

PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT
OF
NEW-BRUNSWICK.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER,

Fredericton, December 9, 1828.

This day, at two o'clock, His Excellency Sir HOWARD DOUGLAS came in State to the Council Chamber, and being seated on the Throne, the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod was sent down to the House of Assembly to command their attendance before His Excellency; and that House being come up, His Excellency was pleased to open the Session with the following

SPEECH:—

Mr. President, and Gentlemen of His Majesty's Council;

Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly;

I Have called you together at a season which is not, I fear, the most convenient, in consequence of having received an intimation from His Majesty's Government which gave me every reason to apprehend that at a later period I should be deprived of the pleasure of meeting you in Session, to bring forward some important business which I wish to recommend, in person, to your consideration.

In furtherance of those objects, and in your other deliberations for the public good, I have no doubt that I shall continue to receive that assistance from your zeal, wisdom, and loyalty, which I have hitherto had the high satisfaction to experience, in my Administration of the Government of this Province.

Although the Revenue of the present year, may not be equal to that of the past, yet, I am happy to have it in my power to say, that in this contingent fluctuation, which may be easily accounted for, there is nothing to apprehend for the future, and that the financial resources of the Country are substantially sound and unimpaired.

Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly;

The Treasurer's Accounts shall be laid before you as soon as they can be prepared: and I rely on your making provision for the ordinary Services of the Province.

I shall likewise cause to be laid before you statements drawn up by the person whom I have appointed, to examine and report upon the expenditure of the Public Monies.

To give the fullest and surest effect to a measure so important, I instructed that Gentleman, not only to make a strict and efficient audit of each and every account of expenditure for the present year, but further to have retrospect to a period at which it appeared material to commence; and to carry forward by distinct years, a statement showing the amount of appropriations in each, so to exhibit an accurate and comprehensive view of the state of the expenditure to the present time. Referring to those statements, and in due consideration of the advances and heavy expenses which have been incurred on account of a yet recent calamity, I recommend the expediency of making less liberal appropriations than usual, for some of the extraordinary and other services of the Country; and a rigid observance of economy, until those floating advances are redeemed.

Mr. President, and Gentlemen of His Majesty's Council;

Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly;

I am happy to acquaint you that various important operations of internal improvement have made considerable advancement during the present year. Had those retrenchments in the expenditure of the Country, which I now recommend, been suddenly introduced, when the late severe depression occurred, many of the Public Works then under execution must have been suspended, and the Country subjected to great additional distress, from the more general stagnations so thrown upon her internal operations. Being enabled, by a particular arrangement, to keep those works in full activity, I deemed it highly expedient rather to cause them to proceed with increased spirit, than to relax in exertions which I perceived would be highly productive, as well as in other respects beneficial. The effect is apparent; and in reviewing the past period of depression in the Commercial affairs of the Country, it is highly consolatory to perceive that the liberal grants which you have made, realized and promptly applied as they have been, to the more important Public Works, have effected more than was contemplated, or could, in other times, have been accomplished, with equal means.

To Agriculture and the Fisheries, as the main sources of prosperity and wealth, I particularly and earnestly desire always to engage your continued and most serious attention. I am happy to perceive, in all quarters of the Province, that the system of Agriculture, in all its branches, continues to make great and visible improvement. The encouragement which you have given to both, has been highly salutary; but the fruits are still vastly insufficient; and the Country is paying dearly, and suffering grievously from these deficiencies. These two great branches of industry are intimately and inseparably connected; for Agriculture is the basis of public wealth. Here they are obviously seeking to go hand in hand, and I present them together for your protection, because an increased cultivation of both is as essential to the commercial prosperity, as it is to the internal well-being of the Country. When enterprize and industry, which it has been, and is your wise policy to direct to those sources, shall have succeeded in rendering them plenteous, articles of Provincial growth and production, will become staple subjects in important and lucrative branches of trade, which are now commencing under inconvenience and difficulty, from these being in defect. Profit to the Merchant, and substantial advantage to the Country, will then more certainly accrue. Capital, accumulating and circulating in the Province, when no longer abstracted, as at present, in its intrinsically valuable part, will further facilitate the pursuits of industry; and render all the internal transactions of the Country, more active and intense. Commerce will then find itself enabled to extend and generalize its operations, with the fairest prospect; and the Province, resting and dealing more securely, upon real and inherent resources, will no longer be exposed to suffer, as she has done, from any external depression that may occur; but which will still be impending over her, from a single cause, so long as she continues to bend her force, so exclusively, on a single pursuit.

It affords me infinite pleasure to perceive the distinct improvement which has for some time been taking place in the Commercial Affairs of the Mother Country. I congratulate you on this, and on the fair expectations that may be entertained, that this improvement is about to reach those branches of Trade, in which this Province is more immediately concerned. In this favourable conjuncture, which it will behove the Country to meet with discretion and circumspection, it may be well to consider, whether some measures might not be devised for better specifying the technical description, and regulating the manufacture of the great staple production of the Country; so to uphold that important commodity in public estimation and demand, in a degree justly commensurate with its natural good qualities, and due to the facilities with which it may at all times be exported.

