

liberal a profession as that of the Law will discharge the debt, I do not allow myself to doubt. As to the public, I shall content myself with quoting the language of the Legislature of 1794 — language that deserves a better place than in the preamble of a forgotten Resolution of the General Assembly — “In a free government all legislative acts, which respect the lives, liberties and estates of the people, ought to be published, and a knowledge of them diffused generally through the State.”

It is well known, that the question of the application of the English Statutes to the Province was continually agitated between the Proprietors, and their adherents, and, what was termed, the *country party*; the views of the former, as observed by Kilty, Introd. to Rep. p. vi., “having been to discourage the extention of these Statutes, in order that their power of assenting to laws might become more important, and the country party being unwilling that such Statutes should be particularly enumerated, so as to limit the courts in their power of judging of the consistency of them with the good of the people; a power, which was essential to the proper discharge of their duties, and which had been expressly given by several Acts of Assembly.” My purpose was to have given an account of the various disputes between these two parties on this subject; but my book has already gone beyond the limits originally assigned to it, and, perhaps, I am mistaken in the amount of interest, which such an account would excite.

The rules, which governed the courts in former times in their admission or rejection of particular Statutes, or parts of Statutes, as applicable or inapplicable to the circumstances of the people of the Province, are stated by Kilty in the Introduction to his Report. After the Revolution, the necessity of what may be termed a standard became more apparent, and several persons appear to have projected some report or collection of such of the Statutes as were in force. The matter was in time taken up by the Legislature, and by Resolution No. 22 of Nov. Sess. 1794 (printed as No. 10 in the Appendix to the Laws, prepared by Kilty, Harris and Watkins under the direction of the Legislature), to which I have before alluded, it was referred to the Chancellor, the Judges of the General Court, and the Attorney General, who were directed to “make report to the General Assembly of such of the English Statutes as