

himself, and of which he perhaps is a species.

I did intend a few observations in reply to "One of the People," but fearing I have already trespassed too far to the exclusion of more valuable matter, I must deter.—

And am, Sir, yours, &c.,

P. T.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS.

"He thought in some respects this Bill went too far, and gave legislative powers to the Justices in Session, which they had not hitherto possessed. It was desirable to relieve the Central Government of a portion of its duties, he would rather see that power delegated to those chosen by the people themselves, than vested in the Justices in Session, who were the mere nominees of the Crown. To be plain, he would rather see Municipal Institutions established, and the powers delegated to the Justices of the Peace in General Sessions, by the Bill before the Committee, handed over to these Corporation."—(Extract from Mr Street's Speech—see Head Quarters.

Mr Pierce.

The above is an extract from a Speech delivered the House of Assembly, on the 18 ult., by one of our Representatives. It establishes the fact of that gentleman being in favor of the introduction of *Municipal Corporations*, and (emanating from such a quarter, when least expected) it indicates the extent to which those liberal and popular measures have extended. The question before the House at the time, was the Hon Attorney General's Bill "to consolidate and amend the laws relating to the local government of Counties and Parishes within the Province." It appears from the debates that by the provisions of such bill, further power is intended to be given to the Justices of the Peace, in the several counties, in order to relieve the central government from local legislation; such, for instance, as assessing this county without applying for a Bill, making rules and regulations for the Government of the Fisheries, &c., &c. This, then, is the boasted measure of the liberal Attorney General! Is it by placing further power in the hands of a body over whom the people have no control, and who are irrespective of them, that he intends to "regulate local affairs, promote self-government, &c." Is this a link in the chain of that boasted Responsible Government which he so strenuously advocates, and under which he enjoys the emoluments of office? If so, then it is truly what the enemies of the system call it, a "Responsible Humbug." But, sir, I cannot believe that the people will rest satisfied with this proposal, that they will forego the privilege of *local self-government*, which they have been led to expect, and accept the half-way measure of the Attorney General in lieu thereof. I agree with our Representative in thinking that if new powers are to be granted, they should be vested in the people, not in the Justices—we should endeavor to progress, not retrograde in the principles of Government, and if (as that gentleman truly asserts) the "Justices are merely the nominees of the Crown," surely they are not the body to be invested with new powers, by a so-called *Liberal Executive*. The yoke is galling enough as it is, without increasing the burden. If concessions are to be granted, let them be given to the people themselves. Give them Municipal Corporations, by which they will have the power to make annual selections of men from amongst themselves, in whom they have confidence, for the regulation of all local affairs, for the expenditure of all public monies within the district, and for the performance of such other duties as might devolve upon them. Were such a system adopted, the beneficial effects of it would be instantly felt; the people would see the necessity of acquiring such information as would enable them to judge correctly of public affairs; and as every tax payer would have a voice in the election of their local officers, and in the expenditure of their public monies, they would in the former case, see that the selections were judicious, and in the latter, that the monies were economically expended; the parties selected would also be respected by the people, (as merit is supposed to be the recommendation); and as the term of their appointment would be of short duration, any impropriety could soon be remedied.

"The Justices are the mere nominees of the Crown." Yes, 'tis true! they are appointed by the Crown, and hold their seats, nominally, during the pleasure of Government, but virtually for life; at least such has been the general practice. A person appointed to that office 20 years ago, remains a Justice still (unless removed by death.) When the appoint-

ment was made, it may perhaps, have suited the wants of the settlement, and the individual so appointed, was perhaps the most suitable in the district at that time, and yet he may be totally unfitted for holding his office at the present day. It may be, that pecuniary difficulties render the situation troublesome to him, or perhaps moral weakness, or physical indolence unfit him for the duties of his office; or he may have been trained in such a school, that leads him to look upon this age of progress with suspicion, and consequently limits his utility to his country in that situation. This is the working of the present system, and these are the men who have the management of our Local affairs, and to whom the Attorney General would grant new powers!! I do not mean to imply that the appointments are all of this description, nor do I wish to cast any imputation upon that body, generally, as there are many of those gentlemen (perhaps a majority of the body) of the greatest respectability, many of whom would no doubt, be returned under the system which I advocate; but if the Attorney General persists in urging the bill (as proposed) upon the country, and thus extend the powers of the Justices, then a new Commission of the Peace should issue, and the names of all those ought to be omitted who are unfitted for the office from any of the causes before named, or others sufficient reasons, as I consider it improper to rest the power of Taxing the people in a body of men in whom, as a body, they have not confidence.

