

sider and report on the assessment law, and already recorded on the journals of that year. *First Report.*

The important disclosures made by these hon. gentlemen, as reported by the com. were as follow :

"\* In examining into the truth of the allegation contained in the petition, that the measures passed too rapidly through both houses, your committee became acquainted with facts of a most painful and alarming nature.—  
 "From the testimony of the honorable William Dickson, a gentleman resident in the Province from its early date, and commanding that respect which is due to his high character and exalted station, we learn a fact most mortifying to the pride, and most humiliating to the independence of the Legislative Council.  
 "From the introduction of the bill to the day of its final passing, there was, according to the hon. Mr. Dickson, a majority against the measure. But, at the third reading, several members who were previously opposed to the bill, and who held offices under the local government, suddenly turned in favour of the measure, and others reluctantly absented themselves under pretence of sickness. And this change, the hon. Mr. Dickson is satisfied, arose from intimidation by the local government, who seemed determined to carry the measure at any sacrifice. He states, that it was most painfully manifest from their countenances and demeanour, that the change was not from conviction but from coercion. The business of the Legislative Council was suspended for two hours, for a meeting of the executive council; and he avers his belief that at that council, the members of the Legislative Council, holding offices, were constrained, at the peril of their situations, to vote for the measure, which they had for a week before decidedly opposed. Upon those members returning that day to their legislative duties, there was a change of voting; and one of those who absented themselves on pretence of sickness, was, to the knowledge of the honorable William Dickson, able to attend. On the day the final vote was taken, and about ten minutes before it was taken, a message was delivered to the honorable James Baby, that Major Hillier, private secretary to His Excellency Sir P. Maitland, wished to speak to him. Upon the return of that honorable member, from the interview, to the Legislative Council, he was evidently much confused and agitated. Until that moment he had been opposed to the bill; and upon being spoken to by the honorable William Dickson after his return, he seemed agitated and confused, and said he must vote for the bill. After the passing of the bill, and after leaving the Legislative Council, the honorable member put his hand upon his heart, and with reference to his change of conduct on the measure, said something about his children, expressive of regret at the necessity which drove him to the abandonment of the course he had pursued. It is further stated that the late Chief Justice Powell, then Speaker of the Legislative Council, evidently acted on that day under the same embarrassment and coercion, observing he had received a new light within the last ten minutes. The Hon. J. H. Dunn absented himself. The bill was of course carried, and the Honorable W. Dickson and the Honorable Thomas Clark protested against it. The Honorable Thomas Clark, as will be seen in his evidence, states that he also was in the legislative council during the discussion and passing of the bill making permanent the tax complained of, and that he has good reason to believe, that the bill would not

Testimony of  
Honourables  
Messrs. Clark  
and Dickson.

\* See Appendix to Journals House of Assembly, U. C. 1823. Report on Assessment Law.