PROCEEDINGS



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FROM

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and the several stations of the Settlement of Prince of Wales' Island, Singapore, and Malacca."

ADJOURNMENT.

SIR JAMES COLVILE moved the adjournment of the Council. In doing so, he said the Council would recollect that it had determined to meet on an earlier day than usual, for the further discussion of the Bill relating to the supply of water at Bombay. He had been asked to name Tuesday, for that purpose. He was afraid he could not pledge himself to attend on that or any other day but Saturday; but he believed there would be a sufficient quorum without him; and he had no doubt that the Bill would receive such consideration by the Select Committee to whom it had been referred that his presence would not be necessary.

The Council accordingly adjourned until

Tuesday.

Tuesday, March 11, 1856.

PRESENT:

The Honorable J. A. Dorin, Vice-President, in the Chair.

Hon. Sir J. W. Colvile, D. Eliott, Esq., Hon. Major Gl. J. Low, C. Allen, Esq.,

Hon. J. P. Grant, P. W. LeGeyt, Esq. and Hon. B. Peacock, E. Currie, Esq.

SUPPLY OF WATER (BOMBAY AND COLABA).

Mr. LEGEYT presented the Report of the Select Committee on the Bill " to enable the Bombay Government to provide for a due supply of water for public use in the Islands of Bombay and Colaba;" and moved that it be now read.

Agreed to.

The Report having been read-

Mr. LeGEYT moved that the Council resolve itself into a Committee on the Bill, and that the Committee be instructed to consider the Bill in the amended form in which it was recommended by the Select Committee to be passed.

Agreed to.

Section I empowered the Governor of Bombay in Council, at any time before the 1st of August next, to authorize the Police to take charge of private tanks and wells, "to deepen and improve the same, and to retain possession thereof until the said 1st of August, and during such period to superintend the dis-

tribution of the water thereof, &c."

Mr. GRANT said, he had an amendment to propose in this Section. He proposed to add the words "prohibit the consumption of the water thereof otherwise than as drinking water, and to," after the word "to" and before the word "superintend." The principal object of the Law was to prohibit the consumption of drinking water for other purposes than drinking, and especially to prevent its being used for the irrigation of land, for which purpose, he observed, one Parsee had the right to use the water of one of the public tanks. He thought it would be better to specify that object in the Bill.

MR, LEGEYT asked if the words proposed by the Honorable Member would not imply that any unlimited quantity of water might be taken from private wells or tanks

for drinking purposes.

MR. GRANT replied, he had not understood that it was intended that there should be a limit prescribed to the supply for drinking purposes. If that was the intention—if it was meant that the Governor in Council should have the power of putting the inhabitants upon an allowance of water for drinking—he thought that this power should be given by the Bill in so many words; for the measure would be a very stringent one, and should not be provided for in general terms.

Mr. LEGEYT said, it certainly was his impression that it was intended that the Government of Bombay should have the power of restricting, if necessary, the supply of water even for drinking purposes. In the Telegraphic Message which he had received from Bombay, and which was one of the annexures to the Bill, the Secretary to the

Government said---

"I have laid your Message before Government, who do not think the restricted enactment you propose will be sufficient. It may be necessary, in order to save life, to place each inhabitant on an allowance of water."

Mr. CURRIE said, he thought it was quite apparent from Section III of the Bill, that the intention was that the Bombay Government should have the power of limiting the supply for drinking purposes. That Section, after providing penalties for obstructions, said—

"whoever wilfully does any act whereby the water of such well or tank shall be rendered unfit for drinking, or takes water in excess of the quantity allowed, &c., shall be liable, on conviction, &c."

Mr. GRANT said, if it was intended that the Governor of Bombay in

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Council should have the power of putting the inhabitants on a quart, or any other limited allowance of drinking water per day, he thought that, considering how very stringent such a measure would be, the intention should be expressly and clearly stated in the Bill, and should not be left to be gathered from the general expressions used.

After some conversation, in which it was proposed by Sir James Colvile that the intention of the Bill, on this point, should be made clear by the insertion of a few words in a subsequent part of the Section—

Mr. GRANT'S amendment was put and carried, the Honorable Member having previously altered it by substituting the word "prevent" for the word "prohibit."

After the addition of the same words in a subsequent part of the Section, and the insertion of the words suggested by Sir James Colvile, the Section was passed.

