

The Examiner.

"THIS IS TRUE LIBERTY, WHEN FREEBORN MEN—HAVING TO ADVISE THE PUBLIC, MAY SPEAK FREE."—EURIPIDES.

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CHARLOTTETOWN, P. E. ISLAND, SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 1848.

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THE EXAMINER.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 1848.

THE CURRENCY.

We insert on another page the Despatch which has been received by His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, on the subject of the Financial concerns of this Island. A short epitome or analysis of the subject of this Despatch we shall give below. We beg our readers to observe, that we purposely defer giving an opinion as to the merits or demerits of the operations proposed; and we think it best to do so at present for two reasons: First—because it requires study and deliberation to place before the public any reasonable conclusions on an abstruse subject, requiring much examination into detail;—and secondly because the subject ought to be entered into with feelings of a calm and dispassionate character which we confess we do not at present enjoy, for the threat of the Colonial Minister contained in the Despatch, of what is to be done or left undone by the Lieutenant Governor by way of coercing our Legislature—has at present a strong hold upon our mind. We think this threat entirely uncalled for. It surely would have been time enough to have made it if the Legislature—having had a plan laid before them by authority—had taken either an obstinate or disrespectful view of the subject, or had continued to exhibit the same want of intelligence that has heretofore characterized on this head the schemes of Messrs. Palmer and Pope. The use of the names of these gentlemen in the Despatch is certainly to us a matter of great surprise. We very well remember their repeated vituperations on the subject of a document signed by many influential persons, and transmitted to England, as they complained, by Sir H. V. Huntley, with a view of counteracting a request of the Legislature for a sanction of a further issue of inconvertible paper. We remember too, the low personal attacks that were made by them regarding this document; but, be it observed, this was a document open to inspection—a thing in a form which admitted of refutation and invited controversy; but what is to be said of two men, without commission, without authority, having their names placed in such a Despatch as that before us. Lord Grey has indeed, no doubt, the right to consult whom he pleases; but if he wished to raise a storm against his proposition—to excite angry feelings on a subject requiring the most cool and dispassionate discussion—he could not have hit on a more suitable expedient than the mention of the names of these gentlemen. The people of this Island have their liberties as well as their pockets to look to—and if these persons styled Delegates, the particulars of whose much boasted interview with Earl Grey cannot be known—thought they had reason to complain because an openly signed and openly transmitted Memorial interfered with their favourite project—how much more reason have the people generally to complain of an interview, the particulars of which can never be authenticated. All that can be known is, that the Legislative bodies have been openly superseded. As to the views and suggestions of Earl Grey, it is difficult to determine whether they met with the approval or condemnation of the Delegates—a little shamble-rig process has been resorted to, no doubt, and they will confine themselves under the one or other cup, as they may find the wind sits best for their interest, or is best suited to perpetuate for their allies the chance of gain or the dominion of party. It is difficult to guess what they will be at; it is certain they have some rare materials for their workshop. If there be an issue of notes, though payable on demand, they will try to gull the public into the belief, that they have already recommended an issue of notes, but they will not tell the public that the notes they recommended were not payable on demand. If it be proposed to borrow money, they have recommended that too; but they

will not tell that their scheme required a repayment in ten years, and interest at ten per cent., and would have occasioned an addition to the public debt instead of lessening it. If they disapprove of the plan propounded by Earl Grey, then they will at once be in collision with the Home Government. Far be it from us to attempt to unravel the tortuous windings of a time-serving policy. The scheme suggested by Messrs. Pope and Palmer, in the Legislative Session before the last, was, to issue 15,000*l.* of inconvertible paper. Now, what is the plan promulgated in the Despatch? It is this: Notes payable on demand, if presented for payment to the amount of 50*l.*, to an extent sufficient to meet the existing Treasury Warrants, are to be issued in lieu of them—a sum of money adequate to meet the demands which this will produce on the Treasury will be borrowed,—the Despatch does not say on what security, on what interest, or to what amount. It is not proposed to alter the value of the Currency; nor is it stated how the existing Treasury Notes, not payable on demand, are to be disposed of.

Now, it must be evident to any person of the least perception, that the propositions of the Colonial Minister are in direct opposition to the opinions held by these two famous financiers—Messrs. Palmer and Pope. We are told that these gentlemen and their friends have not ceased for several days past to exhibit a vanity the most silly, and duplicity the most contemptible, in reference to this Despatch, assuming the authorship of the scheme which it promulgates. Any person who will read the Despatch attentively—compare some of its suggestions with the Report of the Commissioners, submitted to the Legislature in January last—recall to his recollection the opinions propounded by Messrs. Palmer and Pope in their places in Parliament, and it must be seen how miserably false is the foundation on which the assumption is based.

