

protect themselves, having no guarantee—not even correct information—as to the quantity coming forward. This step frequently tempts some importers, who may be termed needy, or who are encouraged by talkative brokers that care only for their brokerage, to force off their goods by auction; it depresses the market still more, and we have this anomaly, that importers are selling their goods by auction (the most expensive mode) and frequently having just incurred heavy yarding charges, at less prices than non-auction brokers are obtaining for entire cargoes from the quay.

That it is evident, one great evil is, that too much wood is imported: there is too much timber cut down, and too many mills at work. Suppose £100,000 the value of wood shipped from the province for sale, the loss on this is not less than forty per cent, which leaves £60,000 to the credit of the Province. Now, were twenty per cent. less business transacted, the possibility is that first costs would be realised; that is £80,000 worth of wood would be shipped, and £80,000 would appear on the credit of the Province, or a clear gain of £20,000 on a less transaction.

It would be a very different case for the colonies were the Liverpool merchants compelled to go abroad for their goods, or at least a portion. (Perhaps twelve cargoes will sum up the imports from New Brunswick for the last five years, on Liverpool dealers' account.) They are long-headed men, and take care to purchase in the cheapest market, which they invariably find to be their own. This is not a healthy state of things, and is not the case with other raw articles. It is perfectly clear that a change must be made in the timber trade. Production must be brought down to a level with the wants of the country. Timber, unlike other raw materials, has bounds to its consumption which cannot be extended. I shall enclose you tables showing importation, consumption, and stocks of timber for the last five years, which are worthy of the study of all engaged in the timber trade. The stocks in Liverpool are fearfully heavy, equal to nine months' consumption—but this is not all; the inland towns are heavier, by at least two months' consumption, than at any previous year. The cause of this is—during the months of November and December, the Railway Companies and Canals quarrelled, and so keen was the competition, that the rate of carriage to Manchester was reduced from 8s. per ton to 2s. 6d., equal to fifteen shillings per standard on 6d. This caused all the country dealers to purchase more than double their usual quantities, and the Liverpool dealers to forward into the interior on speculation, several cargoes. Surely your merchants will pause before consigning as they have formerly done.

The heavy stocks of the leading markets should be cleared off before a new import takes place. Do give them a little breathing time, that paying prices may be established: avoid those fearful inundations we have witnessed of late years. Compel the leading dealers to purchase at least a portion of their goods in your markets; thus giving them an interest in maintaining fair prices on this side. Then, and not till then, we will have a truly legitimate and profitable trade.

I have observed that much of the distress of the Colonies is attributed to free trade—but that you may know how far Baltic Timber has interfered with Colonial, I would refer you to the subjoined tables. That price has not been the cause of the falling off in the Baltic consumption is well known, the last sale of Dantzic timber being a cargo 37½ feet, average length, at 14½d. per foot. In 1847, the same quality, of 29 feet (the usual) average length, brought 22½d. or 21d. present duty.

In politics, I belong to the Stanley school, and look with fear to the result, should Government (as is generally supposed) repeal the duties on foreign timber. Swedish deals have sold this year at £9 to £10 per standard, deduct the present duty, £3 10s. to £3 12s. 6d., and we have £5 10s. to £6 for the price; I know not how the Colonies can compete with this. The price is for Swedish redwood deals, whitewood generally sells at thirty shillings per standard less.

My remarks have been confined to the Liverpool trade, but they are equally applicable to the London and other large markets. Messrs Churchill and Sim write:

"A stock of wood in our public docks, equal to nine months consumption, on the very high scale of recent years, has been proved by the experience of late years to produce an unhealthy trade, by constant pressure of market, and consequent depression of prices; and the firmest holders have eventually realised the worst proceeds. To avoid an annual recurrence of the same difficulty, there is, in our opinion, no alternative, but a diminished importation during the ensuing season. And it should be the study of those interested in the future, to clear the surplus of the present stock before there is further importation—to resist the temptation of reduced freight, and in anticipation thereof, keep prices low, as a check on speculation."

Gentlemen, I have now given you an idea of the trade of the country in timber; time only will tell whether men will be found mad enough to embark extensively in so dangerous a trade. Is there no hope for the Province? Cannot something be done towards improving the agriculture. I shall consider myself fortunate if any of my remarks are worthy of your notice; and will conclude by quoting a portion of Messrs. W. H. Littledale's annual circular.

"It imports very large profits have been

made on cotton and coffee, probably £2,000,000 on the former; a good per centage on wool, silk, and indigo, while most other articles have done good instead of harm—the only imports of magnitude, on which a loss has accrued, being timber and corn."

