

REPORT ON JURIES IN CRIMINAL MATTERS.

Your Committee, moreover, cannot refrain from remarking on this subject, that in addition to the violation of the principles of the Law and of the rules of Justice, this was in fact not merely to behave to the people of this Country in the most unjust manner, but at the same time to evince the most sovereign contempt for the very great majority, (indeed for the almost entire number) of His Majesty's subjects, and to treat them in reality as if they had been strangers to all civil rights, and placed without the pale of civilization.

Your Committee now immediately to the subject to which their attention has more particularly been directed, have to remark, that during the present year, and particularly since last summer, the face of things has been at length changed in this respect, in the administration of Justice in Criminal matters in this Country.

Your Committee would be guilty of injustice if they did not acknowledge that the care and attention which His Excellency the Administrator of the Government has bestowed on this subject, have at length had the effect of reducing the selection of Jurors to some principles of order and regularity, especially in those extensive Districts in which the abuses which had crept into this part of the administration of justice had been most remarkable, and most deeply felt; and this in a manner which gives hopes that the fundamental rules of justice will be again gradually brought into effect, which inspires confidence in the administration of justice, and by that very means in the protection of the Government, by conferring hopes of that impartiality in the mode of conducting every trial by which alone that feeling, which is the firmest support of the Government and of public felicity, can be created and cherished.

Your Committee have also to observe with reference to this subject, that in the District of Quebec, the General List of Jurors appears to have been made with as much care and exactitude as could be expected in a first attempt of this nature under the existing circumstances, and at a time when the difficulties which would necessarily occur could not be at once readily surmounted; if the strict principles of the Law on this subject have not been precisely followed with reference to the details, the rules of analogy have been at least observed. The List of Petit Jurors in particular, contains in the District of Quebec, the names of upwards of three thousand persons so classed, that the Jurors are taken from the mass of the population, and summoned indifferently in the order in which their names stand on the list; whence a reasonable hope may be formed that verdicts will be obtained, given by men who are strangers to the prejudices and passions which might render their ideas false and pollute the stream of justice. A mode of selection like this must at the same time have the effect of banishing suspicion, and of diminishing the fear