But let us quit this part of the subject for a moment. It is our earnest desire that Sir Donald Campbell should enter on his administration without embarrassment, and without hindrance. It is at the same time our anxious wish to shake off the thralldom in which we, and no less our Governors, have hitherto lived; and we likewise well know the necessity of a revision of our monetary system,—the present plan has too long been cherished by the usurers who have fattened on it. How in the world the important subject of this Despatch is to be brought before the Assembly, with the administration of affairs constituted as it is at present, we cannot surmise. We hail with pleasure an improvement in the constituent parts of the Executive Government, by the admission of a few members who reflect the thoughts and opinions of the people generally; yet so long as its constitution remains unchanged in principle, so long as it is irresponsible to the people and to the Crown, it is next to impossible that such a subject as the one we are treating of, can have a good or safe result. If we had that Responsible Government which can alone carry us through difficulties, some party or other would possess authority enough to meet the coming crisis. Whatever ensued would be the act of the Government, which, if it could not carry through, it must be superseded. As it is now, we will suppose—(for though we know we shall have the new system of Government conceded to us, yet we cannot say when)—that a Message in the old style goes down to the Assembly, and a Bill will be concocted, not by a responsible Minister but an irresponsible committee, in which every man's crude theories must be introduced—one set of men favouring one clause, and another set of men contending for a different one, 'till the whole becomes first a heterogeneous mass, and finally an abortion; whereas, the constitutional system of Government will consolidate into two parties the various persons who have nostrums to propose, and these will each be a phalanx whose previous consultation will have fixed the nature of their measures,

—the country at one time showing their preference of one or the other, and at all times overruling at an election that selfishness and class legislation by which, at present, all our movements are controlled. Such a system, too, is best calculated to lighten the cares of the Head of the Government—and, above all, to strengthen the bond of union between the Sovereign and the People.

Since writing the foregoing observations, we have received the following Letter, to which we give a place without note or comment. The clear and able manner in which our correspondent reviews the question of the Currency, cannot fail to ensure for his remarks an attentive consideration.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EXAMINER.

SIR;

I trust that you will consider it no useless occupation of a small space in your Paper, if I venture to offer some short observations upon the very important Despatch relative to the Currency, which has just been published for general information.

Every one who has given consideration to this subject, having a complete knowledge thereof, must have felt that the energy and enterprise of the Colony has been straitened and repressed by the unsound and unchangeable character of its paper currency. To this, indeed, may be traced the disinclination to enterprizes which are freely entered upon in other communities. Banks of deposit and discount, Marine and Fire Assurance, &c., might, and I have little doubt would, have had an existence here as elsewhere, if there had not been a latent impression that the foundation upon which all such Institutions must ultimately rest was false and hollow. That with an unsound Currency and unsettled views upon such a vital question, it was most hazardous to incur responsibilities of long duration.

We have now placed before us a document which, if it meets with the attention and favourable consideration which it so well deserves, will enable us to rectify much that is erroneous and embarrassing in our present position, and infuse life and vigor into our future operations.

The first part of this valuable Despatch is occupied with remarks upon the erroneous system hitherto followed, and confirms the opinion held and expressed by many parties here, that the present depreciation is only a necessary consequence of that erroneous system. It then adverts to two remedial courses—the one having for its object the restoration of the currency to its former standard—the other, the fixing it at the present well understood and easily calculated rate, to be accompanied with cautionary measures for the prevention of its further depreciation. Lord Grey then states his opinion, that the latter course is the most advisable; stating at the same time the grounds upon which he formed that opinion.

Upon the first of these (the supposed pressure upon the finances, which an attempt at restoration might produce) it is not necessary at present to observe. But it is very desirable that we should carefully consider all the difficulties and complications which such restoration would necessarily involve; and how impossible it would be so to adjust the practical workings of any law enacted for the restoration of the Currency to its original standard, so that it should not inflict or be made the instrument for inflicting injustice and wrong, and of causing litigation and dissension in the community.

The present rate of the Currency has now had a duration of nearly twelve years, with but very trifling variation. It may, therefore, be supposed that the circulation has unobservedly become graduated and leveled to the circumstances and requirements of the Colony. A cycle of twelve years is a long period in money engagements, and it may be justly concluded that the great mass of pecuniary obligations at the present day, have been contracted, either in the present currency, or in a currency having a well-understood and easily settled