

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 3.

The House met at 3 o'clock.  
Mr. HOGSETT and Mr. PARSONS called the attention of the House to the system of issuing tickets of admission to the House. Hon. members were daily pestered with applicants for tickets, to the serious interruption of their business.

The SPEAKER assured hon. members that he would endeavour to have the matter satisfactorily arranged.

On motion of Mr. GODDARD, pursuant to order of the day, the House resolved itself into Committee of the Whole on the Address of thanks to His Excellency the Governor, Mr. KNIGHT in the chair.

The first paragraph was then read and adopted.

The second paragraph having been read,

Mr. PARSONS said the first paragraph of this Address purposed to thank His Excellency for his gracious speech, and for the uniform courtesy which he has exhibited to this Assembly. Where could one find a greater illustration of the happy state of affairs existing in Newfoundland? For the past five years we have been dwelling in the utmost peace and harmony. One would fancy that the millennium had arrived. Now what occasion was there to thank His Excellency for this? His Excellency was certainly a very graceful gentleman; but it was rather ridiculous to offer him the solemn thanks of the House because he had refrained from pulling the hon. Premier by the nose, and because he did not kick the Executive Council out of Government House. Gracious Speech, forsake! Was it not high time to get rid of this nonsense? He (Mr. P.) could see nothing for which to thank His Excellency in so special and peculiar a manner. The second paragraph of the Address read as follows:-

"We fully approve of the course taken by the Executive Government in issuing the Proclamation in June last, that relief in future would be confined to destitute widows and orphans, and to the sick and infirm poor. We believe this act well timed, and we cordially hope and trust that the Executive may be successful in its efforts to supersede the demoralizing system of able-bodied pauper relief."

Now there was not a single human being in the country to whom the course pursued by the Government could commend itself. He (Mr. P.) did not deny the demoralizing influence of pauper relief, but he certainly did contend that Government before cutting off from the people the only source of maintenance on which they had relied, should have furnished them with some means of supporting themselves and their families. But hon. gentlemen opposite cared little how deeply the country might be steeped in poverty, so long as they could save the Revenue. £30,000 have been annually expended, and Government had shown no anxiety to obtain any return for this enormous outlay. Every man who applied for relief was received and welcomed; no inquiry was made, and indiscriminate charity was issued broadcast, and why? Because hon. gentlemen, members of the Executive were importers of Indian meal and molasses. The hon. the Premier purchased meal from the hon. Mr. this, and molasses from the hon. Mr. that, though he himself was the introducer of the Placemen's Act, by which Government contractors were made ineligible as legislators. And whose money had hon. gentlemen been expending? The pauper's own money. Not a man but had paid for every fraction of the pittance which he received, in money or in labour, in sweat, in peril, eye and in death. The speculation of hon. gentlemen opposite was a good one. An Executive Councillor had only to trade upon his politics, let his stock in trade be meal and molasses; let him fill up the interstices with strategy, and he could not fail to succeed. Upon the second paragraph he (Mr. P.) had to propose an amendment, which was as follows:-

While we admit the necessity of the large outlay under the head of relief for the able-bodied poor, we cannot refrain from expressing our disapproval of the injurious mode in which such outlay was effected; and our regret that no remedial measures had been adopted by the Government to relieve the evils accruing to the poor from its sudden stoppage. In his speech His Excellency says that "notwithstanding all the guards" at the disposal of the Government, the drain upon the revenue was annually increasing. What "guards" did His Excellency refer to? The only guard he required was honesty, rectitude of purpose; but unfortunately that was not forthcoming. He contended that if this £30,000 had been spent in the employment of the fishermen of the country, after the completion of their hard summer's labour, there would not have been a pauper in the country. He believed that the outcry about the condition of the country was merely got up to frighten the people into Confederation. It was true, the times were bad, but they had been bad before now. So long as we have to import the commonest necessities of life, there will be paupers. But if this £30,000 had been employed in assisting the poor fisherman to cultivate his homestead, how different would the result have been? Five acres of land were sufficient to maintain a poor man and his family. Let the poor man till his land, and with the wealth which God sends him from the sea, he will make a comfortable subsistence. Never was a country more blessed by Providence, and yet we could daily hear it denounced, merely for the purpose of debasing the people of the country, and making them believe that a change was required, and that for that change we must look abroad, and not within ourselves. Doubtless a change was necessary, but the change must be radical and internal, not from without. The poor man of the country, who, as he pays no taxes, is unaffected by taxation, might ask what he could lose by Confederation. Now, at least, he possesses the inalienable birth right of British freedom. Under this nefarious union he would be curtailed of his liberty. Why, he would hardly be allowed to sneeze. Let the men of money look to it, then. They must necessarily be affected by this scheme. Oppressive taxation would press them down. Canada would tax their food, their clothes, their beds, their boats, their nets, their hooks and their lines. She would tax everything they possessed when living, and their coffins after they were dead. The able-bodied poor want you to open up the resources of the country, and not to give them yellow meal. The hon. member then referred to the importance of our fisheries, and contended that the Government should foster and protect this branch of our industry. He pictured the miseries of those who were without food, and stigmatized the Proclamation of the Government relative to poor relief as the most cruel and despotic act that ever emanated from the most despotic of Governments. He begged therefore to propose the amendment which he had read.