"Money will force itself into employment, and if one class of operators cannot employ it, another, and a more gambling class will; and thus the spirit of speculation is set in motion which too often ends in disaster. But in what channel is the tide most likely to flow in 1850? We think the first movement will be in produce, manufactures, and general commercial enterprise, which points out the year 1850 as likely to be one of great activity, and, we trust of prosperity, if the machine be not driven with reckless impetuosity, and surely the catastrophes of 1847 are sufficiently recent to prevent this."

I am, with all respect, Sirs,
Your obedient servant,
A LOOKER-ON.
Messrs. H. Chubb & Co.

Communications.

PARISH OF NEWCASTLE.

To the Editor of the Gleaner,

Sir,—Last week's Gleaner contains many excellent communications on abuses in this Province, and shows how much need there is for reform, especially in this place, with which I am acquainted. Should the banner of reform be more speedily unfurled in this the land of our adoption, it will be a means of preventing it coming to bankruptcy and ruin. Reform has at length feebly raised its voice in the wilderness, and I expect ere long it will become a mighty tempest, and blow all those Officials out of office who stand in its way. Only let the people of this fine county come forward and put their shoulders to the wheel, and those grievances of which we complain will speedily be banished from our land. Only two weeks have passed since I penned a few questions, and forwarded them to your journal for insertion, enquiring why certain grievances existing in this Parish are not redressed. Your next paper contained a communication from a Tax-payer from the Parish of Nelson, asking the same important question. I return your correspondent many thanks for the way in which he comes forward and gives assistance in the cause of reform; and I humbly trust there is not a Parish in the County in which grievances exist, but will come forward and assist in the great work of reformation. The same paper contains two communications signed C. M., and R. T. M., in reply to "One of the People." I am happy to perceive that C. M. concurs with me in saying that advertising is the only legitimate course to pursue, to give satisfaction to the public, and that he has done both in spirit and in letter. R. T. M. deploras his inability as a newspaper correspondent, but I think from the tenor of his communication that he is an old hand at the bellows; he is well able to defend himself. I must confess that he has done so candidly. He says that he conscientiously believes that advertising is the only way to satisfy the public; and I must in justice say that both your correspondents have come out and exculpated themselves to my satisfaction, and I think to the satisfaction of the public. Mr Editor, now is the time for the mystery to be sifted. The question is, why has the Lower District of Newcastle Parish been kept back from public competition. Perhaps Mr C. W., ex-Overseer for the Lower District, will be able to solve this question. If I remember right, the Parish of Newcastle was advertised in January, 1849, for supplying the poor with the necessaries required, and when all parties assembled to see their respective tenders opened, Mr C. W. objected most strenuously, and did not allow the Lower District to come out and be honorably competed for; consequently the Upper and Middle Districts were only competed for. Mr Editor, I will go a little further. To my astonishment, when I glanced over the Gleaner of 11th February, 1850, I perceived an advertisement calling for Tenders for the Upper and Middle Districts, to be supplied with necessaries, but not one word about the Lower District. If Mr W. G., present Overseer for Lower District, would come forward manfully and state why he has kept back his name from said advertisement, and likewise his reasons for not advertising the Lower District, as the Overseers of the Upper and Middle Districts have done, he will save "One of the People" the trouble of advertising to this important subject again. I am, yours very truly,

ONE OF THE PEOPLE.

Newcastle, February 23, 1850.

THE INITIATION QUESTION. MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS.

To the Editor of the Gleaner,

Sir,—In looking over your paper last week, I observed a communication signed "Voter," evidently written for the purpose of directing the public mind to the political movements of the day, and of inducing thought, and creating discussion on a subject of paramount importance. Such an object I consider creditable to the writer, and although I am not in the habit of troubling you with communications on political subjects, I conceive the question of "Initiation of Money Grants" to be one of such vital importance to our prosperity, that I embrace the opportunity of giving the principle my support; and the more so as I conceive the present to be a very suitable time for bringing such a measure under the notice of the public.

