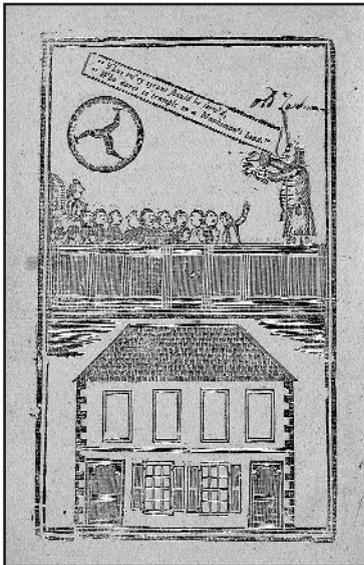


DEBATE 4 - A MOVE TO DOUGLAS



- Castletown had been a pleasant Georgian capital, but was being rapidly overtaken by the newer port, commercial centre and tourist resort of Douglas.
- Douglas had its own Town Commissioners since 1860, with local government powers to develop amenities and undertake public works.
- Douglas was recognised as the capital in 1869.
- The Lieutenant Governor had moved his residence from Castletown in 1861.
- The Law Courts had moved from Castletown to Athol Street, Douglas in 1862
- The House of Keys building in Castletown was considered 'dismal' and 'unloved'.
- A suitable replacement building in Douglas was available - the old Bank of Mona, Prospect Hill.

Woodcut of the
Old House of Keys, Castletown



The House of
Keys, Douglas



When compared to the rapidly increasing population of Douglas and its opportunities for money making, Castletown was declining in importance. The revenue acquired as a result of the Election Act of 1866 was already being put to good use in Douglas where the construction of a new pier (Victoria Pier) was started in 1867. This would enable the tourist industry to thrive, with its visitor figures in 1870 of 60,000 increasing by 1884 to 182,000. The Douglas Town Commissioners were keen to develop the town, both from the public health aspects of water supply and sewerage, to the demolition of old properties and building of the new thoroughfare of Victoria Street, and the enclosure of the area of shore for the building of the Loch Promenade.

The elected House of Keys, while mindful of increased public expenditure for new premises, wanted to be part of the growth of Douglas. Members from the north of the Island had always resented the long journey to Castletown. When the opportunity came to transform the imposing Bank of Mona building on Prospect Hill in 1874, they took it and moved to their new House of Keys.



- Debate between the Speaker and M.H.K.s about the state of the House of Keys, Castletown and the need to move to Douglas
- Vote on the motion that 'This House shall move from its present building to a new location in Douglas'.
- Voting results
- Images of the building, packing the Keys' belongings, archive photographs of Castletown and Douglas, the new House of Keys, and thriving Douglas tourism

