

The Newfoundlandander.

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

SATURDAY, Feb. 4.

The house met at 11½ o'clock, A.M.—Hon. E. Morris, senior member present presiding.

Shortly before 12 o'clock, Hon. members proceeded in a body to Government-house to present to His Excellency the Governor the Address which they had adopted in reply to his Speech on the opening of the session. Being returned to the Council Chamber, hon. E. Morris stated that the house having waited upon his Excellency the Governor and presented its Address, his Excellency was pleased to make the reply which he (Mr. M.) read to the house.

The Address of the Council and his Excellency the Governor's reply thereto are as follows:

To His Excellency ANTHONY MUSGRAVE, Esquire, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Island of Newfoundland and its Dependencies.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCE,

We, the Legislative Council in Session convened, thank your Excellency for the gracious Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present Session of the Legislature.

Thus meeting your Excellency for the first time, we gladly avail of the occasion to offer our respectful congratulations upon your Excellency's assumption of the Government of the British Crown.

In the appointment of your Excellency to the office of administering the public affairs of Newfoundland, we recognize another evidence of the desire of Her Majesty's Government to consult the best interests of Her Majesty's loyal subjects of this Colony; and we therefore confidently as well as gratefully accept your Excellency's expression of the deep interest you feel in all that concerns the welfare of this community, and of the anxiety by which you are moved, the motives and feelings by which you will be actuated, and the principles which will guide you in the regulation of your official conduct for the promotion of the common good.

We, on our part, assure your Excellency, that it shall ever be our chief pleasure, as it is no less our bounden duty, in our sphere, to afford to your Excellency, as the Representative of the Crown, that Constitutional aid and those loyal, and we trust, wise counsels which you express the confident hope will be thoughtfully tendered by the guardians of the public interests and liberties. And we shall at all times esteem it a high privilege to be aided in our deliberations by the fruits of your Excellency's thought and observation.

We unite with your Excellency in deplored that succession of failures and misfortunes in our chief means industry and our principal sources of wealth which has caused unprecedented depression and distress; and while we are sensible that under the present circumstances it is the duty of the Government to afford such elemosinary assistance as will save the most destitute of our people from the horrors of starvation, we are also impressed with the necessity of reform in the mode by which pauper relief has been so long administered, and we are of opinion that in any measure to be proposed for the correction of this evil, provision should be made for requiring a return in labor for relief rendered to the able-bodied poor.

We look forward with pleasure to the introduction of Bills having in view encouragement to the more extensive prosecution of the fisheries, and we regard the resumption of the Bank fishery as an object of the highest importance.

Agriculture and those industrial occupations connected with it, which your Excellency commands, might we believe be made very valuable auxiliaries to our staple industry, and the Legislature should, to the utmost of its power, lend to those objects its encouragement and support.

Facilities for communication, both by means of Highways and Steam, we believe to be of the first importance. We regret the inability of the Government to have aided them to a greater degree than it has, and we lament the fact that failure should have attended some of its efforts to effect improvement in Steam communication.

We shall endeavour to aid the popular Branch of the Legislature in the enactment of any Laws tending to the promotion and extension of means of intercourse.

We observe with satisfaction that amongst the measures of public utility which the Government is about to introduce, there will be one, the aim of which will be a more efficient Educational system, and we regard the establishment of a Normal School for the preparation of Teachers as one of great utility, and likely to raise the standard of Education and place it on a much more satisfactory footing.

We concur with your Excellency in your recommendations regarding the Volunteer organization and Currency Act, and we are especially favourable to the proposal for the Consolidation of the Local Laws.

The question of Confederation of the British North American Colonies is one which has now for the first time been submitted for our consideration.

We shall await the further information on which it appears we are to be furnished, and we assure your Excellency that we shall approach the consideration of this subject and of the Report of the Delegates to which your Excellency refers, impressed with the grave importance of the proposition, and in a spirit of calm examination and careful enquiry.

