I would submit in a message the answer which His Majesty had been pleased to give to the several addresses and representations which proceeded from the two branches of the legislature during the last Session. I added, that as regarded myself, I had nothing either to promise or profess, but that I trusted I should not call in vain upon you for that assistance which your King expected, and which the rising interests of your country required.

In thus officially coming before the legislature of this country from our gracious Sovereign, with a full measure of reform, I had expected that my appearance would have been hailed and welcomed by both Houses of the Legislature, more especially by that from which had proceeded the Grievance Report; and I must own, I never anticipated it could seriously be argued for a moment that I was intruding upon the privileges of either House.

Having made myself acquainted with the outline of public feeling in this province, by conversing calmly with the men of most ability of all parties, I communicated the result to Lord Glenelg, in despatches, dated the 5th of February, of which the following are extracts:

"Under these circumstances, I consider that the great danger I have to avoid is the slightest attempt to conciliate any party; that the only course for me to adopt is, to act fearlessly, undisguisedly, and straightforwardly for the interests of the country; to throw myself on the good sense and good feeling of the people, and abide a result which I firmly believe will eventually be triumphant."

"Whatever may be the result, I shall steadily and straightly proceed in the course of policy I have adopted: I shall neither avoid, nor rest upon any party; but after attentively listening to all opinions, I will, to the best of my judgment, do what I think honest and right; firmly believing that the stability of the throne, the interests of this province, and the confidence of the people, can now only be secured by such a course."