

believed that to effect this change would be a benefit to the country, they should be prepared to come down with a proposition to that effect, and if they failed they would, of course, vacate their seats or go back to the country.— He (Mr. Street) did not think, however, that the Government would do this, and if they did he did not think they would be a Government very long. ("I don't know that," from the Hon. Mr. Fisher.) The hon. Executive member did not know that, but he (Mr. S.) rather thought they would not try the experiment. [Mr. Street was here called away to the Supreme Court.

Mr. End hoped that hon. members would confine themselves to the paragraph under discussion, otherwise he feared they might ring changes on the address for ever and ever. Let them confine themselves to No. 5; that was the only paragraph really before the committee. He would say, before he sat down, that there was a good deal of truth in what had fallen from his hon. and learned friend from Northumberland (Mr. Street). The present Government was a scientific Government. They worked with tools.— He did not use the word tools as it was sometimes applied, nor did he apply it to any party. He meant that they worked with regular scientific instruments. The address and answer were skilfully graduated to suit almost any taste. It appeared to him that the Government came cautiously forward with a political barometer in one hand and a thermometer in the other. These were the tools he meant, and useful tools they were. There was, however, one alteration he would suggest, and it was to leave out one of the "as to's" in No. 5. The repetition had certainly a hissing sound in his ears, and the word "on" would answer every purpose. With this exception No. 5 was all right.

Mr. Ritchie. The hon. member who had just sat down, says, it's all right but he (Mr. R.) must tell the hon. member that it was not for him, but for the House, to say what is right and what is wrong. He (Mr. R.) thought it was all wrong. They had brought to their notice the all important interest of agriculture in the paragraph of the Speech, to which was under consideration was an answer. The Coal Fields of the country was also alluded to in the same paragraph, and he for one thought, that on these important interests the government should have been prepared with some well digested measures. He had long been an admirer of Responsible Government, and when he read the Speech at the opening of the Session, he had strong hopes that it was the intention of the present government to act up to its principles, and take the initiative in those measures which are necessary for the development of the resources of the country; but he must confess that his warmth of feeling was very much damped indeed, when he heard the reply propounded for their adoption. Instead of measures to foster agriculture and encourage the fisheries, the Government have not intimated that they will initiate a single measure, with the exception of the Consolidation of the laws of this Province, and on this, the only Government measure which had yet been avowed, he would take this opportunity of saying a few words. He held it to be very doubtful whether the consolidation of the laws was to be a benefit or an injury to the country. Consolidation was collecting together all the acts on any particular subject, and embodying them in one act. If this be the Government measure which is propounded, and no alteration or revision of the law was intended, he (Mr. R.) thought that this was a task which any school boy might perform. But if it was meant to revise and amend the laws, then he held that it was a hazardous undertaking, and one which could not be accomplished without a vast amount of care and thought. Consolidation, in the sense he had first used the term, would be simply a convenience for the Lawyers, while consolidation and revision should be the work of a commission appointed for that purpose. No one man should be intrusted with the performance of a task so delicate, and where the slightest mistake might involve consequences disastrous to the country. He would just mention a few instances of the effects of consolidation. An hon. member of the Government, not a member of that House, and one, too, well qualified for the task, undertook to consolidate all the laws relating to the Registry of Deeds within the Province. This Act had, for three successive Sessions, been amended. Three bills had been required to get it in order, and he believed it was yet hardly possible to acquire a correct title under the present law. Another instance occurred last year. The hon. Executive member from York (Mr. Fisher) introduced a Bill to consolidate all the laws now in force relating to the division of the Province into Counties, Towns, and Parishes. That Act was taken upon trust almost, by the Legislature, passed both branches, and was supposed to be all right, until the hon. the Attorney General came to pass upon it, before advising His Excellency to give his assent thereto, when it was found to contain a defect, which would have created confusion throughout the length and breadth of the country. Another case had occurred in the criminal code, which was ably consolidated and revised by his hon. friend the Attorney General, and introduced last year as a Government measure.— In the consolidated criminal law, the crime of cutting Telegraph wires was not included among criminal offences, and recently a person charged with the offence had been discharged without a trial, solely from this defect in the consolidated criminal law. If consolidation and revision is to be done he (Mr. Ritchie) would repeat that it should be done by commission, and even after it has passed from the hands of the commissioners it should demand the most serious and deliberate attention of the Legislature. There were instances where a special Session of the Legislature had been called for the purpose of passing the revised laws alone, after coming from the hands of the ablest men in the state. But to return to the paragraph under consideration, which involved the question of the dissemination of agricultural knowledge throughout the Province. How was this to be done? Was the Government prepared to bend up all its energies, and by the adoption of some general and well-devised system of instruction, carry out the suggestions which Professor Johnston has recommended? If they were so, they should have his hearty and cheerful support. The honourable and learned member from Nor-