We are highly gratified to hear of the favourable result of the Geological Survey. We concur with your Excellency in all the observations upon the important subject of Mines and Minerals, and we are forcibly impressed with the sense of the obligation which rests upon the Government and Legislature to use the amplest and most effectual means within their power for the encouragement of resources which are of so hopeful a character.

We are sensible of the benefits likely to accrue by the successful accomplishment of that great work, the laying of the Atlantic Telegraph, which has already been shewn to be a feasible object by its once temporary success.

We shall rejoice if closer communication with the Mother Country should shortly be permanently established in this way;—we shall not fail to value the prominent position we shall then occupy, and we hope it will be regarded as an additional incentive to the cultivation of that good understanding amongst ourselves, and that healthful rivalry with other countries which may promote the welfare and happiness of our people. We unite with your Excellency in the prayer that the Almighty Ruler may bless our common efforts and guide them to results which may promote the good order, peace, and prosperity of the community to which we belong.

EDWARD MORRIS,
Senior Member present.
Legislative Council, Jan. 31, 1865.

Mr. President and Honorable Gentlemen of the Council, I thank you for your Address, and anticipate with confidence the continuance of that cordial feeling with which the term of my administration has so auspiciously commenced.

After the reading of the reply the house adjourned until 4 o'clock on Thursday next.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, Feb. 2.

(Continued)

Mr. TALBOT said he was delighted with the excellent speech which had just been delivered by the Speaker. He thought, however, when the delegates returned they should have informed their fellow colonists of what they had done in the Conference, and not permitted them to remain in doubt upon so important a matter. Now, for the first time, the Speaker vouchesafes to inform the public through the House of the proceedings of our delegates at that convention. He had three months to consider what he had to tell us, and to-day has given us the result of his three months' study. He sets out by denying that the speech delivered by His Excellency, on opening the Legislature, was the speech of the Governor himself. Now what I said upon that subject was—I said that the views of the Governor, as expressed in that speech, were diametrically opposed to the views of the ministry, and consequently it was the duty of the latter to resign their seats. It is a principle of Responsible Government that when a difference of opinion arises between the Governor and the Executive, when they hold different views in reference to any measure of public policy, then it is the duty of the latter at once to resign their places. This difference of opinion is apparent here. The Governor expresses his belief that the people of the several districts should be taxed for the support of their own poor. The Government say such a system is impracticable, and they decline to entertain it. Under such circumstances it is evident that so long as the present Administration retain power, their Government must be a mere farce—a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. The Speaker spoke of those men who had formerly bolstered themselves into position at the expense of the Government and the people. But why does the Speaker recall that? Did he not himself stand at these men's backs, and by his voice do his utmost to sustain them? He says a great deal of clap-trap has recently appeared in the newspapers against confederation. What newspapers does he refer to, may I ask? The only published clap-trap I have seen has appeared in these papers which favor his view of the question, and they have contained little else than clap-trap since the hon. Mr. Gien, published some letters in one of the newspapers, which he did over his own signature. He was not afraid to put his views fairly and boldly forward, with his name attached to them. I apprehend there is no clap-trap about that. The Speaker tells us he expects to live always in the country, that he has children whom he hopes will also spend their days in it, and he asks why, then, should he do anything to injure it? Well, I do not believe he would intentionally do so. Nevertheless, he might do so by an error of judgment. He might do that which no doubt he would believe to be beneficial to the country, yet it might prove exactly the reverse. So that I do not consider that any argument whatever. Nay, I might be justified in regarding it as part and parcel of the clap-trap to which he referred just now. Again, he indignantly asks—would a native be likely to sell his country? Why, of course he would. Who else but a native could sell it? Surely a foreigner would have no right to do it. What does the Speaker mean, then, by so ridiculous a question? I am surprised, however, to find that he sets so very little value upon the fisheries of the country, and that he sneers at the men who carry them on. He says they are degrading us for their own selfish purpose. Well, if the hon. gentleman can afford to fall out with the merchants, his principal supporters, I don't know that I have any right to object to his doing so. Still, I cannot agree with him that the merchants are degrading the country. I don't see how we could very well do without them. I observe however, that in one part of his speech he utters a very glaring contradiction. He admits that it would have been a great injury to transfer our fisheries to the Americans, but then it would be a great blessing to transfer them to the Canadians. I don't see the consistency of such an observation as that. Both the Americans and Canadians have the privilege of fishing in our waters, and I can't imagine what more either of them can want. They can catch just as much fish now as they are able to get. More they will not be able to do under Confederation. The hon. gentleman repudiates the idea that we shall give away our liberties. But we certainly shall do if we agree to those resolutions. Don't we give away our fisheries, our lands, our minerals, our revenues, and our constitution, with the power to tax us *ad libitum*, superadded. Is this not selling our liberties? If it is not, then I do not know what you can call it. I should be glad to think Confederation as good a thing as the Speaker represents it. If I could be convinced that it would be beneficial to the country, and would have the effect of lifting our people out of their present condition of poverty, I would gladly give in my adhesion to it. The Speaker has called our attention to the material progress which Canada has made, and the prosperity of its people. But if the people of Canada were prosperous, they had worked hard for it. They were industrious, and had given their attention to the arts and sciences, as well as to everything else that could raise them as a people. And now as to taxation: Hon. gentlemen should remember there was such a thing as taxing a people to death. It is the last straw that breaks the camel's back. I cannot and do not say our taxes will be raised to so extreme a pitch as some persons imagine, but I think there can be no question they will be higher than they are now, and if the Canada tariff be retained, they will be very much higher. It is a serious thing to place the power of taxation in the hands of others. But we go further—we give them the privilege of taxing not only

