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No. 54.

POWERS OF THE LOCAL MAGISTRATES.

If the magistrates of each district were chosen by the people (who are, of course, best acquainted with their characters) I should not object to the monies arising from wild land assessments, dog taxes, wolf taxes, &c. being placed under their control; but as they are, in general, merely temporary, and even sometimes transient servants of the local executive, acting in concert with the minions of government, or suffering degradation from office, if such it be, if they do not obey orders, *volens volens*, I do think that the house of assembly ought to have had the control of the proceeds of such imposts as the above; and I consider it a dangerous power, in the hands of the magistrates, by which they are enabled, to fix the price of an innkeeper's annual license, at any sum they please, between 12 dollars and fifty dollars. Examine the Journals of assembly, for the session of 1825-6, and you will perceive that in the Western and, Ottawa districts, £5 a year is charged for license to each and every innkeeper, with the exception of Moses Patten, who pays £4. Again, turn over to the Home district, and you will see that A. Montgomery, John Wilnot, James Schofield, Joseph Bloor, Jacob Snyder, Charles Franks, Thomas Simpson, Ulrick Howard, Joseph Markwell, Jane Jordan, and John Hays, each pay, under the same act of parliament, £10 each!! Is this fair? Is it just and expedient, to allow the first and foremost houses in Amherstburgh, Sandwich, Hull, &c. &c. to get off for \$12, while their brethren on Yonge Street, and in York are obliged to pay \$10? Are not these justices who charge, to all alike, £5, in the Western districts, very well aware that they have the power to levy £12 instead thereof? And is not this partial indulgence placing the innkeepers greatly in their power? It would appear as if the act of parliament was actually made use of to link a very influential class of men to the wheels of the executive, and its dependents.

In York, the maximum or highest rate charged, is 10, in Cornwall 5, Sandwich 3, in the Ottawa 4, Kingston 9, Niagara town 8, Bruckville, and Prescott 7½, Cobourg, and Port Hope 7, Vittoria, and St. Thomas 4, Sandwich, and Amherstburgh 3, Hamilton (Gore) 5, Dundas 6, and Ancaster 7½ pounds. Is this scale fairly graduated!

William Forsyth's pavilion at the Falls, and A. Montgomery's house on Yonge St., (the one doing perhaps one twentieth of the business of the other) pay alike; and John Hay, and Joseph Bloor, in York, have paid higher for license than the owners of the most spacious hotels in Kingston, or Fort George!! Look at the charges, and look at the system; 'tis a base one.

By the present system of district taxes, under the control of a body of men appointed during the pleasure of the crown, a revenue of perhaps, from \$50,000 to \$80,000 per annum is placed at the disposal of the minions of a colonial government, instead of being under the salutary control of the representatives of the people. No wonder it is that our legislature is despised by the backs of office, when it is known, that out of an annual revenue, in all equal to \$400,000, only a little over a couple of thousand pounds was required to be voted, last March, by the commons in parliament!!

On examining the journals of 1821, I find that Mr. Speaker Willson (magistrate & excise officer) brought in a bill to continue this injudicious apportioning power in the hands of the magistrates, but that after it had passed the assembly, *nem. con.* some flaw was found in it upstairs, and the Attorney General, seconded by Peter Shaver, brought in, on the last day but one of the session, the bill which appears on the statute book; and, according to the unconstitutional system still continued, carried it thro' parliament the same day, *none dissenting*. I also perceive that in 1824 the act was continued for four years, with alterations, and that it, with several other important statutes, would have expired had the last session been called three days later! Such are the expedients resorted to by a colonial government. I trust the innkeepers who have paid high licences will read this chapter with attention, as well as the public. The remedy is in the next assembly, for the act expires with the close of their 1st session.

No. 55.

WAGES TO MEMBERS FOR TOWNS.

Opposition to a bill making provision for wages to town members; (1st session 6th parliament)—Messrs. Attorney General, C. & D. Jones, Gordon & Clark. On the second session there was no division, but the legislative council gave sundry queer reasons for not assenting to the bill, one of which was, that members were members for the province and not for a particular place. Why then do districts pay *their* members?