

The Examiner.

"THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY WHEN FREE-BORN MEN—HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC—MAY SPEAK FREE."—MILTON'S EURIPIDES.

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HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 27th March.
AFTERNOON SITTING.

HOUSE IN COMMITTEE ON ADDRESS IN
ANSWER TO HIS EXCELLENCY'S
SPEECH.

Dr. JARDINE in the Chair.

(Concluded.)

Mr. YEO said, he should like to ask the honourable member from Bedeque (Mr. Pope), whether he did not expect that, in the event of a change in the Government, he would be able to procure a place for himself?

Mr. COLES replied, that he was happy to think, that before long, there would be an opportunity, under the working of the Responsible System, to engage men of talent, like the honourable member from Bedeque (Mr. Pope), in the service of the public. Under the operation of that system, it would be the evident duty of the Government to prefer to offices, men who were found both able and willing to pull with the people. Should the hon member from Bedeque have been influenced by any desire for office, and should he eventually obtain it under the Responsible System, it was his (Mr. Coles) opinion, that, in his services, the people would have an ample return for any salary which he might draw from the public purse. The honourable Sol. General had said, that the entire speech of His Excellency had his hearty concurrence. If so, then the honourable and learned member must have changed his views with respect to Responsible Government, for His Excellency had said in his speech, that the People of this Colony are as much entitled as those of the neighbouring Provinces to have their government framed in accordance with their own wishes; and he had admitted that Responsible Government is what the people desire, and had therefore announced his having authority to introduce it. The honourable and learned member had put words into his (Mr. Coles's) mouth which he had not uttered. He had made him say, that His Excellency did not expect the House to proceed to the transaction of business until after he should have reconstructed his Council. Now he (Mr. Coles) had said no such thing. What he did say was, that he did not think it likely that His Excellency could expect the house to proceed to business, until he should surround himself with a Council in whom the House could place confidence. No doubt the honourable and learned member would very much like to make it appear as if he (Mr. Coles) were guilty of a breach of confidence in divulging what His Excellency might have told him in private. As to the honourable and learned member's opinion, that the majority of the House were dissatisfied with Sir Donald Campbell's assent to the Revenue Bill, and that they had calculated upon his rejecting it, he (Mr. Coles) thought the rejection of it would have been a grievous disappointment to the minority and the whole body of the obstructives, for had it been rejected, their hired editor would not have been able to serve up so many hashed dishes, in the shape of editorials, composed of wretched roads, broken bridges, starving paupers, and member's pay, as the appropriation and restriction clause appended to that Bill had enabled him to provide for their service and aid. What had been said by the honourable member from Bedeque (Mr. Pope) was, he thought, quite sufficient to show that he was right in what he had stated concerning defalcation in the Treasury: and so little could the truth of what had been stated with reference to it be questioned, that he did not

believe there was one friend of the late Treasurer in the House, who would stand up and say, that a defalcation would not have been found in the Treasury at the time of the first investigation, had not the moneys abstracted been replaced by sums advanced for the occasion by the Treasurer's friends, some of them members of the Council. He (Mr. Coles) never doubted the correctness of the Treasury, since the appointment of the public Auditors; and, consequently could experience no disappointment when every thing was found correct in that Department on the last audit day; but the necessity for quarterly audits would not have been made manifest to all, at the time it was, had it not been that there was then two or three members in the Executive Council who were not bound to the Treasurer by such intimate ties, as connected him with some of the rest. The fact, however, that the moneys in the Treasury Chest were all found correct at the last audit, did not, by any means, exonerate the Government from the charge of corruption with reference to that Department; for, with as much propriety might they have taken a convicted robber from jail, and have offered to place him in charge of the Treasury, provided he could find the securities required by law, as have made the same offer to the late Treasurer, at a time, when by his own act he had vacated his appointment, and when they, the very men who made the offer to him, had positive knowledge of his defalcations in the office. The credit of a country could only be maintained by the integrity of its public officers; but the supporters of the present Government had unblushingly declared, that the public had nothing to do with the private character of a public functionary; and that although in his private transactions he might be the veriest swindler, that consideration ought not to weigh against him as a public officer, so long as all was found correct in the Department under his management, and he could find the necessary securities. It was indeed grievous to him to have to make such allusions to individuals, as had been forced from him in the course of the debate; and he would, therefore, take leave to say to the honourable Solicitor General, that if he wished well to those among his friends whose conduct, he was aware, would not bear the nicest investigation, it would be advisable for him to forbear in future any attempts at their vindication, for his advocacy of their cause always led to more and more painful disclosures.

Mr. LONGWORTH said, the assertion of the hon. member for Queen's County, (Mr. Coles) that, under the Responsible System they would not hesitate to buy over or bribe, men of abilities by appointments to offices, to support the Government, was quite sufficient to prove that the system which he and the rest of the Snatchers hoped to see established must be a corrupt one. The honourable member himself (Mr. Coles) had formerly held the same opinions as himself with respect to it. Views of personal aggrandisement had, however, caused him to act, although perhaps not think, very differently; and he was now the leader in the cry for the establishment of a system which he had formerly condemned. The party who sought it were actuated by no other views and motives, than those of self-interest. It was possible, however, that, in spite of the unworthiness of their motives, they might obtain it. If they did, they would, however, have to swallow a very large pill: for the conditions annexed to the concession of Responsible Government would not be dispensed with. But when once they had it they would no doubt make the most of it; and where offices sufficient

did not exist for those who must have them, new ones would be created for their benefit. They would then all work together, and audit and pass one another's accounts, without the exercise of any thing like unnecessary or inconvenient exactness. For a time the system might work well for the individual interests of those who had the direction of it; but when it came it would bring with it much general political evil to the country. When planted it would be found to be a political Upas Tree, and its baneful influence would diffuse itself over the whole Island. He was himself friendly to the establishment of Responsible Government; but not such a system as that which the Snatcher party desired to have introduced. The system to which he was favourable, was one which, by the exclusion of office-holders from seats in the Assembly, would secure the purity and integrity of that body. He would support the original draft Address, and oppose the amendment.

