

For the British American.

Mr. White,—

When your valuable and independent Journal first made its appearance, every real friend of the Country hailed it with feelings of gratification, because it professed to be based on independent principles; upon which its success altogether depended: and happy am I to find that it has been so triumphantly successful, notwithstanding the tirade of abuse that an honorable Member of the honorable House of Assembly lavished against it, when he said, on giving a casting vote as Chairman of a committee: "I cannot patronize such a scurrilous and vagabond paper as Mr. White's." The truth, the truth Mr. White is sometimes too cutting, and in this instance we see it verified; for had your paper cast any unjust reflections on that honorable member, is that the malicious way he should seek redress? It appears the cap fitted too well, and the very mention of your invaluable paper acted like electricity on his feelings, and allowed them to overcome his judgment, for I cannot suppose for a moment that any member in his cool senses, would make use of such language; but Sir, it only tends to confirm an opinion in me, that when you find a man a very great liberal in profession, he is despotic in principle. I believe there is no man in Prince Edward Island, can lay greater claims to professions of political liberality than this individual, as I have frequently heard him pronounce the "Man of the People." Yet Sir, this is the would-be Patriot, that would willingly stifle the voice of the only independent press in this colony.

We have heard of the independence and disinterestedness of the honorable the House of Assembly, trumpeted forth to the world by some of the sapient members of that enlightened body: indeed I believe they are obliged to be their own trumpeters. As for their independence and disinterestedness, I shall relate a circumstance that came under my own observation,—on entering the gallery of the House on the 14th day of February, I found Mr. Owen moving the estimates for the ensuing year; on getting through them, he said, "I do not intend to move for the Members' pay this year; but if it is the intention of any honorable member to move for any sum, I trust it will be moved at this stage of the session, as it would put a stop to any clamour that might be raised out of doors against them, in lengthening the session in order to increase their own pay," when it was moved by Mr. Compton, and agreed to, "that the sum of twenty-five pounds be voted to each member for his services during the present session."—But what was my surprise and astonishment on entering the gallery on the 18th day of March, in finding

Mr. Owen on his legs, supporting the propriety of referring their Pay vote back to the Committee of Supply to increase the amount!—glorious consistency, rare independence and disinterestedness!

We have also heard a good deal about the improvement of the Country since the commencement of Governor Ready's administration; but Sir, has it kept pace with the increase of taxes? I think it has not, and I believe every person on the Island capable of judging, [except the Members of the House of Assembly and their favorites] will join issue with me in saying so; and will not public opinion bear me out in saying, that the taxes of this country have increased in a greater proportion since that period than in any country in the world? But Sir, is it to be wondered at, when we contemplate the enormous expense of our Legislature, and the dexterity with which they cut out situations and office salaries thereto? It is not perhaps generally known, that the expense of one Session of the Legislature at the present day, amounts to nearly as much as three years revenue of the Colony forty years ago.

The House has now been in Session nearly three months, and what benefit I ask, has been done for the country? There have been a number of bills passed we must admit, and among the rest, one to shorten the duration of the Assembly's of this Island to four years, without being asked by the electors: but had they passed a bill to prevent the House from meeting oftener than once in four years, there would be a real and lasting benefit conferred on the Country.

Your obedient Servant,

RUSTICUS.

Liberty-Hall, March 30.

For the British American.

MR. WHITE.—The communication signed "Willie the Bellman's Son," has, I believe, caused some little sensation among the good folks in town. I am sorry that the Scotchman did not choose a more fitting subject for his wit. All will agree that the respectability of religion ought to be kept up at all events, and that no thing or person belonging to it ought to be exposed to ridicule in a public paper. However all are pretty well aware that the subject of his satire is no Elder, it was doubtless a slip of the pen occasioned by not exactly knowing the persons filling the different situations in St. James' Church. But of this I am not certain, as I am neither the son of a Bellman, nor do I know any thing of the gentleman.

I will beg leave to turn the attention of the public to a matter more nearly concerning their real interests—I mean the collection of the Land assessment tax. I have heard lately with much astonishment, that

Fees are to be demanded from the time of default made in the payment up to that of filing the information. Our House of Assembly whose wisdom, some will be bold enough to say, might with great ease be stowed in a small drawer, while the members were gone to the country to endeavor to acquire more; certainly never conceived such a project for putting money into men's pockets as this. We all know they can carve out places for themselves, and as a proof of the stem of wisdom acquired during their country excursion, and quarrel with the hand that bestows these places, yet, I hardly think that in framing this act, even they imagined that such a construction would be put upon their words. I ask any man (in his senses I mean) to read that part of it, requiring the Treasurer to make proclamation, &c. and afterwards to say that a person who has to travel 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, and 100 miles, to pay 2s. for his hundred acres of land, that this poor person should be obliged to pay 5 or 6l. cost because either through inadvertence, ignorance, or misinformation, he may have omitted, to trudge from the East Point of North Cape, to pay a few pence, I say Sir that such unauthorised and unlawful extortion cannot be borne, and is as contrary to the sound principles of policy and justice as it is to the true meaning and construction of the assessment act. The Act itself may be very equitable, and perhaps may have the wonderful effect that the anti-proprietors wish to attribute to it; but if we are to be saddled with such impositions as I now allude to, I much fear the very equitable anti-proprietory land-tax will be found quite as impolitic and pernicious a law as many others that may be found in our statute book. If the defaulter pays not his tax after having been duly admonished so to do as the law requires, and for which no fee or reward at least by this act is to be taken, then let information be filed according to the due course of law and the costs from that time together with the tax be levied as the act prescribes. This I contend, is the true and legal construction of the act; and no person reading with any other view than that for their own emolument can say otherwise; it is the abuse not the use that is complained of.

I trust some person will have spirit enough to resist the payment of these fees before the practice grows into precedent. If there is still such a thing as law or justice in the Island, (which some, wonderful to say, have the hardihood to doubt), he will be rewarded for his pains on the other hand. The person that willingly pays this imposition, deserves to lose his money for his too easy compliance.

The crown Officers I should say, have not taken the law on this subject into their consideration; if they have, they perhaps are too good lawyers to read it otherwise.