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"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.

Mr. COLES, in rising to propose an amendment to the draft Address, reported by the Hon. SOL. GENERAL, commenced, by saying, that that Address was very far from being in accordance with his own views, and that it was also as little, he believed, in accordance with the views of the majority of the House; nay, more, he could not persuade himself to believe that His Excellency expected that what he seemed from the tenor of his speech to require, would be agreed to, or conceded by the House. The hon. member having read his proposed amendment, said he believed it contained the sentiments of the majority with respect to the question to which their attention had been called by His Excellency's Speech. The hon. member then briefly reviewed the negotiation for the introduction of Responsible Government, between the late Lieutenant Governor and certain leading members of the Legislature, pledged to the support of the Responsible cause. He said, that Sir Donald Campbell, after having acquiesced in the justness of the principles on which, as a foundation, the organic change sought to be effected in the Government was based, and after having fully admitted the propriety of all the arrangements proposed to be made, preparatory to the introduction of the Responsible system—had offered three seats only in the Executive Council to the Responsible party. These had been declined, because had they been accepted, the three gentlemen filling them, as opposed by a majority in the Council, twice their number, would have been powerless to give effect to any expression of their principles as members of that body. They had very lightly treated the offer with contempt, as being less than a contemptible mockery. In consequence, therefore, of the Lieutenant Governor's refusal to reconstruct his Council, so as to admit of an effective expression of public opinion therein, the public business was not progressed with in the House, and the Legislature was prorogued. The second Session of the Legislature was opened by a speech from His Excellency, delivered in a most unbecoming manner. To this speech, however, the House replied in an Address, in which, whilst manifesting not the slightest disposition to compromise the rights and privileges with which they were invested, as representatives of the people, they forgot not the respect due to the position occupied by the Lieutenant Governor, as the representative of the Queen. They then consistently set about the immediate prosecution of the measures of which the well being of the Colony demanded the completion, without delay; and the Revenue Bill having been completed and passed through the upper and lower House, the necessary intimation of the fact was made to His Excellency, and when the House went to the Council Chamber, that the Bill might receive His Excellency's assent, he compromised the dignity of his station by descending to a trick, and suddenly prorogued the Legislature without having given the slightest previous intimation of his design to the House, although the Speaker had, in an audience a few minutes before, informed him that the House would be ready for prorogation on the following day. Well, said the hon. member did he recollect the smirking and laugh-

ing with which certain hon. gentlemen manifested their satisfaction at, and concurrence in, the insult levelled by His Excellency at the Representatives of the people. These honorable gentlemen still continued to manifest the same feeling towards the people and their representatives; and the people knowing this, was it to be wondered at that they should demand that these individuals should be divested of a power, which they exercised solely for their own aggrandizement, and the obstruction of every needful measure of reform; and of which, in their fancied security, they even dared to avail themselves, to advise and countenance unexampled insult to the Representatives of the people. It was, continued the hon. member, rather to be regretted that His Excellency Sir Alexander had made so direct a reference in his speech to the course pursued by the House in their contact with the late Governor Sir Donald Campbell, for the establishment of Responsible Government, and Sir Donald's censure of their proceedings. The subject, however, having been introduced in His Excellency's speech, it behoved the House to advert to it in their Address in answer to His Excellency. This was accordingly done in the amendment which he had submitted; but whilst the subject was therein referred to in such a manner as clearly to indicate the confidence of the House in the propriety of their former proceedings, with respect to the great question still at issue, the expression of their sentiments was, as it ought to be, most respectfully conveyed to His Excellency. The House were bound to justify themselves in the eyes of His Excellency, who had, as yet, seen little more, he believed, than an *ex parte* statement of the facts involved in the controversy, and to show him that their having had recourse to extreme measures, was purely in self defence and in the maintenance of the just rights of the people's Representatives, and owing to arbitrary and unconstitutional resistance, on the part of Sir Donald Campbell, to the lawful wishes of the people constitutionally urged upon him and his government by the House of Assembly.—It was their duty to shew His Excellency, Sir Alexander, that they were still determined to occupy the high but constitutional ground which they had assumed, so long as their occupation of it should be demanded by a just regard to the wishes of the people whose representatives they were. It was their duty firmly, as respected themselves, but most respectfully, as regarded His Excellency, to shew him that they were not afraid of being again returned to their several constituencies; for that they now felt themselves to be doubly fortified and sustained by public opinion, being fully convinced by recent manifestations thereof, that very many respectable and influential individuals in the community who were formerly rather opposed to the responsible movement than otherwise, now convinced, rather, he was inclined to believe by the arbitrary and unconstitutional resistance made to it by the government and government officials, linked with the petty minority—the representatives of their interests—in the House, than by any direct endeavours to proselytize them by the leading advocates of the system; and such individuals in various sections of the country, had avowed their intention to sustain, to the utmost extent of their influence, the majority of the House in their constitutional endeavors to obtain the establishment of Responsible Government in the Colony. His Excellency, in his Speech, had said that the people of Prince Edward Island were as much entitled, as those of the other provinces, to the ac-

