

Communications.

FOR THE FREE PRESS.

The State Constitution. No. 4.

Having in the last two numbers endeavored to present as concisely as possible the objections that have been urged against the existing organization of the legislative department of our State government, and briefly adverted to the practical advantages that might result as well from a reduction of the size of the Legislature, as from a change in the basis upon which it should be constituted, in accordance with the plan I proposed at the commencement of these papers, I now proceed to notice some other points connected with this great question.

Among the reforms that have been pressed with so much earnestness upon the public attention, there is probably not one upon which there has been a greater unanimity of opinion, than in regard to the propriety of abolishing borough representation. Under the present Constitution, seven towns in the State, the aggregate amount of whose qualified voters cannot exceed 1500, are entitled each to one member in the House of Commons, being an average of one representative for every 214 voters. The annual expense thus incurred amounts to \$1243—taking the estimates of the last year as the basis of the calculation. The amount in itself is certainly unimportant; but it is just so much paid from the coffers of the State, in violation, it is alleged, of the rights of others. Doubtless the provision in the Constitution, which confers upon these borough towns the right of representation, was predicated upon the supposition, that they possessed, or in the lapse of time, would possess, a separate and distinct interest. But that experience has warranted such a principle, no one, I presume, will affirm. Perhaps the unalterable decrees of Providence have forbid that any distinct commercial interest should grow up in North Carolina; and until the obstacles which have heretofore impeded our advancement shall have been counteracted, no satisfactory reason can be given for the continuance of a public burden from which the State derives no adequate advantage. Nor can it be regarded as a very important privilege to those towns that are thus represented. To most of them it has proved a grievous curse, and nothing is hazarded in the assertion that more feuds and broils have grown out of contested elections in the borough towns than in all the counties combined.

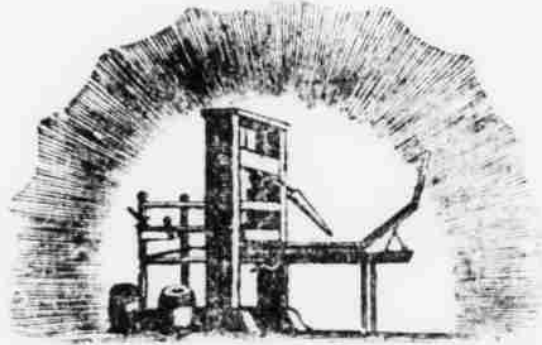
It has also been proposed to place the election of the Governor in the hands of the people. Under the mode by which he is chosen at present, that is by the Legislature, the county of Edgecombe which contains 1600 qualified voters has no more influence in his election, than the county of Haywood which contains but 550. But independently of the glaring inequality which this statement exhibits, a more substantial objection is to be found in the practical evil that the present mode induces. In all free, constitutional governments it has been considered a settled axiom, that their several departments should be kept separate and distinct. This is necessary to ensure independent action among the co-ordinate branches of the government. In practice our Governor is in a state of perpetual dependence upon the Legislature. From the body he derives his official existence, and to it he is indebted for the means by which he is enabled to maintain the dignity of his station. Custom has affixed something like disgrace to a failure to be re-elected. Hence to ensure that object, the bold and fearless independence which should characterize the Chief Magistrate of a sovereign State must frequently be compromised, and the first Executive officer of the State sinks into the pliant tool of the Legislature. Let the people elect the Governor, and thus make him independent of the Legislature and this evil will be obviated. Another advantage, by no means inconsiderable, would be gained by removing this election from the Legislature, making away so fruitful a source of discord and contention.

One at all familiar with the mode of conducting elections in our Legislature, and their results, need not be told how the harmony of its councils is distracted by the frequent recurrence of these contests. Besides—the Governor, being the chief Executive officer of the State, should be in fact, as he was intended to be in theory, the immediate representative of the sovereign power, and directly responsible to it. In this way he can best execute its high behests and act more efficiently as a check upon the Legislature.

The propriety of excluding free negroes from the polls is so palpable, that it is needless to do more than state that this is one of the objects proposed.