MR. PINSENT.—The Speech with which the Governor has opened the present session of the Legislature is one of more than ordinary importance. It is the first, in fact in the career of the present Government, which has been marked with a decisive policy, upon the two great questions of Poor Relief and Confederation. It gives us some very important and, so far satisfactory, information, upon the Frisco Shore

question; and the provisions made for the Mail service are such as give promise of greater efficiency, comfort and convenience, under the Inman, than under the Cunard Contract; and for these matters much credit was due to the Executive and to the Governor himself. With reference to the Proclamation designed to suppress the "gigantic evils" which have been produced by an ill regulated system of Pauper Relief,—he was disposed to think that, in the absence of positive measures for the improvement of the condition of the people, the Executive has done wisely in, so far at least, withholding its hand. Whether consistently with the calls of humanity, and without the substitution of some new mode of succour, this sudden and radical change can be continued throughout the coming three months, is now a question the responsibility of which rests more with this House than with the Government. This administration seems to have failed, and he knew of no other that could succeed, nor had he heard any serious plan suggested by any party or person in the Legislature or out of it, for the amelioration of this country and its people, by the use solely of any means within ourselves. The Opposition can suggest none.

MR. HOGSETT.—We are not the Executive.

MR. PINSENT.—No, and he was not a member of the Government, nor was he paid, but he considered that it was no less his duty, and that of every member of the House, in the faithful discharge of his obligations to the people, in their present straits to devise and suggest positive measures of amelioration, if he could. If he could not, it showed that there were none to offer. How were the representatives of the people to demonstrate their fitness to rule, and to succeed to Government, unless they manifested a capacity to do that which those in power failed to do. But this Proclamation was condemned by the amendment of the hon. member, Mr. Parsons. The policy of the Government is denounced to-day by the Opposition, which yesterday unanimously declared its approval of that policy in this respect, and took credit to itself for having instigated and forced it, and of initiating a course so creditable. He supposed this change of opinion arose from the change of leadership. The hon. leader Mr. Glen, did not approve of the non-relief plan for which he was such an advocate. Was the hon. member Mr. Parsons, really in earnest, in condemning the Government for their action in checking this ill-regulated system of Poor Relief? And yet he offers no other remedy in the House, and he has never suggested any remedial measures but the Torbay Factory Bill, and Steam Bait skiff, and he has shewn no outside activity in public charities, in associations for relief. He could not claim the credit that attached to the gallant Major, who is the active Secretary of an extensive Benevolent Institution, not to the hon. member for St. John's West, Mr. Bieman, who, no doubt, subscribed liberally. Reflections had been cast upon members of the Government, who were said to have improperly profited by the distribution of pauper relief; and others, who were said to have absorbed the greater part. It was a grave imputation, which rested on the unsupported assertion of the hon. member, which could not be proved by the public accounts. If any fraud of that kind could be proved, he (Mr. P.) would be sorry to support such an administration. He believed this charge was unsupported in fact. The general system of Poor Relief had been defective; but no more so lately than before. The men accused if using these means of rapacity had stopped it. But as to the Proclamation, the view he (Mr. P.) took was that the Proclamation may limit the Governmental expenditure, but cannot eradicate pauper-relief. The Government may, by the hard lesson of aggravated adversity, teach a greater measure, of thrift and self-reliance, and some good may be done, but there is a limit to all this. We must, while we refuse to aid, devise, if we can, the means and opportunities for improvement and industry. Mark the present condition of this country. We are truly told in the speech from the throne that the past year has been unmarked by disaster or epidemic disease, that both fisheries and the crops have been attended with good average results, that the price of provisions has been moderate. Where are the corresponding effects, where the results we should naturally look for from such a state of things, in the comfort, the independence, and happiness of the people? Is not the condition of the working classes the reverse of these three? Is it not deplorable? Is there a member of this House, a very large proportion of whose constituents is not in a wretchedly destitute state? Our duties had already been reduced to little better than a pauper-relief agency; and honorable members are, by the policy of the Government, as indicated in its Proclamation, deprived even of that privilege. But, consoling reflection, we have the luxury of Responsible Government, this magnificent travesty of the British Constitution, King, Lords and Commons; and yet how many hon. members are there that would like to see the man who could say of the mace—"take away this baulk," and who would knock the pillars of the Constitution about our ears; and if this were, or could be done, and the civil expenditure were reduced to any sum short of a degradation of the public service, are the people to benefit substantially by a mere political administrative change of that sort? The folly of this was forcibly demonstrated the other day, when it was shown that if £25,000 could be saved out of £32,000, (which in itself was a simple absurdity, and merely putting it so) and the amount distributed amongst the fishermen, it would not improve their condition if they got it, being only twenty shillings a year, and yet some such a plan, falling very short of even so much gold, appears to be the only suggestion that the most reflective wisdom in this House can make.