Mr. DOUSE was opposed to the amendment. It looked like an attempt to force the Lieutenant Governor at once into a compliance with the wishes of the Majority. Would they not have loudly exclaimed against him, had he adopted such a course towards them? From all that he could learn, His Excellency was favourably disposed towards the Assembly. Was it not then very unwise to assume a right to dictate to him? Were he (Mr. Douse) ever so much in favour of the establishment of Responsible Government, he would, influenced by these considerations, vote against the amendment. He himself was not adverse to Responsible Government, but he was decidedly opposed to the Departmental System, by the establishment of which, they were actuated by nothing but the desire of office, hoped to aggrandize themselves, and he had the satisfaction to know that his views on this question were fully participated by his constituents.

Mr. CLARK supported the amendment, and maintained that there was nothing in it derogatory to His Excellency. It was couched in mild and courteous language. If the members of the Assembly were afraid to state to His Excellency, in plain and unambiguous, yet still courteous and respectful language the fact, that the Executive Council did not possess the confidence of the people, and that they could not transact business with his Government, until it should be so as to be no longer opposed to public sentiment, they were indeed unfit to represent the people. They who constituted the majority of the House knew that they did represent the people. They equally knew that the minority, the friends and defenders of a corrupt government, did not represent the people. It could not, for one moment be expected then, that the majority, if true to the trust reposed in them by the people, would give their countenance to an Address such as the original draft, which if not directly conveying an expression of confidence in the Government, yet left it plainly to be implied, that they by whom such an Address could be adopted, must be fully satisfied with the character of His Excellency's advisers. The majority were taunted with being office-seekers; but, to those who could prefer no other accusation against them than that, he would reply that if they sought offices, it was only through the people, who had unquestionably the best right to bestow them. He was confident that nine-tenths of the people were in favour of the Responsible movement; but as more than sufficient had already been said in speaking to the question, he would not further insist upon the propriety of the course pursued by

the majority. He would merely add, that he would support the amendment.

Mr. WHELAN supported the amendment. He denied that it contained any thing like dictation. The minority said that His Excellency, Sir Alexander had, in his Speech, avowed the same sentiments with respect to the mode of settling the great question at issue, as those which were entertained by the late Lieutenant Governor, Sir Donald Campbell; and in the Address proposed by them, there was an expression of the highest respect for those sentiments. That certainly would answer very well for those who had upheld the policy of Sir Donald and his government; but it was language which could not, with any degree of consistency, be adopted by those who had condemned and opposed that policy in the most positive and direct manner. Unless they meant to condemn and stultify themselves, the majority were bound to carry an amendment to that Address. The Amendment which had been submitted was one which although it plainly indicated the feelings of the majority with respect to the government, was in all respects strictly temperate and respectful. But had the majority thought, with the minority, that His Excellency intended to pass in his Speech the same censure upon the proceedings of the majority as that pronounced by Sir Donald Campbell, they would have held it to be a palpable insult; and might in that case, have been fully justified in proposing an amendment less expressive of respectful consideration. The minority said the advocates of Responsible Government had obtained no victory. In saying so they falsified his Excellency's Speech. Sir Donald, even at the most favourable stage of the negotiations with him for the introduction of the Responsible System, had merely proposed to consult his Royal Mistress touching the propriety of such a step. But Sir Alexander had told them, in express terms, that he was authorized to introduce that system. An announcement such as that, compared with the declaration of Sir Donald that he was not at liberty to comply with the wishes of the people, was either victory or it was nothing. Should the House adopt the original draft Address, in doing so they would be receding from the objects which through the two former Sessions they had vigorously striven to attain. Should they adopt the amendment, they would merely maintain the position which they occupied with respect to Sir Donald. They had told Sir Donald that they could transact no business with his government, until it should be reconstructed in such a manner as to claim their confidence; and through the proposed amendment, they merely proposed respectfully to make the same declaration to Sir Alexander. It was as much an inherent right of the Assembly of this Colony, to seek to effect a change in its Government, as it was of the British House of Commons to require a change in the Imperial Administration; and that too at any time, and quite independently of any contemplated organic change in the nature of the government. The honourable member then adverted to what recently took place in Nova Scotia, in consequence of the responsible movement there; and shewed that a reconstruction of the Executive Council, by Sir John Harvey, had preceded the necessary details preparatory to the establishment of the Responsible System; observing that he certainly conceived that Sir Alexander Bannerman was as much at liberty, in the exercise of a discretionary power, to pursue that course here, as Sir John Harvey had been in Nova Scotia. Two honorable members had said that Responsible Government would produce corruption. He said quite the contrary