thumberland (Mr. Street) had spoken of the Government feeling, instead of leading the way, and the members of Government themselves, speak of paving the way for measures of a beneficial character, but he (Mr. R.) thought their object was to get the House to pave the way for them, and they seemed inclined not to stir until it was done. He was glad, however, to notice one paragraph in which the Shediac Railway is favourably noticed in the Speech, and in response, prepared, he presumed, by the Government, the same favourable views are repeated; for the members of the Government, of which the hon. and learned member from York (Mr. Fisher) was one, made the House speak of that measure as an "important undertaking," and promise to give it the "most attentive consideration." He was glad of this, and congratulated the hon. and learned member on his change of opinion since last year, as he (Mr. Fisher) appeared now to have found out that it was not such a "gigantic humbug" after all.

Hon. Attorney General did not like to reply to an hon. member in his absence, (alluding to Mr. Street) but the hon. and learned member from Northumberland had made remarks which called for some notice on the part of those who framed the Address in answer to the Speech. It had been said, that the Government was not prepared to carry out the views enunciated in the opening Speech. This was a mistake. The Government was prepared with such measures as far as it fell within the province of any Government, to initiate them. He would say, once for all, that although the Government had not gone into any detail of the measures which they would submit for the consideration of the House, yet when a subject was brought forward in the Speech, it might in future be taken for granted, that it was one with which the Executive Government could deal, that a measure to carry out the views contained in the Speech would be introduced. With reference to the subject under consideration, he would then announce that Professor Johnston's report shall have been submitted, that the Government intended to bring forward a plan for carrying out the Professor's suggestions, by the establishment of agricultural schools. With regard to Coal Mines, the Government was prepared to submit a measure for the consideration of the Legislature, having for its object the settlement of the long vexed question, whether we really have in this Province a valuable coal bed or not. (hear, hear.) This was a question which he was sure every hon. member on the floor of that house would like to see settled. With respect to the Navigation Laws, the Government would be prepared to submit the draft of an address to Her Majesty, having for its object, to put the trade between the whole of the North American colonies, on the footing of a coasting trade, not for the purpose of admitting foreigners to a participation in its benefits, but to open all the ports in the respective Colonies to the vessels belonging to each, and to place them in a position to negotiate for an extension of our free trade with foreign States, in reciprocal terms. All that the people of this country wanted was a fair field and no favour; give them this and he (the Attorney General) had no doubt that the energy of New Brunswickers would enable them to compete with the inhabitants of any other country. The consolidation of the laws was another subject to which members of the Government had directed their attention. Notwithstanding what had fallen from some hon. members on this subject, he could inform the House that he had consolidated, in one Bill, the laws relating to Town and Parish Officers, and when that Bill came before the House, he thought they would agree with him that it was no school-boy's work. He considered that the time had come when a consolidation of the laws had become imperatively necessary. A revision of the laws was also exceedingly desirable, but before this could be undertaken it was absolutely necessary to find out what the law now was, and collect for that purpose the materials scattered through the statute book, was also a subject which demanded some attention. He would ask any hon. member if it was reasonable and proper that the time of the Legislature should be occupied, at an expense to the Province of seventy or eighty pounds a day, in passing acts which were intended solely for the benefit of a few private individuals? He thought they had pursued this system quite long enough, and it was time that the public should be given to understand that when private individuals applied for acts of this description, they should be called upon to defray at least a part of the expense to which such applications subjected the Province. Before he left this subject he would briefly allude to what had fallen from his hon. and learned friend from Saint John, (Mr. Ritchie) with respect to the escape of a person accused of cutting the Telegraph wires. It would be recollected that he (the Attorney General) consolidated the criminal code last year. At the time this was done there was not a single Telegraph wire in the Province to cut, nor had the Legislature passed the Bill which made it a criminal offence to do so. How was he (the Attorney General) to know that a line of Telegraph would be erected, or that the Legislature would include in an act incorporating a private company, a clause making certain infractions with that company a capital offence? He took no blame to himself at all for the escape of the accused. He omitted nothing which the consolidated act revealed, and therefore he could not hold himself responsible for the imperfection to which the hon. member had alluded. Another subject, and it was the last which he should notice at present, was the imperfect state of the present system of auditing. It was, in his opinion, in every way desirable, that the powers of the Auditor General of the Province should be enlarged. That he should have authority to examine witnesses on oath, and thoroughly sift every account which passed through his hands. He would not then allude to reports which reached him, in various ways, of the misappropriation of the public money. Such reports should never influence the Government or the Legislature, and he would take that opportunity of stating that the Government should notice no charge against a public officer, unless such charge was made in writing and presented to the notice of the Government in a regular and proper