Not that he (Mr. P.) deprecated, for he would command judicious economy—it would be good, so far as it went. What are we to do then? Shall we try beyond ourselves when the opportunity is offered? When we find the whole trade and industry of the country, and with those its general condition, in an unhealthy and demoralized state, and going from bad to worse, year by year, in the presence of comparative abundance, shall we halt or hesitate in our choice, between enduring the irremediable ills and sufferings we have, and entering upon a new order of things, in which there can be no possible risk of aggravating our evils, and which, if it should change, must alter our condition for the better? He (Mr. P.) spoke of the principal subject of his Excellency's speech, Confederation. The hon. member then went on to say that he regarded this question as one of too grave importance to be lightly treated, one infinitely raised above all questions of party. The man must be a traitor to his country who could make it the battle ground of faction. Neither one side nor the other could recommend its arguments to the intelligence and respect of the country by personal abuse or trivial treatment. Assailing men for their motives, and impugning their sincerity, could do no good, and could be suggested by no motive but to lead the public away from the deliberate investigation of the question on its own merits. He believed a great change of opinion had taken place. He blamed no man for changing or modifying his views, from reflection upon so grave a matter. But a long time had been allowed for deliberation, and in that period he knew of no man who had, from a considerate opinion, changed to the opposite view. The revolution had been altogether the other way, and the intelligence of the community was now, he believed, almost entirely in favor of union. There were those who had hoped against hope, and found it fruitless. There had been doubters and alarmists, who now trembled,

"Even at the sounds themselves had made."

For his part, he had never opposed the principle of Confederation. He had always advocated union; but he had taken exception to the Quebec Convention, as possessing some features that required correction, and as being wanting in some provisions which it should contain. He had always opposed the adoption of the measure without the endeavour to correct these defects, and he had always opposed the determination of the question without an appeal to the people, and had cooperated in an endeavor to prevent the possibility of any such attempt, and he had always desired and contended that the measure could not, in justice to the country, be submitted for its suffrages, without an ascertainment of the terms. It would be merely deceiving the constituencies, and keeping concealed from them the true issue they had to determine, to go before them without being enabled to explain the principles and the main conditions of the project. Delay, up to last year, may have been discreet. Our position up to that time may have improved. Time had been afforded for observing the operation of the measure with others, and of ascertaining what corrections and improvements were susceptible of being made. Then, last year, our opportunity had arrived, when the difficulty with Nova Scotia was pending, but a feeling of consideration for our sister colony held us back then.—Disaffection had arisen there, chiefly from the mode of carrying the measure; but whatever the cause, the struggle had ended in failure and defeat; and its champion was now President of the Privy Council of the New Dominion, that same Mr. Howe, with whom Colonial union had been the dream of his youth, the aspiration of his maturer years, and with whom one would have thought it would have been the cherished object of his old age. It may be that, for a short time, he had forgotten his old love in the indignation of offended patriotism, but he had been taken at last into the warm embrace of the confederate arms. The time had now arrived when further delay might be fatal. The provisions of the Quebec Convention could now be improved upon in all essential points. We should now unquestionably obtain a larger subsidy, an objection which he once held that the capitation money was not to be increased in the ratio of population, was already removed. Taxes and assessments on mining operations had been entirely repealed. Light dues had been remitted; articles used in the fishery had been admitted free of duty, and above all, an exception which had been taken, not without reason, that we should at certain seasons be placed at a commercial disadvantage by American produce being subject to a tax when that of Canada was free of duty, had been removed by legislation, which annulled all duties on the importation of flour and breadstuffs from the United States. There was the better half of a Reciprocity Treaty already, with the probability of the establishment of such a treaty at no distant time, an object which, remaining isolated, we could not effect for ourselves. Thus were all the staple necessities of life admitted duty free. If we continued as we are, it was an utter impossibility to foreign taxes upon any importations. Our present tariff was enormous, and there was no hope of material reduction. Many intelligent persons placed great faith, and were willing to accept Cunard's proposition in view of the general benefit and blessings which history and experience and the laws of progress and political economy taught that equitable unions produced. But we were not confined to such reflections; our faith must be further strengthened by our own exceptional position. Isolation and solitude were our ban, and yet some would hug and foster this characteristic of barbarism. How were we to remove or mitigate it? Would any intelligent man believe that improved means of intercourse between ourselves and the outside world was not an important step in that direction; that assimilation with a more advanced, more pro-