our imports, but our exports, our lands, our houses our money, our cattle, everything in short that we have

The SPEAKER—No! No! No!

Mr. TALBOT—But it is so. The 29th resolution reads as follows.

"The General Parliament shall have power to make laws for the peace, welfare and good Government of the Federated Provinces, (saving the Sovereignty of England,) and especially Laws respecting the following subjects:—

The Public Debt and Property.

The Regulation of Trade and Commerce.

The imposition or regulation of Duties of Customs on Imports and Exports, except on Exports of Timber Logs, Masts, Spars, Deals and Sawn Lumber, and of Coal and other Minerals.

The imposition or regulation of Excise Duties.

The raising of money by all or any other modes or systems of Taxation.

The raising of money by all or any other modes or systems of taxation. Does it not give the General Parliament unlimited power to tax us how they may please, on what they please, or to any extent they please? If it does not, then I do not know the meaning of words. The hon. gentleman also says our fishermen are already taxed fifty or sixty per cent for the supplies they get.

Does he mean to say that under the Confederation they won't have to pay anything at all for their supplies? If he does, then I will agree with him that Confederation is a good thing, and I will vote at once for it. But I do not consider the price which a man pays for his supplies as being in the nature of a tax at all. Again, he says that our lands are valueless to us, but that Canada will give us £37,500 for them. Now that's disingenuous, to say the least of it. It is true that in a measure our lands are valueless to us, but it is not true that we are to receive £37,500 for them. That amount is included in the general bargain, and is not given for our lands exclusively. Nevertheless, I do say I am greatly pleased with the idea of Confederation. I think it would be beneficial to us in a great many important respects. When I think how we are shut up here in our isolation, sharing so little in the great enterprise, and the civilizing strides that are being made east and west of us, apparently content with our own littleness, and occupied almost entirely with our petty party squabbles and our contemptible sectarian contentions—I say when I think of these things, I feel that our alliance with the more powerful neighbouring Colonies would be greatly beneficial. If these evils could be swept away by Confederation, I would welcome it at any price. I feel, too, that the Speaker does not overrate the inconvenience to which our young men are subjected here from want of employment, though I doubt the effectiveness of the remedy he sets up. We educate our young men, and for what? Merely that they may walk about the streets, eating out their hearts and brains, and their energies, for lack of occupation. They lose ambition, they lose moral standing, they become a burden to themselves. Our native young men, Mr. Chairman, are not second in industry, in energy, and in ability to any of those of the neighbouring nations. All that they lack to secure to them honorable positions in life, is opportunity. Some who have gone from us have raised themselves to most respectable conditions in life, and there are others yet with us who would do so if the opportunity were given them. It is not that a strong argument, then, why we should endeavor to get out of the crawling and creeping isolation which wraps us about as a garment? But, Sir, I am not satisfied that Confederation will change this for us. If I could be, I would be proud to have confederation as the great panacea. Let us have no clap-trap either in this House or out of it on this question. We are here to elicit truth. It should be our endeavor to avoid all discussion that would lead us away from the truth. Let us know what Confederation will do for us, what are the benefits we shall receive and what the sacrifices we shall make for it. But in the meantime do not ask us to adopt it before we are thoroughly acquainted with the details. Confederation in the abstract may be good, but the details may be found some of them to be bad. Let us therefore examine the details