knowledge of the Colonial Minister, "that it was not desirable to carry on the Government of any of the British Provinces of North America, in opposition to the opinion of the inhabitants"; and although, in announcing to the Legislature that he was prepared to introduce Responsible Government into the Colony, and to surrender the disposal of Her Majesty's Crown Revenues, he had also stated, that these concessions were to be made on certain conditions, the House could not be justified in supposing, after so full an admission from His Excellency, that the Government of the Colony should be carried on in such a manner as to secure the general concurrence of the people, that these conditions could be of such a nature, as to compel His Excellency to assume a hostile position towards the people. He was very happy to find that there was no longer an unjustifiable distinction to be made, by the Imperial Government, between Countries or Colonies on the score of population, but that to the few as well as to the many, there was to be extended a full practical recognition of their rights as subjects of the British Empire. He rejoiced to find that the people of this Colony were no longer to be treated aliens by the rulers of the mother country; and that, at length, the stigma, that they were not possessed of materials for carrying successfully into practice the system of Responsible Government, was completely wiped off and obliterated.—Yes, whatever might be the conditions coupled with the proffered concessions—even, although they might be such as for a short time to delay the complete establishment of the Responsible system—the admission, by Earl Grey, that the people of this Colony are entitled to as full a measure of self-government as any of the sister Provinces, is a signal victory; and, as such, he hailed it with the most lively satisfaction. The enemies of the system and the people, exulting in their short-lived triumph, derived from the obstructive proceedings of Sir Donald Campbell with reference to the measure, had as well through the columns of their hired periodical, as by every other means in their power, endeavoured to bring the majority of the House into contempt in the estimation of the people, by ascribing the loss of the measure to the incapacity and ignorance displayed by them in the course of their negotiations for its introduction. But what now appeared to be the fact? Why evidently this—that in consequence of the unyielding, uncompromising firmness, displayed by the majority of the House, in seeking and claiming the introduction of Responsible Government, not as an act of mere grace, but as a positive right, it has been conceded as an acknowledged right. With reference to the conditions to be conjoined with the concession, they were not to be afraid that they would prove an insuperable obstacle in the way of their attainment of the desired reform in the Government. When submitted to the House, the House would give them due consideration. If they proved to be such as the House could comply with, without any dereliction of duty or abandonment of public principle, they would no doubt be acquiesced in. If on the contrary, they should be found such as the House could not entertain, consistently with a due regard to the public interests, the House would at once in a straight forward and candid spirit declare that they could not give them effect. It would become the House to act at once without reserve, and plainly and unequivocally to tell his Excellency that they desired such a re-construction of his Council as would ensure harmonious understanding and action between that body and the majority of the Assembly. Thus,

said the hon. member, we find ourselves not only in as good a position as we occupied at the commencement of our negotiations with Sir Donald Campbell, but in one much better, for we have now the express sanction and authority of the Colonial Secretary on our side; and so far is the country from having been overtaken by the decay, loss, ruin, and beggary which were predicted, as the consequences of the stand made, and the course pursued, by the majority, in the first and second sessions of this House, that our roads were never better, and our bridges instead of being impassable, are in a state of complete repair; notwithstanding the absence of any appropriation, by the Legislature, for roads and bridges. It has been found that there was sufficient public spirit among the people to induce their acquiescence in the necessity which prevented the usual provision for that service, and where road repairs were found to be absolutely necessary they were made by the people at their own expense; and large contracts had been freely taken and executed by individuals, in full reliance upon the good faith of the Assembly, to provide for their payment in a future Session. He was also happy to perceive that the debt of the Colony has not been so small for the last fifteen or twenty years as it is at present. It was owing to the stand made by the majority that the public expenditure had been so materially diminished; and with that uniform economy which was to be hoped for under the operation of the responsible system, he hoped that before the lapse of many years the Public Debt, which now was reduced to only £5000 or £6000 bearing interest, would be completely cancelled. In the early part of the winter, so great was the outcry raised against individual members by some of the obstructives in Charlottetown, that when poor persons applied to them, it was no unusual thing for a lady or gentleman to say, "Oh we have got no money; the majority in the House of Assembly withheld the grant usually voted for the relief of the poor; and if you want relief, you must seek it at the hands of Coles and Lord." However, notwithstanding all the abuse which had been showered upon the majority, by some of their opponents, it was now very clear that the country, instead of having been injured by what had been termed the obstinacy and infatuation of the majority, were likely, even in a pecuniary point of view, to be materially benefitted by it; and he was happy to say that he believed there were none amongst the poor whose necessities had not been relieved. With respect to the omissions of the last Session to which their attention had been directed by His Excellency, in connection with the expression of a hope that they would take an early opportunity to remedy them—there could be no doubt entertained, touching the perfect willingness of the House to proceed to the due consideration of all matters, whether affecting the local interests of the Colony, or the general interests of the North American Colonies, circumstances compelled them to postpone, in the two previous Sessions of the House, so soon as the obstacles should be removed which had caused such postponement. Having made these remarks, he would now move the adoption of what he had submitted in lieu of the draft Address reported by the Solicitor General; hoping that, should his proposed amendment meet with the concurrence of the Committee, His Excellency would not perceive in it any reflection upon any observation contained in his speech. His Excellency had been here for a short time only; and he has not yet had an opportunity to investigate and ascertain the true position and intentions of either par-