It is said that we are not fitted for these Local Institutions. So it was said when Sir William Colebrooke advocated these measures, and many of the gentlemen of the present house were instrumental in successfully opposing their introduction; but the force of public opinion has done a great deal since that time, (for instance the extract of the speech quoted above) and I am not inclined to believe that the constituency of this County, would again return the men who would defeat such a measure. Are we less fitted for these measures than the people of our Fatherland were two centuries ago? are we less enlightened than the people of the New England States were when they were first established there? In both these countries these Institutions have been introduced to advantage. In the latter the improvement of the system as compared with ours, is strikingly apparent—their Schools are fostered and encouraged, and being immediately under the control of the Local authorities, elected by the People, there is an efficiency in their system which does not exist in ours. There are few of their citizens who do not possess a reasonable share of learning, and generally speaking, they are men of intelligence, being trained from youth upwards, to regulate their Local Affairs. These are some of the results of Municipal Corporations.

In conclusion, I would say, that the Gentleman from whose speech I took the extract at the head of this communication, has been looked upon by many of his Constituents, as a Disciple of the Old School—as one who has been opposed to Retrenchment in our Official expenditure—and averse to the extension of Popular Privileges. Whether such conclusions were correct or not, I will not express an opinion for the present, but will await the result of the present measures, and in the mean time will give him credit for sincerity in his professions. His Constituency expect something of him now, that he entertains such liberal sentiments; and should the Government neglect to bring forward a suitable measure for the introduction of the Municipal system, it is confidently hoped that the Gentleman referred to, will do something more than find fault with them for their neglect. Let him prepare and introduce a Bill embodying the principles propounded in his speech. Let him show the people by acts, as well as by words, that he means what he says, and I feel satisfied that (notwithstanding the time which has been lost) he will receive at the approaching election a decided mark of their approbation. But should the present opportunity be allowed to pass without effecting the desired change—should our Representatives violate the trust reposed in them by their constituents, or shew themselves unfit for the situation, either by acts of omission or commission—if they refuse to exert their influence in obtaining for the people those concessions to which they are entitled, and these privileges which they confidently hoped to enjoy—then may they anticipate, ere long, their descent from that high position as Representatives of the People,

which they now occupy, to take their stations again as simple denizens of our Province, and give place to others more alive to the interests of their country, and it may be, more sincere in their expressions for the welfare of its people.

E. F.

Miramichi, March 1, 1850.

PARISH OF NEWCASTLE.

Mr Editor,

I cordially respond to the sentence of the celebrated "Junius," that "the freedom of the press is the great palladium of all our civil and religious privileges." Your correspondent, "One of the People," availing himself of the privilege it holds out to all alike, proceeds to put certain questions to the defunct and living Overseers of the parish of Newcastle, touching their sayings and doings. This is right. Public officers, as such, are most assuredly public property, and should be amenable to their opinion honestly expressed, for the just performance of the duties belonging to their office. In accordance with these convictions, I deem it at once a duty and a privilege, to explain, so far as I can, publicly or privately, any public transaction with which I have been connected. Thankful to "One of the People" for bringing the circumstance he alludes to under my notice, and giving me an opportunity of explanation; and in doing so shall be as brief and plain as possible. As I am accused for withdrawing from competition, it will be necessary for the sake of elucidation to state very briefly my connection with the advertising for tenders—a mode I as cordially approve of as any person in the place. Years anterior to 1847, the Grand Inquest had a great "talk" about the Overseers advertising for tenders for supplying the poor of the parish, and publishing the names of all recipients, permanent or transient, and I think made a presentation to the Sessions predicated upon that "talk." I am not certain if their Worship took any action upon it; I think not. At all events, the Overseers got no official notification upon the subject; notwithstanding this, the Overseers spontaneously resolved to advertise for tenders for supplying the poor of the parish by districts. Accordingly, on the day indicated in the advertisement, they met at Newcastle, and from the speculation about it a very keen competition was expected; but not one solitary tender found its way to the offerers; and after waiting most part of the day, they were obliged to leave Newcastle without having the gratification of seeing one tender. Four o'clock of the same day was appointed in Douglastown to receive tenders for the middle and lower districts; but no tenders. The Overseers could do no more. They invited the public to respond to the sayings of the Grand Jury, and assist them to protect the rights of the people in the administration of their own charity—but no response. The public were satisfied that the Overseers were doing their duty.

In 1847, the Grand Jury, of which C. M. and R. T. M., my respected and respectable colleagues were Jurors, very justly took up the subject of advertising, and made a presentation to the Sessions upon it. But no action. However, Mr C. M. being appointed that year Overseer for the middle district, carried out the principle in that and the following year. In 1849, Mr R. T. M. was appointed for the middle district, and the Overseers at once resolved to advertise for Tenders. Having done so, they met at the time and place appointed in Newcastle, to examine tenders, and award accordingly. But no tenders. True, Mr Watt, the Overseer, had one—consequently no competition. How was this, when the banner of reform was unfurled? Perhaps the good people of Newcastle were not out of their nap, and had not seen the banner unfolding itself to the rising gale of reform.

