

The Examiner.

AND SEMI-WEEKLY INTELLIGENCER.

THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY WHEN FREE-BORN MEN—HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC—MAY SPEAK FREE.—MILTON'S EDITORIAL.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

STATE OF THE QUESTION OF RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT, AND ARGUMENTS AGAINST PENSIONS.

E. WHELAN, Esq.

Sir—I addressed a letter to Earl Grey through the *Review*. Wishing to have some more copies for transmission than Mr. Pippy could spare me, and also that it should be seen by many who take your Paper, if you think fit to give it insertion, you will thereby oblige

Your most obedt. Servt.

ALEXANDER RAE.

May 8, 1850.

TO THE RIGHT HON. EARL GREY,

MY LORD:

Suffer a plain man to address to you a few lines in regard to the present position of this Colony. By the Despatch of Lord Glenelg of 1836, the principle is avowed that one uniform system of government, must pervade the North American Colonies. By that of Lord John Russell of October, 1839, office-holders in this, as well as in the other North American Colonies, are warned that without any fault of theirs, they may be required to resign their offices on the ground of public expediency. By that of May, 1846, Her Majesty's assurance is given that in reference to the administration of the Government of this Island, "all the subordinate officers of that government, should merit and obtain (as it is Her Majesty's injunction that they should cultivate) the confidence of the Representatives of the people inhabiting the Island, by every measure which can be pursued for that purpose consistently with their duty to the Crown and to the Colonies at large." In the latter part of that Despatch, a decided objection is made "to the general inference or assumption that either Colony is entitled to claim the benefit of any particular political usage, which it may be desirous to adopt and borrow from the other." The manifest contradiction in the latter part of this to Lord Glenelg's of September, 1836, I do not now touch on, further than to remark, that the power which gave cannot always take back again.

Come we next to your own despatches of 1848, 1849 and 1850, wherein you tell us that we must pay the Civil List, and in the latter Despatches of 1849, make a powerful appeal for a Salary to the Chief Justice, and use sundry arguments in behalf of allowances to other officers.

Why the former House was dissolved, and a new election called at the most ineluctable season, the Governor has not yet explained. The Colonists bore the expense and turmoil, and have as yet made no direct complaint. The new House met, sacrificed much for the sake of obtaining Responsible Government, but would neither go on under the old system, nor pay pensions to officers whom they wished to remove. They were prorogued, they were again called, and after five days' Session have been again prorogued. Who ought to yield? To determine this let us endeavour to ascertain our relative positions. The motives which induced Great Britain to found colonies it is not necessary here to enter on; but it is proper to remind you that the time has come when from the knowledge the North American Colonies have, and from their inherent though slumbering power, they can no longer be dealt with in the way customary some twenty years since; or if such management shall be attempted, the cost will greatly exceed the profit. Honour or influence none will under such a phasis, be added by them to Britain; and it would soon become necessary to part with dependencies which both plagued ministers, and kept the Imperial Treasury and the people the losers. That their Legislatures have frequently gone wrong, is notorious; but if amongst other errors, some of them have occasionally blundered, yet they have the elements of growth far more vigorous than any part of Europe, and like many a headlong, hardy

youth, they will rapidly blunder into vigorous and resolute manhood. Then we are to have Responsible Government! you not only know, but you say so; and the only question is, *how much is it to cost?* Not that Britain is to pocket the price, but that Britain has by you been brought forward on the scene as commanding this Colony to pension certain gentlemen in case it dispensed with their further services. It may be foreign to our province to examine whether you are justifiable in making this demand, but we must immediately determine whether the Colony is bound to accede thereto. The following reasons appear against such compliance:

1st.—Pensions are not the custom in America. They are, both in the Colonies and in the United States, looked upon as a growing, eating evil, which it is well to avoid. We cannot recognise any rule of right by which men who have sought for and obtained lucrative public offices, should be exempt from making from their incomes provision against reverse, or from sustaining it as others do.

2d.—It is true Nova Scotia did pension their Colonial Secretary, but he had been sent out from Britain to fill that office, and he had performed the duties for thirty years. This was one of the cases wherein the Despatch of 1839 stated a pension to be almost indispensable. Our Colonial Secretary came out from Britain to fill the office of Provost Marshal, and within the last twenty years, got first to be Treasurer, and then Colonial Secretary, besides being during the same period Puisne Judge, and Master in Chancery, &c., &c., &c. Five thousand men in Britain have incomes exceeding your official income (so far as the almanac shews it); but in this Colony, passing by the Governor and the Chief Justice, there are probably not five incomes derived from any profession or occupation, which equal the amount of the several salaries and fees of the offices held by the Colonial Secretary of this Island. Omitting those who have fallen into obscurity, or by the tide of misfortune have been swept away to other lands, and looking only at those who in this province have not drawn blanks in the lottery of life, and considering the education, ability and labour requisite for his offices, and that no capital was needful, nor any risk run, he, our Colonial Secretary, has drawn the highest prize.

