

Communications.

COLONIAL GOVERNMENT.

Mr Editor,

An article treating on Colonial government, written by a talented public man, must ever attract public attention, and in proportion to its ability ensure public success. Among the multifarious subjects with which provincial prints teem, seldom is the public eye greeted with a comprehensive view of colonial administration, as it is, or as it ought to be; seldom does a writer touch on colonial wants, common to all, and point out a mode of alleviation;—wants rapidly arising from the varied and changing interests, diversified principles, and increase of knowledge diffused throughout the provinces. The abuses incident to each, form an animating theme for the display of public disputants, and doubtless inspire exalted feelings of patriotism; but a design applicable in its practice, to all, showing existing defects, with their remedy, was wanting, and comes recommended by its novelty, equally with its necessity. In the letters of the Hon. Joseph Howe, on Colonial Government, a plan of this nature is offered for acceptance. Though addressed to a distinguished personage, yet appearing in public print, and whether adopted or refused, interesting all, they become public property. The opinion of an enlightened and leading mind, on an important subject, must command respect, and make converts to its doctrines. An admirer of Mr Howe's abilities, yet I cannot implicitly subscribe to all the principles promulgated. Interested in whatever concerns us all, I take the liberty of slightly reviewing the article.

With a justly deserved compliment to the ability and sincerity of the noble lord addressed, Mr Howe ushers in his opinion of the duty of a Colonist to brighten the path of the Minister "by every ray of light that may guide him on his way." Arguing from what would be the Minister's situation in conducting the political administration of either of the sister kingdoms, if deprived of the invigorating assistance of statesmen versed in her requirements and sympathizing in her wants, the conclusion is drawn, that what his relation to either, in such case, would be then, his relation to America is now. But the Minister is surely not bereft of information on a topic so important. Where are the despatches of Governors for the last 60 years—the embassies of delegates direct from the representatives, to explain difficulties or arrange disputes—the experience of statesmen trained in the Colonial school, and drinking information from every source—the continual light diffused both from the Imperial and Colonial Press, marking the onward course of public opinion; and lastly, the legitimate right, nay, the duty of the elective body, to address the Sovereign on intricate questions, and in times of trouble and perplexity.

Here is light darted from many points, all concentrating in one focus; sufficient in itself (one would think) to dispel the darkness which enshrouds, to reveal the cares which encircle the distant dominions of the Crown. But it is true a Minister cannot receive too much knowledge of the country he is called upon to govern—of those local grievances common to every country, however well ruled; the full voice, and not the mere echo of public opinion, should resound in his ear. Mr Howe's experience in colonial matters, his clearness in illustrating his views, and his standing as a political man, point him out as a person well calculated to offer advice, if required, even to a Minister of the Crown. His principles, (every one knows) are liberal; and however grave conservatives may tremble at the bugbear of republicanism, yet it is now clear the democratic spirit pervades most strongly the parent constitution.

The Editor of the Morning Chronicle may rage at the idea of applying self-government to dominions of the British Crown; but it would be difficult to unlearn the lesson taught in the historic page of England for the last one hundred and fifty years, "that the Sovereign rules, the People govern." Fiction should never veil a fact.

Mr Howe appeals to the progress of the Colonies since the principles of self-government have been introduced, and justifies it by its consequences. He argues not upon theoretical visions, but from the evidence of facts. The burden taken off the Colonial Office, and the burden thrown off the Colonists by the responsibility of their officers, attest its advantages. We have sufficiently enjoyed the blessings of the old system of irresponsibility, not to admire

the workings of self-government. The days have passed, they will live but in history, when the voice of the Assembly will be no more valued by the advisers of Her Majesty's Representative, than "the marginal note of an old newspaper." Why then should we be alarmed at the sound, and fear not to exercise the principle? Does the shadow image forth terrors which the substance fails to convey?

After contrasting the former with the latter administration, exercised in the Colonies, Mr Howe proceeds to discuss the appointment of Colonial Governors. Whoever reflects on the mode in which the Chief Executive Magistrate has been appointed in these distant Colonies—on the duties which their situation imposes—their power to diffuse blessings or withhold benefits, cannot deny the importance of the subject, and its connection with the best and dearest interests of British Americans. That it has never been treated on before among the many articles on Colonial administration, must excite surprise. History records no fact more alarming than the evils threatening an empire from a mal-administration of its dependencies—that mal-administration arising from the improper appointment of governors. It is stamped on every record of ancient and modern times. The blood tainted at the extremity, has circulated through and poisoned the heart. Great Britain's history points to a Hastings denounced by a Burke; and though American colonies cannot vie with Asiatic dependencies in real value to the mother country—though American governors have not the same difficulties to grapple with, the same temptations to undermine human virtue, and test human nature—though they may never (happily for the governed) be dignified with an impeachment before the most august tribunal in the world; yet the happiness of Colonists, the ease and relief of Ministers render the appointment a subject of grave and serious consideration.