I particularly recommend to your continued liberality, the Institutions of Education and Learning, for which you have hitherto provided. I shall cause to be laid before you some Reports which I have called for upon a very important class of those Institutions, necessary, in themselves, to give a competent degree of classical and other education, to young persons not destined for the learned professions; and essentially so to provide for youth, in the different Counties of the Province, the means of qualifying themselves to enter with advantage, and duly to profit by, that noble Institution which the patronage and munificence of our Most Gracious Sovereign, and the wisdom and liberality of the Legislature of this Province, have enabled me to establish in this Capital. Should it appear, from these Reports, that the Institution of which they treat, may be rendered more generally and actively beneficial, you will propose whatever your joint wisdom may suggest, for accomplishing so important a purpose.

I have great satisfaction in acquainting you, that, in compliance with my representation, a measure has been adopted by His Majesty's Government, for completing the armament of all the Militia Forces of this Province, without any charge upon its local Funds. I shall have occasion to communicate with you by Special Message, on some arrangements, relating to this important subject. Confident, now, in the full efficiency of an excellent Militia System, to the formation of which my attention has long been devoted, and which you have enabled me to establish, by Law.—Provided with every requisite by which to render that system practicably efficient, when necessary; and convinced of the sentiments and spirit which would animate and inspire it for the defence and security of the Country, I congratulate

you on the perfection of a measure upon which so much reliance may justly be placed in the day of need; and which, by a judicious exercise of the powers vested in me, will be lightly felt by the People, when no need is. I recommend this system to your continued support, in all its essential provisions.

The liberal appropriations which you have made for the improvement of the Great Roads, have, in general, been applied to the best advantage. New and important communications have been opened and established in directions highly essential to the business and convenience of the Province; and others will be brought, in turn, under the same circumspect and substantial principle of management and execution, to such extent as you may consider it suitable to the circumstances of the Country to undertake. In revising the Law, I recommend you to consider of the expediency of introducing some amendment for more effectually regulating, and applying, Statute Labour on the Great Roads; and likewise to reconsider the principle upon which it is assessed in the Country generally, with a view to regulate it according to some scale that may be adapted to the different circumstances of the People.

I took an early opportunity of bringing under the consideration of a former Assembly, the expediency of ascertaining the practicability, and probable cost, of opening a water communication across the narrow Isthmus which separates the Gulph of St. Lawrence from the Bay of Fundy. The practicability of such an undertaking has been satisfactorily ascertained; but it would not have been prudent for New-Brunswick, to take the execution upon herself; and the circumstances of those times were not altogether propitious for bringing it forward on general grounds. But in the present state of the British inter-colonial Trade, the accomplishment of this great project becomes an object of so much national importance, that I have recommended it in the strongest manner to the paternal consideration of His Majesty's Government, and to the Governments of the adjoining Provinces. Copies of my communications on this subject, shall be laid before you. Though not to be undertaken solely on New-Brunswick account, this is a measure in which she is most nearly concerned, and which could not proceed without your concurrence. In the documents which have been prepared for your information, you will find reason sufficient to induce you to give the measure, the fullest consideration; and, without giving any precise pledge, these will incline you to afford whatever conditional contribution may appear to correspond with the particular position and circumstances of this Province, viewed relatively with the general objects of the measure; and with the extent to which New-Brunswick may participate, with the other North American Provinces and the West-India Colonies, generally, in a National Work which it may fairly be considered will be beneficial to all.

The interests of this Province very urgently require your immediate attention to some general measures by which the approach to, and navigation of our Coasts, may be facilitated and rendered more safe, by the establishment of additional Light Houses. I am persuaded that you perceive the absolute necessity, and policy of providing for a gradual application of these safeguards, in a manner that will admit of devoting to that special purpose, generally, whatever sums may purport to be levied for this particular object. Such means shall be applied with the utmost care and circumspection, in a manner that will be satisfactory and beneficial to all the navigation, shipping and local interests concerned.

The several objects which I have thus recommended to your particular consideration, are all essential, and in the nearest and dearest degrees, to your well-being and happiness; in a prudent management of your finances, and a judicious application of your income; in providing for the Education and Instruction of youth; an industrious improvement of the internal condition, public and domestic economy of the Province; a spirited cultivation of its natural resources; a discreet and well regulated dealing in that great staple, upon the character of which, the stability and productiveness of one main branch of your external transactions will chiefly depend; and eminently, upon a fixed and permanent degree of attention, to secure and maintain this Province, as an integral part of the British Empire.

In the personal observation which I have bestowed upon the local circumstances, and natural resources of this Country; and in the studies by which I