

CHAPTER III.

LEGISLATIVE TOPICS.—1773 TO 1831.

GOVERNOR PATTERSON TO LIEUT. GOVERNOR READY.

THE first business of the Legislature, when it met for the first time in 1773, was, as might be expected, a confirmation of the proceedings of the Governor and Council, antecedent to calling a House together. This was followed by an Act to make valid in law process and proceedings in the Law Courts, and this confirmation reached as far back as the first of May, one thousand seven hundred and sixty nine. The times and places of holding the Supreme Court of Judicature were established, and an authority issued for the record and publication of all the Laws. This done, a remedy appears to have been sought against the fraudulent habit of raising money on uncertain bills of exchange; and it is singular to notice the different damages "ascertained;" foreign bills of exchange were subject to ten per cent. damages on protest; but bills drawn on other colonies, to only five per cent. damages; that is to say, where the greater facility of collection existed, the more damages were laid on. A lot of minor troubles appear to have agitated the 'collective wisdom' of the Island at this time, and we can fancy boats aground in rivers and creeks, in consequence of the discharge of ballast, and considerable irritation caused thereby; but not only from this cause, but from brush and rubbish upon the lands, small bushes, rotten wind-falls, and decayed leaves, all of which were at this time, subjects of legislation. They conferred upon the Governor the power of making public roads, scrutinise jurors, brought criminal offenders to trial and prohibited masters of ships from letting any one slip away from them without a Pass. Small debts and rum appear to have been hyphenated together, as