The 32nd article of the Constitution provides that all who may deny the truth of the Protestant religion shall be excluded from all offices of profit or trust in the State. In these days of universal enlightenment, when the mists of bigotry and intolerance are so rapidly being dissipated, even in the governments of the old world, it is scarcely necessary to insist upon the erasure of so odious a restriction. It is a relic of a barbarous age—inconsistent with the great principles of religious freedom that caused our pilgrim fathers to seek a home in the Western world, and incompatible with the bill of rights, which declares that all men have the natural and unalienable right to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. Religion should be a matter between a man's conscience and his Maker; and in a country professing to be free, it is absurd to prescribe the acknowledgment of any particular religious creed as a qualification for civil office.

ARISTIDES.



TARBOROUGH:

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1834.

In consequence of the indisposition of the Editor and his assistant no paper was issued from this office the past week.

New Bank.—We learn that the following gentlemen have been appointed the Board of Directors of the Branch at this place: Richard Henry Lewis, Spencer D. Cotten, Ely Porter, Willis Wilkins and Dempsey Bryan—and that Richard Henry Lewis has been chosen President, and Peter P. Lawrence, Cashier—Clerk not yet appointed. It is expected that this Branch will go into operation early in the ensuing month.

The Newbern Sentinel states that the following gentlemen compose the Board of Directors of the Branch established at that place: Asa Jones, John R. Donnel, John H. Bryan, Robert Primrose and William Hollister—and that Asa Jones has been chosen President, John M. Roberts, Cashier, and Frederick J. Jones, Teller and Clerk.

We observe with pleasure that several of the prominent journals of this State have taken favorable notice of the opinions of our correspondent "Aristides," on the subject of the State Constitution. The Raleigh Register republishes the articles in question, and the Salisbury Carolinian gives copious extracts, accompanied with the following complimentary remarks:—

A good sign from the East.—The "Tarborough Free Press," of the 12th instant, contains a well-written essay in favor of Constitutional Reform. This is most cheering, as it emanates from a section of the State that has hitherto most strenuously opposed all change. The writer promises a series of essays on the subject. The object of the first one is to prove that a Convention may be limited, and thus to relieve the apprehensions of those who oppose the meeting of such a body, lest it might destroy all that is valuable, as well as all that is faulty, in our present Constitution.

We hail this sign as the harbinger of success to the friends of Reform, and of future unanimity and good feeling between different sections of our native State.

The essay contains much sound doctrine, well sustained by reasoning; but, as we are pressed for room, and as the doctrines inculcated in it are generally admitted where our paper circulates most extensively, we shall give only the opening and concluding paragraphs.

New Cotton.—The Fayetteville Observer of the 23d ult. says:—About 12 or 15 bales of new Cotton have been received, the quality only fair. A load of 7 bales, good quality, of the crop of Gen. Dockery of Richmond county, was bought by Mr. O. P. Stark on Thursday last, at 13½. Last year's crop will command from 11 to 12½ cts. per lb.

The last Freshet.—Within a month, we have had the two most severe Freshets ever known in this section of country. The last, which occurred on Sunday week, is said to have done greater injury in many places than the first. The Stages have hardly yet resumed their wonted regularity, and the wonder is, how they can get along at all, with the roads in so disordered a condition. The passengers in the Stage from the North, on the night after the late Fresh, came very near losing their lives at Crab Tree Creek, in this vicinity, a stream which, in ordinary times, may be easily waded...*Ral. Reg.*

New Paper.—We are informed that a new Paper, friendly to the views of the Administration, is speedily to be established in this City under the editorial control of Col. Philo White, former Proprietor of the *Western Carolinian*, but more recently an Agent of the General Government abroad. The Editor is a practical printer withal, and from his past experience, will, we have no doubt, bating its politics, publish an interesting paper.—*ib.*

Our State Capitol.—We learn that Col. Bragg who was appointed Superintendent, *vice* William S. Drummond, Esq. removed, has himself been notified that the Commissioners will not need his services after the 9th of October ensuing. We learn further, that it is the intention of the Board to abolish altogether, the office of Superintendent, from a belief that the public work can be carried on with equal rapidity, and greater economy, without one.—*ib.*

