

proceedings, and examples, of every kind, and by such occasional remarks as may be necessary to connect them, and to shew in what manner they bear upon the subject of our enquiry.

The first regulation in land affairs must necessarily have concerned the manner in which persons claiming lands in virtue of the Conditions of Plantation should make proof of the facts on which their demands were founded. No express direction, however, appears on this subject prior to the first entries of rights, and the matter was probably committed for some time to the Secretary, to whom the emigrants, with all the circumstances of their arrival, must in general have been sufficiently known. He, no doubt, established such rules as were requisite towards uniformity and correctness in the proof and admission of rights, and where he was not otherwise satisfied, might exact from the parties such evidence as from the nature of the case could be obtained. The entry of Thomas Weston, with the attestation of George Pye that the five men therein mentioned were to his knowledge brought in by the said Weston, is the first example that has been observed of such additional testimony being given; but, it soon became necessary to guard against frauds in the exhibition of rights, which had become a medium of traffic among the settlers. Regulations were therefore prescribed for the proof of those rights by the oaths as well of disinterested persons as of the claimants themselves, and where such corroborative testimony could not be obtained, the parties were on application allowed their Warrants upon giving penal bonds with condition that the rights exhibited had truly accrued and had not already been used.

For the ease of the inhabitants, also, when the population had become in some degree extended, persons were commissioned in different quarters to take the probates of rights, of which they were enjoined to make periodical returns to the Secretary's office. In some instances these persons were empowered also, in receiving the proof of rights, to issue Warrants to the parties entitled, under the like injunction to make returns thereof to the Secretary at St. Mary's: Authorities or Commissions for this last mentioned purpose were subsequently given in various instances, unconnected with the proof of rights, chiefly with the view of promoting settlements in those extreme parts of the Province which were in dispute; but this practice, after full demonstration of its tendency to produce error, fraud, and confusion, was at a pretty early period wholly abandoned. The following Extracts and references will exhibit the practice in these two particulars.