Section II provided for the removal of cattle from certain parts, and declared that cattle found within the prohibited limits should be seized,

"and the owner therefore shall be dealt with under the provisions of Rule, Ordinance, and Regulation II of 1812."

MR. LEGEYT moved that all the words after "shall be dealt with" should be left out, in order that the following words be substituted for them:—

"according to the law for the time being in force for the seizure and sale of stray cattle, and the punishment of the owners thereof."

His reason for moving this amendment was that, in all probability, before the 1st of August next, the Police Bill which was now before a Select Committee, would pass into law, and the provisions of that Bill would supersede those of Regulation II of 1812.

The amendment was agreed to, and the Section than passed

Section then passed.

Section III was passed as it stood. Section IV provided that ———

"Every owner or tenant of a tank or well taken for the use of the public under this Act, and every porson who shall sustain loss or injury by reason of any interference with a private right under the provisions of this Act, shall be entitled to claim compensation from the Municipal Fund of Bombay."

Mr. ALLEN moved as an amendment that, after the words "under this Act," the following should be added:-- "and every owner of any cattle, whose cattle should be removed, or should be directed to be removed." It had been admitted that owners of cattle, whose cattle were removed, should be entitled to compensation; but the Bill, as amended, while it contained a specific Section for the removal of cattle, contained no specific provision for compensation to the more. It was true the owners might claim under the general words in the Section ---" every person who may sustain loss or injury by reason of any interference with a private right, under the provisions of this Act, shall be entitled to compensation, &c.;" but he should much prefer that the specific Clause which he proposed should be introduced.

Mr. LeGEYT said, he saw no particular objection to the insertion of the words proposed; but the Select Committee were of opinion that the words which the Honorable Member had just quoted from the Section would fully comprehend any person who might be injured by reason of his cattle being removed. An owner of cattle had a right to put his cattle within his own enclosure. If his cattle were removed from that enclosure, that would be an interference with his private right; and the Section, as it stood, would enable him to recover compensation. It appeared to him, therefore, that the addition proposed by the Honorable Member, would be a redundancy.

SIR JAMES COLVILE said, it would be worse than a redundancy. It would seem to imply that, if cattle were removed under the Act from the owner's own close, the removal would be no violation of a private right. It would seem to imply that an owner of cattle was something distinct from every other person who might sustain loss or injury by reason of an interference with his private right under the Act. If cattle were removed under the Act from places in which the owner was entitled to keep them, the owner's private right would clearly be violated, and he would be entitled to compensation under this Section as it stood. Where the removal would really violate no private right, he confessed he should not be much disposed to encourage the owner to claim compensation from the Municipal Fund, which, perhaps, would prove insufficient to meet all the demands that might be made upon it under this Section. It appeared to him that the Section, as it stood, was quite sufficient for the purposes of justice; and

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there was no reason to suppose that it would receive other than a sensible construction from those who would have to administer the Law.

Bombay

Mr. ALLEN said, if the Section had begun with the words—" Every person who shall sustain loss or injury, &c., shall be entitled to claim compensation, &c.," he should be perfectly content to leave it untouched; but seeing that it made specific mention of those whose private rights should be interfered with under Section I, and not of those whose private rights should be interfered with under Section II, he had thought it proper to propose his amendment.

The amendment was put, and negatived.

The question was then proposed that

Section IV stand part of the Bill.

MR. ELIOTT said, he agreed entirely in the principle that those who should sustain injury by the operation of this Act, should be entitled to compensation; but he objected to throw the burthen of the compensation upon the Municipal Fund of Bombay, because by Act XI of 1845, by which the Fund was constituted, the monies of the Fund were set aside for certain specific purposes; and the supply of drinking water to the inhabitants was not one of those Section VII of the Act directed ригровея. that the monies to be raised from the several sources therein specified, should be disbursed in the manner thereinafter provided. tion X placed the Fund under the supervision and control of a Board. Section XI appropriated a certain sum to Police purposes. Section XII provided as follows :--

"That, after the deduction and payment of such sum of money as aforesaid, the residue of the said Fund shall be appropriated and disbursed by the said Board under and subject to the control of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace, or other persons appointed for that purpose by the Government, for the following purposes:—

" 1. Defraying the expenses of Establishments necessary for the purposes of this Act.