first, therefore approved of them. The House will be prepared to consent to the general principle of Confederation. But most important of all—as we have not been authorized by our constituents to propose that might be made, but simply to inquire and report as to the decisions at which the Conference might arrive. The Government, under all the circumstances, would be wrong in giving any more enlarged authority; and for his (Mr. Shea's) part, he would not have accepted the position if it involved any greater power than was conferred upon the Delegates. The idea of a confederation of the Provinces, though new in this Colony, was familiar enough to the people of the other Provinces. When Lord Durham came out from England to inquire into the so-called rebellion, among the measures suggested by him was a union of the whole of these Colonies, for the purposes of strength, and moral and material advancement. The subject, since that time, has occasionally been under discussion in Canada and Nova Scotia, and the conclusion invariably arrived at was that the measure would tend to advance the general prosperity.—It has never been dealt with at a party question, and most of all shades of politics amongst the most enlightened of our Colonial statesmen, recorded their deliberate opinions in its favor. But until now the inquiry has never been gone into with a view to a definite result, and it therefore assumes an aspect of greater importance, and naturally attracts a larger share of public attention than ever before was found to wait upon it. It will be remembered that when the subject was first named in the last summer, a general desire seemed to pervade the public of this country that we should not be excluded from any measure of Union the other colonies might be disposed to form; and the Government were criticised with severity for their supposed hostility to the question, in which it was contended that great benefit would be found for the people of this colony. He (Mr. Shea) was surprised to find that the hon. member for St. John's, on his right, who in September last, through his journal, was prominent amongst these critics, should now come forward as an opponent of course he then advocated so strongly. (The hon. gentleman here read from the *Patriot* some strong observations in condemnation of the government for not having adopted measures to have this country represented at the Charlottetown Convention, and deprecating the view that they represented the people in their indifference or hostility to a union of the colonies.) He did not say it was not competent to any man to change his opinions; but when statements so adverse to each other are found coming from the same lips, in the short space of time that has elapsed since September last, the individual has at least no right to the character of a reliable authority. But the hon. gentleman says he was favorable to a Legislative Union of the Maritime Provinces, though opposed to a federal union of the whole. He failed to draw any such distinction when he wrote in September, but he spoke generally of a union of the Provinces, and quoted Mr. McGee, who it is well known is a Minister of the Crown in Canada, and never advocated any measure of union that did not comprehend all the Provinces, as embraced in the resolutions of the Quebec Conference. But he would take the hon. gentleman on his own ground, and see the position in which his argument placed him. He objects to a federal union, as proposed by the Conference, because it abstracts from the authority of our present Legislature, though he avows himself favorable to a Legislative union, which would annihilate our local constitution. Can anything more illogical or untenable be imagined? He objects strongly to the loss of a part, but is quite willing that our local institutions should be entirely swept away! This is the position the honorable gentleman places himself in by his attempt to escape from the conspicuous inconsistency of his conduct. But a Legislative union, which would extinguish the local constitutions, was found to be impracticable, and the Charlottetown Conference was a foregone failure, and must have ended without a result, even though