manner. He thought, however, that more stringent powers were absolutely necessary to be given to the Audit Office, and he for one believed that the very conferring of these powers would do much to remove the causes of complaint which are so frequently heard throughout the country. He had said this much to show hon. members that the Government, as a Government, did not shrink from any responsibility which could reasonably be cast upon them. There were, however, some measures propounded in the speech, as a Government, they would not presume to interfere with. For instance, the initiation of Money Grants was the undoubted right of that House. Could any hon. member believe for a moment that any Government would come down to that House and say, "Here, you have an undoubted right to do so and so, but we, the members of the Government, think that we could do it better, therefore you must give it up." No man in his senses would presume to promulgate such a doctrine to the representatives of the people of New Brunswick.— He hoped that in future, when any measure, which it was within the power of the Government to accomplish, came down, strongly recommended in the speech, that it would be implied that the Government was prepared with a measure so recommended. Neither himself nor his colleagues had any other object in view than to do their duty to the public faithfully and well. It was only by pursuing this course that they could hope to maintain their position, and while they did pursue this course, he was satisfied that any unintentional oversight, or error in judgement, would not be attributed to improper motives.

The question was then taken on the fifth paragraph, and passed, with the verbal amendment suggested by Mr. End.

On the sixth paragraph being read,

Mr. End rose and said, that although he felt himself incompetent to take the lead in discussing the effect which a repeal of the Navigation Laws would have on this country, yet he felt also that the paragraph under consideration should not pass without discussion. It appeared to him that the counsels of the great country to which we belong were being guided in a direction which must be injurious to the best interests of the state. That she was lavish of her blood and treasure to accomplish national purposes of one kind, she was wasting national strength by neglecting the interests of her artisans. (Mr. End) for one, fully participated in the fears alluded to by his Excellency, as to the effect of the recent important change in the Navigation Laws of the Mother Country, and he was not prepared to say, as one member of that House, that he had a single ray of hope that these fears would prove groundless. Entertaining these views he would reconstruct the sixth paragraph, and avoid any expression which could, by any possibility, be construed into an approval of what had been done, or a hope that the admission of foreign ships to British registry could be anything but ruinous to the ship owner in this country, unless full and unequivocal reciprocity from foreign states could be secured. (The hon. member then moved an amendment embodying his views.) They all knew that John Bull was a fine old gentleman, but sometimes he carried his gentility too far, as in the case of the Navigation Laws, where he had given away privileges without an equivalent, and if this suicidal course be persisted in a little longer, he feared the old gentleman would soon have nothing to give away, and perhaps too little to keep himself comfortable. Unless the British Government should succeed in inducing the Americans to reciprocate with this country, it was folly for them to expect that their worst fears about this matter would not be realized.

Mr. WARE fully agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member from Gloucester, (Mr. End) respecting the careful wording of the answer which they should give to this part of His Excellency's Speech. He thought it the duty of the House, to be extremely cautious how they used any words that might imply an approval of the repeal of the Navigation Laws. Under the new law British vessels must still have three-fourths of their crew composed of British subjects, and the law compels British ship owners to provide for their crew in a particular way, specifying even the quantity of lime juice which they shall be allowed in certain cases. Now the foreigner who feeds his crew on stock fish and rask, and pays them less than one half the wages which British seamen demand, has the unrestricted privilege of competing with the British ship owner, and if this state of things continued, British ship owners must adopt the same course, or surrender the carrying trade to foreign nations. With such opinions he was not prepared to say, as a member of that House, that he had a shadow of a hope that their worst fears for the interests of British ship owners and British ship builders would not be realized, and he would not consent to the use of a single expression which could be construed by the free traders in England into an approval of these measures.

The Hon. the ATTORNEY GENERAL said, there was nothing like approval intended to be conveyed by the paragraph as it then stood. The alteration of the Navigation Law was an act of the Imperial Parliament, and he (the Attorney General) could see no impropriety in the House saying that they hoped the consequences of the measure would not be so disastrous as they had at first anticipated. He thought with the hon. member from Kent, (Mr. Wark) that any such construction could be put upon the paragraph in England, as that hon. member seemed to anticipate, he would certainly cheerfully go with the amendment. They should, however, bear in mind that it was intended to address Her Majesty on this subject, and in that address they could fully explain their views, so that there could be no great fear of the paragraph under consideration being misunderstood, or misconstrued in England.

Mr. WOODWARD said, that if they were to go into the question of the Navigation Laws, in all its bearings, the debate would take a very wide scope. He had no doubt whatever that reciprocity with the United States, as respects registry, would be exceedingly desirable as far as this country is concerned, and that they should do all