"2. Repairing, Cleaning, Draining, and Lighting the Public Roads, Streets, Bridges, Tanks, Market Places, and other public places of a like kind."

It could hardly he contended that the supply of drinking water to the Inhabitants fell within any of these specifications. How, then, could the provision in the 4th Section of the Bill be justified, that persons who should suffer damage by reason of any interference with a private right under the provisions of the Act, should be entitled to compensation out of the Municipal Fund? To him it appeared that to declare that such compen-

sation should be paid out of the Municipal Fund, would be very like a private individual staving off a creditor with a cheque upon a Bank in which he knew he had no assets. They all knew that the Municipal Fund had no assets for this purpose: they all knew that it had not assets sufficient for the purposes to which it was actually pledged; and he would ask Honorable Members versed in the Law whether it would not be a sufficient answer to any suit brought under this Section for the Managers of the Fund to say-" We hold no monies for this purpose. We hold monies under a certain trust; and this claim does not come within the scope of that trust"?

The Bombay Government, rightly appreciating its duty, and constrained by a sense of grave responsibility, had stood forward on this occasion of extraordinary emergency to provide for the relief of the inhabitants. It felt it to be incumbent on the ruling power, when ordinary means fail, to resort to extraordinary means, to avert a great calamity. The calamity apprehended in this case, was a water-famine. Water to drink was as much a necessary of life as food to eat. He did not know whether, heretofore, the Government had ever been called upon to interfere in the case of a water-famine; but there were many instances of its interference in cases of real famine a famine of food; and in these cases, the Funds of the State had been freely given for the relief of the sufferers. Two years ago, a famine of food prevailed over a part of the Presidency of Madras. To save the labouring classes from starving, the Government felt it to be its imperative duty to provide them with employment in public works, that they might earn the means of procuring such scanty subsistence as, in the general scarcity, could be had, so that life at least might be sustained. From a statement of the measures adopted on that occasion, he found that the total sum expended by Government for the relief of the people in distressed districts was no less than Rupees 17,68,027. Of this sum, the amount expended in the district of Bellary alone, which suffered most, was Rupees 12,28,207. The benefit secured by this expenditure might be considered to have been local: the immediate benefit was the Saving from starvation of people of the labouring classes in the districts affected by the famine: by the roads and other works constructed by their labour, a permanent benefit was gained by those districts: yet no one had thought of making the outlay of GoLEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

vernment a local charge. The measure which this Bill provided for, was entirely a Government measure. The Municipal Board, as far as appeared, had never been consulted about it. All the correspondence concerning it had taken place between the Government and a Special Committee appointed by Government for the occasion. The measures proposed were to be carried out under the special direction of the Government, by its own officers. Under circumstances like these why should the cost of giving effect to the Act be borne by the Municipal Fund? Why should the Trustees of the Municipal Fund be compelled, supposing that they could be compelled, to divert the assets of the Fund to a purpose not within the scope of their trust? As yet, he had heard no reason assigned for this charge being laid upon the Municipal Fund. To him it appeared that the proceeding would be inequitable. On the other hand, he thought that Government ought to bear the charge, and that the Bill should make a provision to that effect.

He should, therefore, vote against the 4th Section, and if the Council should negative it, he was prepared to propose a new Section in its place.

SIR JAMES COLVILE said, he begged to give his opinion upon the Honorable Member's amendment now, because he was not quite sure that, if the debate was a long one, he should be able to remain until the time for voting arrived. He concurred in much that had been said by the Honorable Member as to the nature of the emergency. He did not deny that, in so unusual an emergency, the State might fairly come to the aid of the Inhabitants of Bombay; and he admitted the force of the Honorable Member's objections to throw the extraordinary burthen of the compensations awarded under this Act upon the Municipal Fund, which probably had not more than enough to meet the ordinary charges upon it. But he did not know that the Municipal Fund was not capable of expansion. He believed that there were larger powers of taxation in Bombay than existed in this city; and coupling that with the fact that the proposition in question had not originated with this Council, he thought that it would be better to leave the Bill as it stood. The draft Bill sent up by the Government of Bombay with the papers containing the grounds on which they asked to have such a law as this passed, contained a Clause which proposed that all sums claimable by way of compensation, should be paid out of the Municipal Fund. The Bill

as introduced by the Honorable Member for Bombay, contained a similar provision. No doubt, the amended Bill contained provisions which might materially increase the amount of compensation payable; but the question was one rather of principle than of amount; and the principle of making the Municipal Fund liable for these demands, had originated with the Government of Bombay, representing, as far as the Council knew, the community of Bombay.

