

THE BELL.

WEDNESDAY MORNING, FEB 8, 1837.

OPENING OF THE LEGISLATURE—In a previous part of this day's paper, will be found the proceedings of the new Parliament as far as we have received them; and we hail the dismissal of the solemn mockery of a Chaplain as an omen for good. The **SPEECH** is a most uninteresting document; and if its spirit be acted upon by our M. P.'s they will not be long in having the pleasure of meeting their constituents again at the Hustings. His Excellency first congratulates the House on "the peace and prosperity which pervades the Province;"—there is nothing unusual in this. He then notices the failure of the crops and the fisheries during the past year; but that notwithstanding the Revenue has increased. He advises economy in the management of the public purse; and the only thing he expresses himself persuaded they will provide for with liberality, is the "support of his Majesty's Government." He recommends to their notice and consideration, "the improvement of our present defective system of appropriating and expending the Road money;" but not one consolatory word is said about encouraging our great sinews of strength, the agriculture, the fisheries, and education of the Province. He then states that the regularity and good order of many of the battalions of militia are deserving of great praise;—this, in a military point of view is very doubtful. And he concludes by the confident hope, "that the harmony which has so long marked the legislative proceedings of this Province, may continue to distinguish them." Now, although we are lovers of harmony as much as His Excellency can be, we nevertheless trust, that our Representatives will not purchase it at the expense of the people's constitutional rights, as their predecessors have in too many instances done. A contemporary has recommended watchfulness; we respond by saying to all the constituency, watch them.

LATEST NEWS.—By arrivals at New York and Philadelphia, London news to the 20th Dec. have been received. By these it appears that the state of the money market had materially improved, and confidence was in a great degree restored. The French papers are chiefly occupied with lamentations in consequence of the reverse sustained by Marshal Clausel, in Africa; it appears he had the temerity to march into the interior with about 7000 men, to attack the fortified town of Constantine, containing about 100,000 inhabitants. But he no sooner reached it, than he had, from the effects of his enemies activity, and the severity of the climate, to make good his retreat, leaving however, the most of his men, either dead, or in hospitals. The French papers speak of again investing the place in the spring with 25,000 men.

It would appear that the story of the defeat and capture of Gomez, near Cadiz, which we lately copied from the American papers was all a hoax. No such engagement had ever taken place; on the contrary, that bold and enterprising chief, with his band of heroes, had made a bold dash through the central Provinces, under the Queen's authority, to join their adherents in the north. On the 9th or 10th of Dec. he passed the Guadalaxara, and on the 11th he reached the Ebro without opposition. It is said the divisions under Generals Clonard, and Irribaren were in pursuit of him.

Nothing decisive had occurred between the Belligerents in the North of Spain.

Spain was about to recognise the independence of the new States of South America; and Don Miguel had issued a proclamation from Rome, that he was about to re-enter Portugal.

In England, an arrangement had been completed, for transferring the Packet Establishment of the Post Office, to the Board of Admiralty,—all contracts for the former to be under the management of the Treasury.

REFORMED MAGISTRACY.—In our last number, we promised to show how two sittings of our Supreme Courts in each County, could with ease, accomplish all the business of the year, and thus dispense with the Inferior Courts. We now proceed to redeem that pledge.

Any person, who has taken the pains to observe the construction of our Provincial Magistracy, must be convinced, that the whole system is on a wrong principle from beginning to end, and calculated to defeat the ends of its institution. A greater curse cannot be inflicted on any people, than to give them an ignorant and avicious Magistracy, and this Nova Scotia will never be without, so long as the only passports to the Commission are found to be in paying court at the Colonial Office at home, to the Executive here, or to some of their minions down to the ninety-ninth remove. In Nova Scotia, a man may be respectable, popular, and exemplary in every thing that is good and praiseworthy, but these qualities will not recommend him at head quarters, and therefore he remains in obscurity. Assuming it however as a fact, that in our present Magistracy, there are many such worthy men; who does not know, that there are also many who make their hundreds a year, by deciding on accounts and disputes in the privacy of their own dwellings, in the crowding of which, they themselves have had no small share. Here, their proceedings are as much concealed from the public eye, as that of the Divan of the Grand Seigneur. Many others of them are in that state which our countrymen would indicate by the expression "not worth a groat."—Some manage to get their stock *duty free*. While others make it a point of conscience never to pay their honest debts until they are sued.

That they are nearly all ignorant of those laws they have sworn faithfully to administer, is a fact; but one of that kind which we conceive to be no great reproach, since our laws are at present such a labyrinth, that there is scarcely one enactment to be found in the statute books, on which two lawyers would agree.