The Speech lately delivered by his Excellency is supposed, on the subjects therein referred to, to indicate the feelings of his advisers; and from it the public may draw pretty correct conclusions as to the intentions of the Government. If this is a correct criterion to judge by, we may expect that the principle of Initiation will shortly be discussed in our Legislative halls. It is therefore desirable that the public mind should be alive to the question—that it should be fairly taken up and considered—and if we come to the conclusion that such a system will promote the common interest, or be to the advantage of the community, it is our duty as well as our interest to advocate its introduction. I will therefore state a few reasons in favor of its adoption. And first, we have British precedent for it; it is part of the constitution and the practice of the British House of Commons; it is part of that system of Government under which England has acquired her vast Colonial Empire, and by which she has fostered and encouraged her commerce and her trade; through which her ministers have always been enabled to promote domestic industry, while they have ever been in a position to resist foreign aggression. Are not such results worthy of imitation? In England, if a Bridge is broken down, or a new road required; if a sum of money is necessary in order to support a particular Seminary or College, these sums would not, as in our Province, be granted in detail, and by such means occupy the time of the House (at the public expense) in protracted discussions about petty grants. No! But the course adopted is this: during the recess, the heads of the several public departments prepare the estimates for the various services that will be required for the year, (as in the instances above named) for the Road service, and for Education or Public Instruction, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer lays the statement before the House of Commons, and asks the House for such sums as he may deem necessary for those services, and they are granted in that way. These Estimates have been maturely considered by men practically acquainted with the wants of the country, and as the Government who introduce them are held responsible, they have a pretty good guarantee of the propriety of the grants. Were the various sums to be granted, taken up as in our Province, at the instance of individual members, the House would be perpetually sitting, and they would not be able to get through the distribution of sums which are yearly appropriated. By the introduction of this system then, we will effect a direct saving of the public money, as our House would not require to sit over half the time they now take, and as a natural consequence, would only require one half the pay. It is also part of the British system, that Her Majesty's advisers, the heads of the various departments, (being the only source from which applications for money grants can emanate) are held responsible by the people for the correctness of them. In our Province, no such principle being established, we have no department or body of men accountable for the expenditure, and any member can therefore apply for a money grant (and they certainly avail themselves of this principle); it matters not whether A. asks for £20 to make a road to this man's door, or whether B. wants a pension for the third husband of a widow of an old soldier of the revolutionary war; in either case the chances are that they get the amount required, provided the members making the application will promise to return the compliment when other members require their votes. Under our system, the practice (for I cannot call it principle) seems to be, not whether the road is required in the

one case, or the man entitled to the pension in the other, but rather, who can be conciliated and how many votes can be gained? The success of an application depends more upon the influence of the member making it, than upon its real merits. But the evil does not end here. Man is essentially a creature of imitation, and no sooner does he perceive his neighbour profit by a particular course, and obtain a grant, however improper, than he imitates his example; and there are dozens of applications, equally improper, and it may be equally successful. But here lies the beauty of the present system; no matter how improper the grant may be, charge any member of the House with the impropriety of it, and he will tell you, "Oh, I could not help it! I had only one voice, and the House passed it!" So it is; no one is responsible for his conduct under the present system, and consequently no one can be arraigned before the public for his misconduct.

But it has been asked, "Are the people prepared to place the sole power of Initiating money votes into the hands of the Executive?" It is part of the system of Responsible Government, which we, by our Representatives, have recognized; and in justice to the system, and the men who are carrying it out, we cannot refuse to concede the means it is their right; they are supposed to represent the opinions and enjoy the confidence of the people, and are generally selected from the most talented men in both houses; they are removable at pleasure by the House, and are responsible to the Assembly and the people; and if they either violate the trust reposed in them, or neglect any duty which may devolve upon them, they are answerable for their conduct. If, then, the *élite* of the Legislative wisdom of the country are unfit to be entrusted with that prerogative, the Assembly of which they are the select men cannot be worthy of the trust.

It has been said, "How can the Executive have a sufficient knowledge of the wants of the country, or even to make the road appropriations?" I would ask, how does George Grey know what sums are necessary for local improvement in the mother country? He obtains information from the official reports of the subordinate officers of government, and other public functionaries, (who are responsible for the correctness of the information they give) from the local representatives, who are desirous to give it for their own interests; but in addition to that, he obtains information from the same source, and through the same channel, as the local representatives obtain theirs; that is, from the People themselves, by Petition and otherwise. So it would be with our Executive; they could get information from their subordinate officers also. For instance, if the state of the roads is in question, the government would be prepared with reports from the various Supervisors and Commissioners throughout the Province, who make annual reports on the subject, would give the government every information that would be required. The local members would be only too ready to afford any information that they can give for their own and their constituents' interests; and the right of Petition, and communicating with the Executive, is a privilege which the People would (as they do now) avail themselves of. The principle would also apply to the various other departments of public business. But there is another remedy for the objection named, although it cannot be pointed to as at present existing, still it is a part of the system, and will certainly follow the rest. I allude to "Municipal Corporations," the adoption of which is recommended in His Excellency's speech, and the introduction of which would tend much to restore that harmony to society and respect to constituted authorities, of which, under the present system, we are lamentably deficient. By the establishment of such a body, elected yearly by the people, and having their confidence, the Executive Government will possess a sure source of information, on the correctness of which they could depend, and from whom the necessary details could always be obtained.

But it may be said, why agitate the question at this time? The object of representation and the motive of associating together a number of men as Representatives, is for the purpose of obtaining the opinions and views of the people, for the purposes of Government, in accordance with such views. Our Representatives are supposed to express the wishes of their constituents, and to echo their sentiments