the community of Bombay. The Honorable Member had said that this provision was like the act of a debtor who staved off his creditor by giving him a cheque on a bank in which he knew he had no assets; but he (Sir James Colvile) did not know that the assets in this instance would not be forthcoming, and he could very easily see that, if they should not be, the Government of Bombay might take the necessary steps to increase the means of the Fund. If it had not authority to do this as the law stood, there was no reason why, when the necessity appeared, it should not come to this Council and ask for power to increase the Municipal taxes: it might also apply to the Supreme Government for a grant of money in aid of the Municipal Funds. Again, without going the length of saying that this Council had not the power to deal with the General Revenues of the State, he thought it unadvisable to do so except on the suggestion or with the sanction of the Supreme Government, or of those Members of this Council, who, being Members also of the Executive Government, might be understood to express the opinions of the Supreme Government. It was to be remembered that any legislation of this Council was subject to revisiou. The Governor General might refuse his assent to any Bill that was passed by the Council; and even where that assent was given, the Court of Directors, if they should think a Bill objectionable, might disallow it, and then, of course, it would be the duty of this Council to repeal it. Any hasty dealing with the General Revenue of the country, was just one of those things which seemed most likely to provoke the disallowance of

an Act passed by this Council. That might

not be the case in this instance; but still,

in the absence of any suggestion from the

Government or even from the people of

Bombay, that a recourse to the public reve-

nues was necessary, he thought it unadvisable

for the Council to make any alteration in this

Bill as to the source from which the suma

required for compensation, should be drawn.

With regard to the legal question which the Honorable Member had propounded, he had no hesitation whatever in saying that this Act would amply justify the Municipal Commissioners in paying compensation out of the Municipal Fund as long as they had money wherewith to pay it. What might be the position of claimants if the Fund proved bankrupt, he did not find it so easy to say; but he had no doubt that care would be taken to keep the Fund solvent; and that the contingency contemplated, would never arise.

Mr. PEACOCK said, he was one of the Members of the Select Committee who thought that compensation under the Act should be paid out of the Municipal Fund of Bombay, and not out of the general finances of the country; and he should say a few words upon the observations that had fallen from the Honorable Member for Madras on the opposite side of the question.

The Honorable Member had stated that it would be inequitable to make the Municipal Fund responsible for compensation awarded under the Act; and had contended that the charge should be borne by the Government, on the ground that this was an unusual emergency. The necessity for this measure, however, had arisen because there were not sufficient public tanks in Bombay to provide for ordinary cases of want. If the Island had been sufficiently provided with public tanks for ordinary purposes, there would have been no necessity for such a Law as this, At the present moment, there was a plan under the consideration of the Board of Conservancy in Bombay for supplying the Island with water, the admitted reason being that the supply now available was wholly insufficient for the ordinary wants of the Inhabitants. That being the case, he apprehended that the cost of providing for the emergency that had arisen, ought to be paid by the Municipality, and not by the Government. If the present emergency was owing to a deficiency in the public sources of supply, he saw no reason why claims for compensation under this Bill, should be paid out of the general revenues of the country any more than the expense of the proposed plan to which he had alluded.

The Honorable Member had compared the present scarcity of water at Bombay to the recent famine at Madras, and had laid stress on the fact that the Government of that Presidency had provided for the relief of the sufferers. But the scarcity of food on that occasion was not confined to the town of

Madras. It arose from a general failure of the crops, and the disbursements which the Government made, amounting to 17 lacs, was not for Madras only, but for the inhabitants generally of a large extent of country. Where the Government incurred expense for the people generally, it was but proper that the general revenues should bear the charge; but in the present case, there was not a general drought throughout the Presidency; and there was no reason why the people generally should pay for supplying the inhabitants of Bombay with water.