Without laying any claims to originality, as something of the same kind has been tried in a neighboring Colony, and found to work well, we shall now proceed to point out how, in our opinion, the ends of public justice would be more effectually secured, lawsuits diminished, and the Magistracy rendered much more independent and respectable.

To gain these valuable objects, a qualification should be fixed by law, either at £—annual income, or at £—value in real estate, free and clear of all incumbrance. Their appointment should in all cases originate in the nomination of the People; they should serve without fee or emolument, except a small yearly allowance for stationary; they should endeavour to settle all matters of a civil nature, that come before them, without process; and when the latter course became unavoidable, they should issue it returnable to the County Prothonotary or Clerk, by whom all the usual fees should be charged, and collected for the use of the County—for we do not approve of cheap Law; when the County Justice had issued his summons, we would consider that in all cases of debt, his duty was discharged. We would then have two County Commissioners, also nominated by the People and confirmed by the executive, who should be men of legal knowledge, if to be found within the County, and who should hold monthly or semi-monthly Courts, in the Court House, to try all civil matters of a summary nature below £20, and all petty offences.

The petty Commissioners should be paid at the rate of ten shillings per day, for each day they actually served; the Justices for their stationary only; and the County Clerk for his extra services;—the balance of the fees of Court to be applied for the general uses of the County.

Without going into detail, these are our leading views of the best mode of obtaining the ends of justice, and maintaining the authority and dignity of the Laws,

and we submit them without hesitation, to the Members of the Legislature, and the public at large; and we may add, that were an Act passed embracing the most of these views, and such other improvements as might occur to a number of reflecting men, and sent home, we have no doubt but it would receive the Royal Assent, and become the Law of the Land.

We are informed by a person who left Halifax on Friday, that, on Thursday the House came to the determination to reduce the Parliament from seven to four years.

We recommend an attentive perusal of the Report of *Pictou Auxiliary Bible Society*, in this day's paper.

A warm friend, and liberal supporter of the Bible cause, has sent us a communication, suggesting that faithful agents in different parts of the county, should be entrusted with copies of the British and Foreign Bible Society's Reports, and that they should hire them out at one shilling for each reading. Now although we doubt the propriety of hiring them out for money, we may state that there are only twelve copies sent annually to the Pictou Society, these are all, except one copy, sent out through the Town and County, for gratuitous circulation and reading. But we fear, they are often allowed to lie by those into whose hands they are sent, and thus the community at large, are deprived of the benefit that is intended to be conferred upon them. Persons who do so, would do well to recollect, that it is always an interesting volume to the real Christian; and that it is exceedingly unjust, when they have perused it themselves, to lock it up from all others, to many of whom, and the Bible cause generally, it might prove highly beneficial. Those who do not chose to circulate them, will oblige by returning them to the Secretaries or the Depositary of the Society.

NEW BRUNSWICK—Notwithstanding the opposition which was made by the Lumbering Counties to the 5th section of the Civil List Act, it has passed both branches of the Legislature unaltered, and in all probability will become Law—the division in the Legislative Council was 8 to 5.

THE METEORIC PHENOMENA.—We find we were misinformed as to the night of the singular appearance mentioned in our last, it was Wednesday (not Thursday) it occurred. By the New Brunswick papers, we perceive that the phenomenon was observed at St. John and St. Andrews, but no mention is made of a meteor having been seen in these places; upon further enquiring, however, we find the report we made last week as to this fact, is confirmed; the evening was calm, and the sky partially clouded, which might prevent its being seen in New Brunswick, but many respectable individuals in this County saw it distinctly at intervals, between the clouds, as it rushed with great velocity through the atmosphere, a little to the Northward of this place. It appeared as large and luminous as the full moon, and emitted sparks like a rocket on fire. A little before it disappeared in the eastern horizon, it became a beautiful purple; throughout its whole tract in the Heavens from N. W. to S. E. it left a luminous train of light, which continued for some time before it dispersed.

The perfect tranquility of the atmosphere, at the time it was so suddenly and violently disturbed, must have been the cause of those beautiful coruscations seen at St. John, and it will be interesting to Meteorologists to know to what extent such a cause could produce these effects. The Meteor itself has probably fallen somewhere in the Atlantic ocean.

ANOTHER FIRE AT ST. JOHN N. B.—Mr George Doherty's Brewery, in St. Patrick's Street, was destroyed by Fire, on the night of the 31st ult.—no insurance.