gressive wealthy and progressive people, with its consequent sympathy and example; that mutual freedom of trade and industry, would not be unattended with those advantages which in all parts of the civilized world had followed from such conditions? But even abundant fisheries had been found inadequate to the support of the people, yet we had great mineral resources, and where were the ability, the capital, the disposition within ourselves to work them? so of our timber lands. We have gypsum, lime, the finest pottery clay, &c., and they remain useless. Our fisheries are badly conducted, under an effete system, and especially a great source of wealth, the herring fishery, was positively not only neglected, but abused. Manufactures were active in Canada, that might be prosecuted under a different system with equal success here—we have the material and water power to any extent, and coal in prospect. The country was well adapted for those woollen manufactures for which Canada had become remarkable. We export tens of thousands of seal skins, and thousands of hides, that after successive freights, dues, charges and profits, come back either from England or Canada in the shape of leather and the manufacturers of leather, and sell at a large profit here. Those who talk of the poverty and bankruptcy of Canada, had either never been there, or having seen that magnificent country, misrepresented the facts. Millions would yet find a home there, and have room and verge enough. It was yet but very partially settled. There were immense fertile and productive sections of the country to be peopled; and in its present infancy it possessed splendid cities, so no thousands of miles of railway, an unsurpassed system of steam communication, internal and oceanic, factories of all kinds, an immense forest industry, vast mineral resources, boundless agricultural capabilities, prolific fisheries, public institutions competing with any in the world, and social and intellectual life in its highest phases. He had gone to Canada, almost expressly to see and judge for himself what manner of country that was with which we were asked to ally ourselves. He expected to find some similarity to our own colonial features. The picture was a very different one. The latest returns of exports that he had were those of 1867, and he would cite some of the principal, and those which most concerned us; produce of the forest, about £14,000,000; of agriculture, £17,000,000; of the fisheries, £30,000; of mines £500,000; manufactures, £900,000; flour alone, £5,000,000; barley and rye, (chiefly exported to the United States,) £4,000,000; meat £5,000,000; wheat, £4,000,000; leather, £140,000, and so forth. Now it must be remembered that these and many other articles were the exports, there being retained in the country, besides, all that was required for home consumption. How different from our present condition. Ours was an exhaustive process. Every thing went away from us. Nothing remained. All the surplus wealth went elsewhere, chiefly to Britain. The people starved. The Canadian home has made attractive; most of the money made there was spent there; the people, from the richest to the poorest, were identified with the country. Anti-confederates were heard to say, "True they have a railway system, but it does not pay. It is partially a public expense." Such men confined their ideas to the mere outlay and direct return in money. Such a position was entirely fallacious. It was part of a chain of intercommunication and of traffic, which had raised the value of all products, which had led to extended settlement and cultivation, which had cheapened imports and promoted all civilization. In these ways it had returned to the country ten thousand times the actual expense. Would Canadians do without it now? No, they would as soon think of blotting the country from the face of the earth. There were some who would cite Ireland as an example of an unfortunate union, and raise prejudices from such an argument, against Confederation. It was not an apt or fair comparison. Here we associated with equal rights. Here we should enjoy the privileges of the British constitution in its full perfection, without blot or blemish; Education established on a basis which offended none. The fullest measure of civil liberty, and perfect freedom and equality in religion. In another view he regards this measure of Confederation as a step in the logic of events that would be worked out. The history of this Colony, so remote as to make it the most ancient dependency of the Crown, was marked with several eras. At the commencement of this century, it was just allowed to emerge from the condition of a temporary fishing resort. Then we had an absolute Governor and Council, next a Legislature, then the system of responsibility. So we had been educated and fitted for a broader, grander and more national position and sphere of action. Having enjoyed the questionable blessing, and been taught by the experience of local Government, the present state having guided and controlled our infant steps to a degree of maturity, points us to a field of action where the exercise of constitutional Government can be better and more effectively applied. The machinery and paraphernalia of our present system are too much for this country, and they will be reduced in their scope and form of their costliness, while we shall still have a local Government and a voice in the concerns of a great people and a united and progressive Dominion. He had seen an excellent simile from a Harbor Grace friend, who compared the unwillingness of the people for change, to the aversion of countrymen at first to Sam Slick's clock. Sam would visit a farm house, offer his wares for sale. No, they had done without a clock all their lives, and knew the time of day well enough without it. Sam requested that they would oblige him by letting one remain in their house until his return. He left it, wound it up for them, taught them how to keep it in order. After a while Sam returns to get back