3d.—The Colony never agreed to pay such price for "Responsible Government." Annexed for years to Nova Scotia, it was disjoined in 1771, and those who applied for that disjunction, bound themselves to pay the Civil List. If, in consequence of their non-performance, Britain chose to take the burden on herself, that gives her no right, when she is tired of it, to fasten it on our shoulders. Let her look to the claimants of the Townships; these are the parties liable. Yet that ground of exemption, has in the mean time been waived by the Assembly; the Civil List has been provided for, the Chief Justice satisfied, and after all these sacrifices, your Lordship's name is still made use of, you are represented as a true higgler, sticking to "the pensions! the pensions!! the pensions!!!"

Lord Glenelg says in 1836, that one general rule of Government is to pervade the North American Colonies. Lord John Russell in 1839, gives every office-holder in this Colony most peremptory warning, that his tenure of office is not to be during life or good behaviour; but is to be a tenure at will, and that will, depending on public expediency. Mr. Gladstone's Despatch of 1846, and your subsequent Despatches, first darken, and then, almost directly contradict, Glenelg and Russell. Yet you recommend the office-holders to "merit and acquire the confidence and good will of the Representatives of the people inhabiting the Island." Most notorious it is, that some savage nations have worshipped the principle of evil. In that same light were some of these office-holders obeyed at the hustings in 1842, 1846, 1847, and 1850; not that they had done real good but that they had not done so much evil as they might have done. Did they themselves come forward? No, not so; who would bark when he was able to buy and feed dozens to do that work? Why should they risk their offices by

risking themselves as candidates? That risk is a dernier resort; one to be taken hold of when there is nothing but the battle, and when the country shall be so wearied and worried by former battles, as to be unable to strike an effective blow. Shall then, those who held offices without enjoying the confidence of the people, who by virtue of the Colonial Government and the support of the Governor, lived on the sweets of office, and spat upon the people, shall these men now come forward? or shall your Lordship come forward? or shall the name of your high office be dragged forward as a warrant that this Province must pension them? Shall men who have long held office against the wish of the popular branch, have right to pensions when those who get into office by the popular good will, and who retain office only so long as they retain the popular good will, are instantly on losing that good will to surrender the power and emoluments of office without pension?

4th.—Of all the Colonies in North America, this has least ability to bear such an impost. Not one quarter the area of Nova Scotia, not one thirtieth that of Canada, with a population under 70,000, the wisdom of your predecessors left the Crown without a Territorial Revenue worth naming. Of the total area of the Island (1,350,000 acres) they (eighty years since) at once granted all but 20,000 acres, and these 20,000 have, except a small fraction, been all since granted or sold. Of land afterwards fallen to the Crown by forfeiture, what remains would not yield a rent of £150, nor would it sell this year for £1,500. Nova Scotia had her large extent of ungranted lands, her forests, and above all, the prospect of her accruing mines to encourage her. She, besides, gained an immediate addition to her revenue by the compact. Yet further, her chief ports being open all the year, her commerce is more active and extensive. But we, cooped up from November till May, have nothing but direct taxes on land, and duties on imports purchased with agricultural exports, with lumber, and with vessels. So stringent is our necessity, that the Legislature have been obliged to put a tax on the sails, cordage, iron, and every other equipment imported in May or June to fit out the vessel, which in October or November, leaves our shores to return no more. They have been obliged to tax the highest degree of industry and enterprise existing in the Colony.

£600 currency of pensions (only £400 sterling), seems indeed a trifle to those accustomed to the ample means afforded by Imperial Revenues. Yet the Chancellor of the Exchequer would look somewhat perplexed, by a new demand on his department, equal to all the Pro-rates levied in Great Britain. But (to carry on the analogy) the demand you make on us, is double what in any year has been paid to the paupers of this Colony. To forward fisheries, or any other public interest, five times £600 will be given; but pensions are on a different footing, America looks not backward, but forward; not to individuals, but to the bulk. She will pension a man maimed in defence of his country, if he have not other means of sustenance; but she despises the system begun under William, raised to vigour under Walpole, perfected under Pitt, and all on whom the mantle of his inspiration fell or has since fallen.

My Lord, a worthy gentleman in this Island, desirous of introducing some of those improvements practised in other lands, has occasionally for the last twelve years, been advising the public to establish a model farm, whereon he and others might try agricultural experiments for the benefit of the country. It would appear as if this Colony had been early destined for the place wherein British Statesmen were to try their experiments. Sung and isolated, it seemed for such a purpose "a desirable location." Lord Egmont's scheme of a Palatinate was indeed abandoned in 1768; it savoured too much of the thirteenth century. Still some feudality must remain, partly copied from the Canadian Seigneurs, whom the conquest had shewn comfortably established in their mansions, "and so it was ordered." But the British Ministry, less provident for the future population than the Ministry of France, did not restrict these land-