Mr Howe devotes a considerable portion of his first letter to investigation. He advocates the system of rewarding officers according to their merit, and argues convincingly why should Governors be excluded from the application of the rule,—why should they remain exotics nurtured with tenderness, while others, of grades superior and inferior, are required to breast the storms of public opinion? But have not Her Majesty's Ministers recognized the existing evil, anticipated its consequences, and offered a remedy? In the total revolution of the colonial governmental department, we see a principle acted upon not previously in operation. The regular gradation of officers appointed according to previous succession in these provinces, and elevated to changes involving more weighty responsibility, and requiring increased intellectual effort, seems to afford the strongest guarantee that merit will not be overlooked in the future appointment of Governors.

Ambition will be enkindled by such a plan, which might otherwise have been lulled to forgetfulness by apathy and indifference. The most sensitive feelings will be called into action, "to cultivate the understanding and improve the heart." An honorable mind could feel no more chilling neglect than to be overbalanced by an inferior in the scale of preference; a mind not schooled in virtue will have its passions excited to prevent a public exhibition. Notoriety to be won by a signal failure is not desirable.

Mr Howe reviews the various departments from which governors are chosen, with a mind aided by the light of experience, and imbued with a spirit of philosophical inquiry. He points out (what every Colonist must have felt and perceived) the disadvantages suffered by the Colonies in not being governed by men trained in the political school. Gentlemen may grace and adorn the social circle, but something else is required to ensure success in the gubernatorial chair. We have also fully described what must be the natural consequence of placing the Colonial sceptre in the hands of men "hastily snatched" from the Navy or Military department, and experience confirms the truth of the observation.

The allusion to the discipline which officers receive across the border, need not excite the jealousy of a loyal heart. Loyalty may sit enthroned in the heart, while the understanding looks for means to prevent an usurpation by any less patriotic sentiment. Although subjects of a monarchy, and devoted to its Queen, yet neither duty nor devotion forbid us to borrow principles which may bind us more closely to the one, and induce us to cherish more

exalted feelings for the other. Mr Howe does not urge the adoption of republican principles, but the application of that uniformity which pervades other parts of the monarchical system. After a survey of the various sources from which Governors are supplied, that one is chosen which our history informs us has produced the most correct, enlarged, and energetic minds. Reference, however, is not directly made, (though perhaps included in the principles of promotion) to the improvement to be effected in colonial administration if Her Majesty's Ministers carry out fully the plan of a gradual elevation from inferior and subordinate, to the lofty and responsible stations. When the prize of Governor General of the East, or it may be, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, will confer honor on the distinguished and successful aspirant, who wins his way through the hard fought fields of Colonial administration, what may not reasonably be expected when emulation is enkindled to win the laurels which fame will enwreath around the brow of the victorious competitor?

ARION.

New Brunswick, January, 1847.

OUTRAGE AND REWARD!!

Mr Editor, Altho' not the sufferer myself, yet I hereby offer a Reward of TEN DOLLARS for such information as will lead to the conviction of the miscreants, one of whom, on the night of Sunday last, hurled a missile at, and struck an aged and respectable member of the community on the head, on his return from a place of worship. The wretches were standing at White's corner, and within eight or ten feet of the individual when he was struck. You will please pledge yourself for the payment of the reward upon the condition above stated, and I hold myself accountable to you.

Your obedient servant,

A SUBSCRIBER.

N. B. The information can be given to you in the first instance, and you will know to whom to communicate it.

Chatham, Monday, February 3.

Dear Mr Editor,

We had almost made up our minds, rather to have thanked you personally, than to have dared to approach you again by letter, for having so kindly noticed our last communication. But why, for pity's sake, why, publish our desultory, and confidential letter to the world? We begged, we requested of you not to do so. But fortunately for us we believe we are not generally suspected as being the authors,—having the satisfaction—yes, even in our own presence, to hear another individual charged with being the author, and no matter how stoutly he denies it, with the authorship settling down very comfortably upon his broad shoulders. So far we are relieved; and we now, having committed ourselves into your hands, dear sir, do not hesitate a moment in adopting your views as to the mode of putting, and keeping matters right, with regard to our time in the town of Chatham.