Valuable Land.—A gentleman, we understand, recently sold a tract of land in Hyde county, lying on Mattamuskeet lake, divided into lots, as follows: One lot of 45 acres, at 60 dollars per acre—\$2700; one of 120 acres, at 50 dollars per acre—\$6000; and one of 190 acres at 30 dollars per acre—\$5700; making, for 355 acres, the handsome sum of 14,400 dollars! The land was raised to this value by being well drained by a canal. Contiguous to it, lies a considerable quantity of unimproved land, of equal fertility, and possessing equal natural advantages in every other respect, which, in consequence of its liability to overflow for want of canals, would not command 10 dollars per acre. Here are facts which show the great value of the swamp and marshy lands in the lower counties, and demonstrate the importance and practicability of having them drained. The value of the land above alluded to was actually enhanced, by this means, to the amount of 300 to 500 per cent. The State owns immense bodies of this land; and it is believed that there is no enterprise in which she could engage, which would so readily and certainly enrich her treasury, as the reclaiming this part of her territory. Besides the immediate return from the sale of the public land, that of private individuals would be so improved as to yield vastly more in taxes, and to check the tide of emigration which is now so rapidly draining the State of its most valuable and public spirited citizens.—*Ral. Star.*

North Carolina Gold Coin.—The Carolinians have contrived to put their Gold into a shape to pass by tale. Several skilful essayists have established themselves in the gold regions, and have acquired so much reputation for accuracy, that their pieces of gold marked "five

dollars," pass every where as half eagles. It is a kind of inspection, yet we think it may finally make trouble, as those pieces may be counterfeited without incurring the same penalty which is attached to counterfeiting the National Coin, or in fact, any penalty at all.

N. Y. Jour. of Com.

Frauds upon the Government.—The Staunton Spectator states that thirty-seven bills of indictment were found against persons for forgery, at the late session of the Federal Court at Clarksburg, Va. The offenders were all connected with frauds under the pension law.

State of the Treasury.—The Globe of the 24th ult. says, "We take much pleasure in communicating the important fact, that the importations of specie into New York and New Orleans alone, during one week, by recent returns at the Treasury, appear to have exceeded one million of dollars," much of which, the Globe adds, is in gold. From the same paper we also learn that in addition to the revenue received the first half of the year, and of which we have formerly given the particulars, the amount received in the two months which have elapsed of the last half of the year, is said to equal, if not exceed, the estimates made by the Secretary of the Treasury in his annual report, and that the residue of all our once vast national debt is now rapidly paying off, and can all be discharged, as soon as presented, without the least inconvenience or embarrassment."

Washington, Sept. 30.—The President has returned home this Evening, in good health.—*Globe.*

Fredericksburg, Sept. 26.—We mentioned, in our last, that Mr. Wm. S. Archer, of the House of Representatives, had made an assault, on Friday, with a cane, upon the senior editor of the Enquirer. We have since learnt that a short time afterwards the son of Mr. Ritchie attacked Mr. Archer, and a rencontre ensued. We feel authorized, from the publicity which the affair has attained, to state that Mr. Archer and young Mr. Ritchie, attended by their respective friends, passed thro' town, this week, on their way to the District, for the purpose of settling their differences by a duel, *Arena.*

The Petersburg Intelligencer, which came to hand after the foregoing was in type, says,

"We take great pleasure in informing our readers, upon authority to be relied on, that the unfortunate difference between Mr. Archer and Mr. Ritchie (the son of the senior editor of the Enquirer) has been happily adjusted."

The Washington (Georgia) News of the 13th ult. contains the following melancholy intelligence:

"A great man has fallen in Israel." It is our melancholy duty to announce the death of the Hon. WILLIAM H. CRAWFORD. He expired on the morning of the 15th inst., within eight miles of Elberton, whither he was going to hold his semi-annual court. He was taken violently with the bilious cholera, and died the day after he was attacked.—Georgia has lost her distinguished son, and our country one of its most prominent citizens. His loss will be deeply felt, and his death profoundly regretted.

Cholera.—The report of the Board of Health of Savannah of the 24th Sept. states that no case of Cholera had appeared in that place for three successive days, and only one in the last six. The disease had assumed a milder form on the plantations; but on some plantations it has been known to subside, and even disappear for a few days altogether, and then return with increased violence. Between six and seven hundred have already fallen victims to it on about 15 plantations. Not more than five or six cases had occurred at Augusta.

In New York, the disease has so far subsided, that the Board of Health has discontinued its reports. The last mentioned only five deaths.

In Philadelphia there have recently