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The Honorable Member had said that the Municipal Fund was not now chargeable with any payment for the supply of water to the inhabitants, and that, considering the present state of the Fund, to charge it with the payment of compensation under the Act, was like a debtor giving a cheque on a Bank in which he had no assets. The Government of Bombay had sent up the draft of this Bill, and that draft proposed that compensation to owners of private tanks and wells should be paid out of the Municipal Fund. He did not think that the Government of Bombay would have proposed to charge the payment of compensation upon the Municipal Fund if there were no assets to meet If, however, it should be found that the Municipal Fund was not sufficient for the purpose, there was no reason why the Municipal rates should not be raised for the purpose of meeting the charge. He had no doubt that 🛨 per cent. or thereabouts would be quite sufficient.

On the whole, therefore, it appeared to him that the Section should be left as it

etood.

MR. GRANT said, he wished to remark upon only one point arising out of the observations made by the Honorable Member for Madras. The Honorable Member proposed that this Council should, without any communication from the Executive Government, vote away public money. In his opinion, if the Council should give its assent to such a proposition, it would greatly err. There was no analogy between the Legislative Council and the House of Commons, which was a representative assembly; but there was some analogy between the Legislative Council and the House of Lords; and they all knew that the House of Lords could not originate a Money Bill. Whose money was it, in the eye of the Law, that the Honorable Member would dispose The money of the East India of ? Company. Would this Council be justified

in voting away the money of the East India Company? Had the East India Company entrusted this Council with that authority? The finances of this country were, subject to the orders of the Home Government, entrusted to the management of the Governor General of India in Council in his Executive capacity. He thought, therefore, that no money Bill ought to be originated in this Council without some communication being made to it either by a formal Message from the Governor General in Council in his Executive capacity, or by a Member rising in his place and stating that the Bill had received the sauction of the Governor General in Council in his Executive capacity.

For that reason alone, if there were none other, he should oppose any amendment of the kind intended by the Honorable Member for Madras. But he might add that he agreed with the Honorable and Learned Members who had just preceded him in the debate in thinking that it was perfectly fair and equitable that the people of Bombay, for whose sole benefit this Act was proposed, ought themselves to provide the funds that might be necessary to give effect to its provisions.

MR. LEGEYT said, he quite concurred with the Honorable and Learned Member (Mr. Peacock) in thinking that it would be much better for this Council to adopt the proposition that had been made by the Government of Bombay; and that, if any difficulty should hereafter be experienced in paying compensation under the Act out of the Municipal Fund, the Government might come up to the Legislature for a law empowering it to raise the Municipal taxes by a special

After what the Honorable Member to his left (Mr. Grant) had said as to the power of this Council to pass a vote affecting the general revenues of India, he should not feel at all justified in departing from the terms of Section IV, and thereby endangering the

immediate passing of the Bill.

Mr. ELIOTT said, the Honorable Member to his left (Mr. Grant) had argued that, because the general revenues of the country were the monies of the East India. Company, this Council had not the power to vote them away of its own motion. Now, it seemed to him that the Council had at least as much right to vote away such monies. as it had to vote away the monies of the Municipal Fund, appropriated as they were by Law to specific purposes. He held that it was inequitable to lay a burthen upon that Fund of the nature proposed, be-

cause it was foreign to the purposes expressly specified by Law for which it was held in trust. If the Council could meddle with trusts of this kind, what could prevent it from meddling with any other trust? It might as well order the compensation to be paid out of the funds of the Bank of Bombay. It might be said that the Subscribers to that Bank were, for the most part, inhabitants of Bombay, and being, as such, interested in the benefit which the Bill was designed to afford to the people of Bombay, they ought to pay for it.

With regard to the question whether the Municipal Fund had assets to meet the demand for compensation, he would observe that it was perfectly well known, from the papers before the Council, that the Fund had not means to provide even for the objects for which it was constituted—that the Board entrusted with its administration had been obliged to suspend public works upon which it had already entered, and which were in progress, from sheer want of means. He maintained, therefore, that the Council was in reality drawing upon a Fund which could not meet its demand.

On the whole, he thought he was fully borne out in saying that to lay the burthen of compensation upon this Fund was in-

equitable.