We have on several occasions heard the matter discussed since last Tuesday; every body seems to acknowledge, and nobody to deny the justice of our remarks, and we fully coincide with you that a Town Clock will be the best possible expedient. You may therefore rely upon hearing from us with an enclosure whenever the time comes that it may be required; and we have aly—and we shall continue to exercise all reasonable and safe influence with our husbands and households upon the subject.

We are, dear sir, sincerely yours,

C. ANDE.

Monday Morning, 8th February.

Mr Editor,—Whether your correspondents in last week's paper were really ladies or not, does not of course, in any manner, affect the merits or the justice of the case which they, through the columns of your valuable paper, present for the consideration of the good people of the town of Chatham. I have felt the inconvenience of a want of uniformity in our time myself to a very great extent, within the last year or two. I think the plan you suggest a good one, it not the best that could be devised, and shall act upon such thought when the proper time comes, by contributing my mite.

Pray present my best acknowledgments to your fair correspondents for bringing the subject up, and believe me, Mr Editor, your friend,

AN OLD INHABITANT.

8th January.

To CORRESPONDENTS.—An Observer will be attended to next week.

Editor's Department.

MIRAMICHI:

CHATHAM, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1847.

The Subscriber having been compelled to consume a large amount of time, and incur considerable expense, in his too often fruitless endeavours to collect his far-spread Outstanding Debts, hereby notifies all persons to whom he is not indebted, and with whom he has not a running account, that orders for Advertising in the Gleaner, and for Printing in future, must be accompanied with the CASH, otherwise they will not meet with attention.

JAMES A. PIERCE.

Gleaner Office, October 23, 1846.

NOVASCOTIA.—The following resolution relating to a uniform rate of Postage in the Colonies, was submitted to the Assembly, and passed:

Resolved—That a Committee be appointed on the general subject of the Post Office, and that its attention be particularly directed to a consideration of the practicability of a reduced and uniform rate of postage—and also of the advantage of the general system being adopted for the Colonies, and the best means of accomplishing such an object.

A Message was received from Sir John Harvey, relating to the distress existing in the Highlands, and Ireland, stating that he was ready to concur in any grant of public money to be applied to the relief of the existing destitution among the poor in those countries.

A message was subsequently received from the Legislative Council, stating that they had agreed to a vote of £1,000 for the above named purpose.

The following Resolutions in reference to the British Possessions Act, were submitted to the Legislature, and it was ordered that a committee of seven be appointed to the duty therein stated:—

Whereas, by an Act passed by the Parliament of Great Britain, in the 9th and 10th year of the Queen, Chapter XCIV, entitled, An Act to enable the Legislatures of certain British Possessions to reduce or Repeal certain Duties of Customs, authority is given, under certain restrictions in the Colonial legislatures, to pass Acts reducing or repealing Duties of Customs imposed by the British Possessions Act.

And whereas this house gratefully acknowledges this legislation of the Imperial Parliament as a highly valuable boon to the British North American possessions, offering great commercial benefits to the Colonies, of which it is the duty of this house to take earliest advantage.

And whereas it is impossible to carry into full effect any measure having this object in view, without the co-operation of the Sister Colonies.

Resolved therefore, That a Committee be appointed for the purpose of considering and reporting to the House the means by which the greatest benefit may be derived from the said Act, and especially the mode in which a communication with the Provinces of Canada, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland, may be most conveniently and effectively conducted so as to avert the danger of conflicting Legislation, and ensure the attainment of harmonious action on this important question.

A number of documents were laid before the House, relating to the filling up of the Executive Council, and as we have not space to publish these important letters in detail, we give below the summary of their contents, from the Times of Thursday.

No 1. Sir John Harvey to the Executive Council, invites their assistance in forwarding his views—calls their attention to a Letter from the Col. Secretary, which contained rules for his guidance in administering the Government. Offers to appoint a Council of 12. Offers himself as a medium of communication with the Opposition Members. Proposes a fair participation of official emolument, and a condition.

No 2. Copy of Memorandum placed in the hands of Messrs. Doyle, Howe and Young, by the Lieutenant Governor. The differences are presumed to arise from personal rather than political causes. Lieut. Governor offers himself as a mediator and moderator—hopes to promote reconciliation by causing to meet at his table men of both parties. Could not appeal to the Constancy now, which would only perpetuate political strife, Res's himself upon the assistance of all. Says to them, let the Legislative Session run on, the time would be brief. Trust they will not lend themselves to increase the difficulties which impede the success of his administration.

3—Extract of a private letter from Lord Grey—showing that it would be the duty of His Excellency the Lieut. Governor, to act strictly upon the principle laid down in his memorandum—not to identify himself with any party, but to make himself a mediator and moderator between the influential of all parties.