The examination of tenders for the middle and lower districts was appointed to take place in Douglastown, at 4 o'clock, on the same day. Mr Watt did not attend. Previous to my going to the meeting, I requested James Milne to look over the amount advanced to Mr R. T. M., as Overseer, for the purpose of adjustment, in the event of my tender not being the lowest. He did so, and I was perfectly astonished when he told me, that in my absence, and since the new appointments, he had made considerable advances to the paupers of the lower district. Now here was a fix; these also had to be adjusted precisely upon the same principle as those advanced to Mr R. T. M. With these difficulties before me I went to the meeting. Before opening the tenders, it was deemed necessary to understand how these advances were to be paid. Those advanced to Mr R. T. M. were first adverted to; but after two hours' discussion, we were no nearer the goal, and seeing no prospect of coming to a satisfactory arrangement how these advances were to be paid—to lessen the difficulties in regard to them, I proposed to withdraw the lower district from competition—to place it in the same position as the upper district—to do as I had done unchallenged for nine years before. This was objected to on two grounds—first, because the tenders were designed to cover both districts—and secondly, the lower district would not receive the benefit of the lowest tender. The first was found untenable, because the parties could limit or extend, according to circumstances; the second did not apply to the lower district at all, because neither parish nor pauper would be benefited in the least degree, however low the tender, no matter should the supplies be advanced at half price, unless a corresponding reduction were made in the board allowance, with the parties with whom paupers are boarded, and this they had peremptorily refused, principally under the

impression that the summer of 1849 would bear very hard upon farmers, and in this they were not mistaken; hence it is self-evident that the pauper boarding paupers would alone reap the benefit of a low tender, and thus defeating the views of the Grand Jury and Overseers—the great design of competition being to lessen the poor rates. It was now suggested that if a reduction of the board wages could be effected in the lower district, that the benefits of the lowest tender should be extended to it; to this no opposition was offered. Mr R. T. Miller then said he was prepared, by the consent of parties, to proceed with the tenders. He did so, and after a very careful and impartial examination, declared my tender to be the lowest, and of course approved of it; thus extending the benefit of the lowest tender over both districts, and removing all difficulties. I take leave here to observe, that I attach not the shadow of blame to any of the parties at the meeting; I am fully convinced they acted conscientiously, and from the best motives.

Now, Mr Editor, this is the transaction that "One of the People" has enveloped with mystery, stigmatised as a secret transaction, while it took place in a public company. But I hope what I have stated will satisfy him.

One word more about the principle of advertising and competition, for I think "One of the People" seems not to have very clear views of the subject, otherwise he would have extended the principle; neither does he make any distinction among the paupers—no attempt to classify them, by which alone the principle of competition can be carried out for the benefit of the Parish. Every argument that can be advanced in favor of competition for supplies, and their cogeny I at once admit, cast with equal force be advanced in favor of taking tenders, by advertisement or otherwise, for boarding the paupers. Let them be classified, and let the annual boarding of the first class come under the rule of competition. I will return to this subject before long. My devoir to "One of the People." I am glad he has unfurled the Gouffon of reform; I hail it as an omen for good. Let him go on till every wrong be amended—faults redressed—and abuses for the time to come be avoided.

C. W., Ex-Overseer.

March 4, 1850.

Editor's Department.

MIRAMICHI:

CHATHAM, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 1850.

NOVASCOTIA.—A late Halifax Sun thus notices contemplated improvements in that city:—

The proprietors of the Bank of British North America are about to erect an addition to their building—and the Messrs Mordoch an splendid store on the corner of Duke and Granville streets, so long occupied by them as a dry good store and warehouse. Two other parties in the latter street contemplate new erections also. Labor and material are cheap, and the present, consequently, is the time to build, rents in the business portions of our city being comparatively high. We understand too, that a new Barrack is to be built. The site we know not, but we should hope, if it be on that of either of the present barracks, our citizens will take steps, ere it be too late, to have the erection somewhat removed. We doubt not, respectful and united remonstrance from the people, and the Corporate and Provincial authorities, this desideratum would be attained.

The same paper suggests the erection of a new market.

NEW WORKS.—*Improved Bridge from Starvation to Plenty.—Annexation of Great Britain to her Colonies.*—This is the quaint title of a pamphlet which has recently issued from the London press. Judging from the only extract which we have seen, the author appears deeply interested in his subject, and well acquainted with the state of the Colonies. We give this extract below, and it is gratifying to perceive that while the people of the Colonies are doing comparatively little to enlighten the people of Britain with reference to their present depressed condition, and make their capabilities known, there are persons abroad who are looking after our interests, and endeavoring to remove the ignorance which exists in the Mother Country with respect to the Colonies.

Whilst in Ireland able bodied laborers (rather laborers who would be able bodied if they were fed) are expensively caged up in the unproductive work-houses, the British Provinces of North America, close at hand, contain millions of acres of fertile land without inhabitants.

Can anything be more senseless, if not criminal, than the neglect of this beautiful provision of Providence towards the care of Irish distress?

The present communication between the North American Colonies and the Mother country is in every respect bad; and does nothing towards fostering that degree of intimate intercourse which is essential to the development of those countries, by enabling people who might contemplate settling there to visit and reconnoitre them with that facility