

Your Lordship will, I presume, be addressed on the subject above referred to by the Governor of the Colony, who, I suppose, will express the views of his Responsible Advisers. But, as the conduct of these gentlemen towards myself has been unusual, and, as I consider, unbecoming, I respectfully request your Lordship's permission to trouble you with a brief account of the proceedings.

When the House of Representatives was dissolved last year, I had occupied the Chair as Speaker for upwards of ten years. I was originally elected Speaker on the 3rd of June, 1861. At the commencement of the next Parliament, on the 30th of June, 1866, I was elected a second time without opposition; and in the same year I had the honour to receive from Her Most Gracious Majesty the distinction of knighthood.

About a fortnight before the termination of the last Session of the Parliament, which expired in 1870, I informed the House from the Chair that in consequence of ill-health, and from other causes, it was not my intention to offer myself again as Speaker. Your Lordship of course knows the usual proceedings taken when a Speaker retires. These proceedings may vary in different Legislative Bodies.

Some of them, as the English House of Commons, may think it right that a retiring Speaker should be pensioned. Others may think not. But it will be admitted that ordinary courtesy and good feeling require that a retiring Speaker, if he has done his duty, should at least receive the thanks of the House over which he has presided.

I am not aware that, with one exception, it has been imputed to me that I did not do my duty as Speaker. As I have already informed your Lordship, I was unanimously elected a second time, and was knighted in consideration of my services; and I frequently had the satisfaction of hearing from leading Members of the House that its character and tone had been successfully maintained by my conduct in the Chair. I refer your Lordship with confidence to the successive Governors of the Colony and its leading public men, for an estimate of the manner in which I discharged the duties of the highly responsible office which I had the honor to hold.

When a Speaker has announced his intended resignation, it is usual, I believe, for the leader of the House to come to the front, and invite the House to take the steps which are dictated alike by custom and courtesy.

But the leader of the House, the Hon. William Fox, made no such movement; and the result was that, after ten years' service as Speaker, I was allowed to leave without a single word of thanks, or any acknowledgment whatever of my services.

Mr. Fox has, with exceedingly bad taste, imputed to me that I had been influenced as Speaker by party considerations. I assure your Lordship that any such imputation is entirely untrue and undeserved; and I do not believe that a single individual in the House of Representatives, besides Mr. Fox himself, is capable of making such an imputation.

Conscious that I had done my duty to the House, and believing that fact to be generally recognized by the Members, I could only regard the omission of the usual compliment given upon such occasions as an unjustifiable and totally undeserved slight.

The present House, sensible of the discredit brought upon its proceedings, has sought to repair the omission of last Session by a vote of thanks recently agreed to.

The proceeding is an anomalous one, inasmuch as the present House has no knowledge of me as Speaker, and, in point of fact, nothing to thank me for. Still, I cannot but feel much indebted to it for the kind feeling which prompted the action, and much honored by its adoption, even though the Prime Minister, in moving it, did so in terms which were studiously ungracious.

The House has followed up its vote of thanks by an Address for some mark of Her Majesty's favour; and it is in reference to this point, in particular, that I now venture to trespass upon your Lordship's time and attention.

When I occupied the Chair of the House, I frequently found it necessary to assert what I believed to be its proper position and privileges in the government of the country.

Though no longer a Member of the House, I still find myself compelled to assume the same position. As one who filled for many years the highest office in the elective branch of the Legislature, I conceive that I have a right to expect a certain amount of official consideration.

If Ministers, when I resigned, had done what was usual and becoming, they would have moved a vote of thanks to me before the House broke up, and they would have offered me a seat in the Legislative Council at once. Some Legislatures might do even more than this for a retiring Speaker; but I submit that that is the least that should be done, and that much a retiring Speaker has a right to expect.

The resolution of the present Ministry to refer the matter to the Queen is nothing but a movement to exclude me from the Legislature for the present Session, if not longer.

I must decline in any manner whatever to give my countenance to the doctrine that the treatment of a retiring Speaker is to depend upon the pleasure of the party leader of the day. I can imagine few things more calculated to impair the dignity and the efficiency of the office.

I ask your Lordship to excuse me if I am mistaken. I assume that your Lordship will be addressed by the Governor, and moved to request Her Majesty to summon me to the Legislative Council of the Colony. Highly as I should esteem that honor under other circumstances, I cannot, consistently with the respect due, in my opinion, to the office which I once had the honor to hold, accept it as proposed; and I have accordingly respectfully to request that your Lordship will abstain from advising Her Majesty to take that action, and thus spare me the pain of giving a refusal.

It is with much reluctance that I have troubled your Lordship on this unpleasant subject; but I trust that your Lordship will admit that a due sense of official respect required that I should not acquiesce in the treatment which I have received at the hands of the Executive Government of the Colony.

I will only further add, that while it has been my pleasure and good fortune to enjoy the confidence and friendship of nearly all the public men of the Colony, it has been my misfortune to incur the personal hostility of the Prime Minister. I ascribe it to this personal hostility (engendered I know not how, unless a difference of views on public questions be held a good ground for such a feeling);