

THE
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SESSION, 1867.

Meeting of the Legislature.

THURSDAY, April 18, 1867.—At 3 o'clock His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor was pleased to command the attendance of the Members of the House of Assembly at the Bar of the Council Chamber. Accordingly the Members appeared before His Excellency, and after the usual formalities returned to choose their Speaker, when,

On motion of the Hon. Joseph Mensley, Attorney General, seconded by the Hon. Benjamin Davies, the Hon. Joseph Wightman was appointed Speaker.

His honor the Speaker having suitably acknowledged the high honor conferred on him, the Speaker elect, with the House, then went up to the Council Chamber, when His Excellency was pleased to open the First Session of the Twenty-third General Assembly of this Island, with the following

SPEECH :

Mr. President and Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council :

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly :

The time at which it was deemed advisable to dissolve the last Assembly, and the Ministerial arrangements which were the result of the General Elections, have prevented me from summoning you at an earlier period for the discharge of your Legislative duties. Although the lateness of your meeting must be attended with inconvenience to you, I rely with confidence upon your devoting sufficient time to mature such measures as the exigencies of the Colony and its public service may require.

During the recess, the purchase of extensive Estates has been effected—the particulars of which will be laid before you.

I do not fail to observe the general desire evinced by the tenantry to obtain the fee simple of their land by the purchase of their farms. My efforts are, therefore, directed towards extending the action of the Land Purchase Bill to such parts of this Island as have not yet participated in its benefits, and I shall endeavour, under its provisions, to buy out the interest of the remaining proprietors in the comparatively small portion of the land which is now held under leasehold tenure. The means of providing funds for this purpose will require your serious consideration.

The important question of Education will again be submitted for your consideration, with the view of improving the position

of the school teachers, and otherwise rendering the laws now in force on this subject more efficient and more extensively useful.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly :

The public accounts for the past year will be laid before you. The revenue has increased, but the expenditure has been largely in excess of ordinary years, on account of the purchase of the Estates to which I have alluded, and the amount required for military purposes.

The Estimates for the current year will be submitted to you. They have been framed with due regard to economy.

Mr. President and Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council :

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly :

The advantages to be derived from the development of local industry and from improvements in agriculture are well worthy of your attention, and I shall be glad to co-operate with you in such measures as you may devise for the advancement of these interests.

The serious loss incurred by the total unfitness of the highways to support the yearly increasing traffic, renders it absolutely necessary that the whole question should undergo a thorough investigation, with a view to the adoption of a better system. Your experience will readily suggest the most appropriate means of collecting information on this important subject as a preliminary step to future legislation.

In full reliance on your zeal for the welfare of the Colony, I now leave you to the discharge of your Legislative duties.

Hon. Members of the Assembly having returned to their seats, His Excellency's Speech was again read from the Chair, after which the House proceeded to business.

The Hon. Attorney General proposed that John McNeill, Esq., be re-appointed Clerk. The Hon. Mr. Haviland stated that he had great pleasure in supporting the nomination of Mr. McNeill, who, he said, had discharged the important duties of that office with remarkable efficiency in previous Parliaments; and he (Hon. Mr. H.) congratulated the House on the circumstance that that gentleman's ability and experience were now again fortunately available for the service of the present Assembly, which had a larger than ordinary proportion of new Members.