MR. CURRIE said, he should vote in favor of the amendment which the Honorable Member for Madras proposed to move, and he wished to say a few words in explanation of the reasons for which he should The Honorable Member opposite (Mr. Grant) had urged that this Council had no authority to vote away public money, except with the concurrence of the Executive Government. But the question of voting away public money would not arise upon the intended amendment. That amendment would not propose to vote away any public money. It would merely say that, in the contingency of claims for compensation being made, such claims should be satisfied by the Government. This had been done in numerous other instances. The Embankment Act, lately passed, was certainly not prepared in communication with the Executive Government; but it provided that any persons suffering damage by the Act, should be entitled to compensation; and when compensation was awarded, the money must be paid out of the public revenue. The question, therefore, alluded to by the Honorable Member, whatever might be its correct solution, did not arise on the present occasion,

It had been contended by the Honorable and learned Chief Justice that, as the proposition for making compensation under the Act payable by the Municipal Fund had come from the Government of Bombay, the Council ought | not to interfere. But it did seem to him that, if it appeared to the Council generally, as it did to the Honorable Member for Madras and to himself, that it would be clearly inequitable to apply the Municipal Funds to this purpose, it would hardly be a sufficient justification for the Council to vote for the Bill as it stood, that the 'proposition for that course had come from the Bombay Government. He thought that it would be inequitable to impose this burthen on the Municipal Fund, not only because monies of the Fund were especially approprinted by Law to other purposes, but also because the people who contributed to the municipal rates were not, for the most part, the people who would benefit by the measure. The rates were paid by house-owners and persons who used carriages and horses, and they were the persons to whom the wells and tanks to be taken possession of belonged; but the persons to whom the water was to be distributed would be principally the poor labouring classes, who did not contribute to the rates.

Bombay

With respect to the argument that there was now a proposition before the Bombay Board of Conservancy to supply the Island with water, which would be carried out by means of a rate to be raised on the municipality, it did not appear to him that, because a special rate was hereafter to be raised for this purpose by the Conservancy Board, with the consent of the Government, therefore funds which had already been contributed for other purposes, should be applied to the supply of water to the inhabitants on this emergency.

THE CHAIRMAN said, the question really before the Council was, whether Section IV should stand part of the Bill. question whether sums claimable as compensation under the Act should be paid out of the general revenue of the country, had not yet arisen. If it had, he confessed he should have felt some difficulty in putting it to the Council. Standing Order LXI directed as follows :---

"If the Bill relate to any of the matters mentioned in the last preceding Order, notice of such intended motion must be given at an ordinary Meeting of the Council, at least one week before the motion shall be made; and the question shall not be proposed by the President, unless the motion be seconded."

The public finances were one of the matters mentioned in the last preceding Order; and no notice had been given of the proposal to make compensations under this Act payable out of that source. The proposal was only now brought forward for the first time. He was quite aware that the Standing Orders had been suspended in regard to this Bill; but he did not think it was intended by that, that the fundamental rules of the Council should be set aside; and he apprehended that the Order respecting motions which related to the general revenue of the country, was a fundamental rule.

As he had said before, however, the question whether the charge referred to should be borne by the general revenue, had not yet arisen. The real question now was, whether Section IV should or should not stand part of the Bill.

The question was put, and carried in the affirmative by a majority.

The Preamble was passed after amendments corresponding with those in Section I.

The Title was passed as it stood.

The Council having resumed its sitting, the Bill was reported.

Mr. LeGEYT moved that the Bill be now read a third time and passed.

The motion was carried, and the Bill read a third time.

Mr. LEGEYT moved that Mr. Grant be requested to carry the Bill to the Bight Honorable the Governor General for his assent.

Agreed to.

Mr. LeGEYT moved that the Council adjourn for a quarter of an hour, in order that Mr. Grant might take the Bill for the Governor General's assent.

Agreed to.

The Council afterwards resumed its sttting pursuant to adjournment.

MR. GRANT having returned to the Council Chamber, the Vice-President intimated that the Governor General had signified his assent to the Bull.

The Council then adjourned until Saturday next, on the motion of Sir James Colvile.

Saturday, March 15, 1856.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon'ble the Governor General, President in the Chair.

Hon. Sir James Colvile, Hon. B. Peacock, His Excellency the Com- D. Eliott, Esq., mander-in-Chief, C. Allen, Esq., P. W. LeGeyt, Esq., Hon. J. A. Dorin, Hon. Major Genl. J. Low, E. Currie, Esq. and Hon, J. P. Grant, Hon, Sir Arthur Buller,