

# THE OBSERVER.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 1824.

The Jamaica Papers to the 16th November have been received. The House of Assembly have passed a vote of thanks to Commodore Sir Edward Owen, for his zealous services, and prompt attention to the commercial and naval interests on that station. On the 13th November, Mr. Hamilton Brown introduced a bill to repeal the Registry Act, which he characterised as a most expensive, obnoxious, and oppressive measure, without being of the slightest utility. "The house had been seduced into sanctioning it by the hypocritical promises from home, that no further interference was contemplated by the Government in our local condition." The bill was supported by all the members present. It was read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY—JAMAICA, Nov. 13, 1823.

Mr. Hamilton Brown, in offering the bill to repeal the Registry Act, considered it a duty he owed to every individual in the island; for, when it passed in the year 1816, the whole island, with one voice, exclaimed against it. It was a most expensive, obnoxious, & oppressive measure, without being of the slightest utility. The Hon. Member, who at the time opposed it, prophesied what would be the result, & which was now come to pass. The House had been seduced into the measure by the hypocritical promise from home, that no further interference was contemplated by Government in our local condition; and he would shew that Government did give such a pledge, by stating that a registration, not emancipation, of slaves was their only object, & the Assembly therefor passed the bill as a peace-offering; but that pledge had not been kept, and therefore the Assembly would be fully justified in repealing this bill. The Honourable Member then read, from the Message of his Grace the Governor to the House in 1816, the following passage:—

"His Grace has been further instructed to declare, it is not the emancipation, but simply the registration of the slaves, which is now suggested; and to disclaim any intention on the part of his Majesty's Government thereby to propose their emancipation. This explanation has become the more necessary, as great industry has been exerted, and which could only have proceeded from ignorance or mischievous misrepresentations, to blend these objects together, and it is fit that the pleasure of the Prince Regent, acting in the name and on the behalf of his Majesty, should not be misunderstood on so essential a point."

Now, Mr. Speaker, that was the solemn pledge that was given, that no other measures regarding our slave population should be agitated in the Imperial Parliament by the discussions which have recently taken place in Parliament, they have forfeited that pledge; and we are absolved from any longer continuing this obnoxious and useless bill.

The Hon. Member then adverted to the hypocritical means resorted to by Mr. Wilberforce to get the measure carried in the Colonies, by making the slave trade the cloak to cover his real intentions; but he had now shown his cloven foot, and it therefore behoved the House to detect, if possible, his iniquitous designs. And the first step should be to get rid of this troublesome bill, which cost the country 10,000*l.* every third year, and was utterly useless; for there never had been a single Negro imported into the island since the abolition. He hoped the House would remonstrate against the proceedings at home with spirit and firmness. He hoped, indeed, that though the island was a small body, it would show on this occasion that it possessed a great soul (cries of "hear him, hear him").

Mr. Blyth made some comments on the Bill which was sent from England, and said that the Registry Bill was the most obnoxious Act that ever had passed that House, and he hoped it would be repealed.

Mr. Whitfield hoped the proposed bill would pass the House unanimously. They had now six years' experience of it, and had found it a most oppressive Act. It would never have been carried in that house, but for the pledge given by his Majesty's Ministers, that they would not in future interfere in our internal concerns. That pledge they had broken, and the House was no longer bound to continue the Registry Bill. The honourable member said, it would be unnecessary for him to take up the time of the House on a measure, the policy of which was so very obvious. It could no longer be questioned, from the conduct pursued by the fanatical party at home, that they meditated the destruction of these islands; shall we then assist in such destruction, by adopting measures attempted to be forced upon us through their instrumentality? He hoped not, and should vote for the Bill.

Mr. Hyslop followed on the same side, and observed, that the Registry Bill was forced on the island, under the idea that the slave trade was still carried on. After urging other topics in support of the Bill, he concluded by giving it his cordial support.

The Bill was then presented, read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time to-morrow.