COLONIAL LEGISLATURE

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, March 1853.

DEBATE ON THE SALARIES BILL.

(Continued from Hazard's Gazette, No. 28.)

Hon. Mr. WHELAN continued: What is the object —of course I mean the ostensible object—of this wonderful effort of legislative sagacity? I suppose it is to economize the public expenditure of a state, the servants of the Attorney General and Queen's Printer; but I am not aware that it provides for a reduction of the labors of either office, or the costs attending their management. This object, then, presupposes that both offices are overpaid;—it presupposes that they are in the habit of making charges not commensurate with the claims the services of the officers, which, I am certainly incumbent upon the hon. member for Darnley to establish this point, if he could. It was clearly his duty to show that the public had paid higher professional fees to the Attorney General than those allowed to his predecessor; and that the Queen's Printer had made charges against the Government not warranted by the nature of the services—if he has not, however, done so; he cannot do so;—but his officious interference in the matter must lead to the opinion, that in his immaculate belief both officers are public extortioners. Now, sure, when the member appeared to be ignorant of the course he should have taken in reference to this matter, I will take the liberty of calling his attention to a matter, which he should be brought to a close, he may be induced to act upon the information. If he thought the Attorney General and Queen's Printer were overpaid, he should have moved for a Committee of Enquiry—not, I believe, before that Committee an examination of the Accounts of both officers, and compared those Accounts with the charges made by their predecessors, he could with no such enquiry justified his apprehensions, and proved that the officers in question had overcharged the public, then it would have been right to compel them to refund the sums so paid to such an extent as those charges, so as to prevent extortion for the future. But instead of that very obvious and very proper course, what did the hon. member do? Instead of proposing which exposes two of his political friends to the most scandalous imputations. How well the opportunity has been turned to account, has been just shewn by a member on the other side of the House—that member appears to have studied the Queen's Printer's Accounts with great zeal; and he must feel deeply indebted to the member for Darnley, whose zeal gives rise to this occasion for sparting forth his resentment against me. But I shall come to his observations and quotations from my Accounts by and bye;—and I think I shall shew that on this, as on all other occasions, his bungling and special pleading is likely to be far more damaging to the character of his over-zealous—who happens to be his friend—Friend—than to the party on the other side, whom he is hired to assail. *Is the principle of the Bill a just and equitable one?* If it is, why was it not thought of before? The hon. member has been sitting in this House; he has had the Accounts of the Queen's Printer and Attorney General every Session before him;—those of the former, for the past two years—which have given