his clock. Oh, no, they would not account; could not have learned the use and be of it. So it was with any old fashioned people, difficult to move from the beaten track than believed.

"Our doubts were 'o'er us, and made us lose the good w—  
By fearing to attempt."

He appended a statement even the hon. member M question, as to the amount which would be assumed by the Government, and of the allow debt, which would be assumed by the Government, and we might larger expenditure under Geological Survey, Fisheries

Governor, Secretary, Servants a House... Receiver General's Office... Surveyor General's Office... Judge Supreme Court & Labra Customs... Local Steam... Halifax Steam... Protection Fisheries... Revenue Cruiser... Geological Survey... Crown Lands Act... Insure Public Buildings... Post & Telegraph... Volunteer Force... Repairs Public Buildings... Marine Hospital... Interest on Public Debt... Light Houses... Miscellaneous... ALLOWANCES E Capitation Money... Interest on £25 per Head... Surrender of Crown Lands...

Less Interest on our Public De

This (Mr. P.'s) policy, and I recommend the Government. No more philandering with gravity demanded deliberate judgment of the people, until arranged as the basis of a Dominion would agree to, as by this House, as would receive by Her Majesty, and such as to the country for its adoption to occupy some time, but the in taken without delay. It would be an intelligent Legislature, des people, to inform them. It deceiving them, and concealing to pursue any other course, this great practical revolution its Providential designs, how be the instrument in their It is trusted that hon. members were anti-confederates, would be example of their great who, convinced of the folly a wise and experienced state retreat, and obtaining increase his country, is now contributing his intellect to the consolidate the Dominion Government.

read with pleasure the letters of "Outsider," in the N he would recommend their capable of forming an intelligent this great question. He speech with the last paragraph

"Viewing the great Union prop independently of questions of

we are sensible of a sort of instinct to make Newfoundland more of its drifts into the current of civil

Confederation is not a financial q one,—ours is a disease that more will only aggravate, as experience

want those things that gold can n self-dependence, assimilation wh that surround us; and thus

by union, union of rule, union of interest."

Mr. GLEN was sorry the gentleman had not confined his speech before the chair, which he had given them a long speech, and told them of his

but forgot to say that the clock was paid for, and so on

Confederation. They would pro but when they had them in, would them. He (Mr. G.) hoped go in. If Canada had not had a \$5,000,000 of Treasury notes, last would be bankrupt. That did not make finances. When the Treasurer asked for the subsidy due to that not get it for a long time, and the in the same way if they joined the G.) considered the Government be disgraceful. The people were and he had that very day to give to 125 of his constituents who c relief. He advised them to go but he would not see them. It was the Government to allow these no civilized government but would they came to bear that this Gover the people to starve. It was b racef and some had already (Mr. G.) did not like to say as y actually died from starvation.

The Committee then rose, and reported progress. To sit again after which the House adjourned.

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