

merits of the codes have nothing to do with the case. Almost in the same proportion, as I disapprove, in my own person, of the Roman Catholic religion, do I dislike the civil law of Rome, and both the French, and the Scotch, juris-prudence that are founded upon it; but it is not what I prefer, or what any Englishman, or Scotchman, or Irishman prefers, that the Canadians are entitled to; but what they themselves prefer; they have their own reasons, their own predilections, their own prejudices if you will, but they are entitled to be governed by those laws, which they themselves approve of; and this is not only the fundamental maxim which the Romans observed with respect to the nations that became subjected to their power, but that likewise which has most wisely been adopted, and acted upon by the British government. Do not the French conquered islands in the West Indies, St. Lucia, and Dominica, enjoy their own laws and customs? Are not in Trinidad not only the Spanish laws observed, but is not the Spanish language that of all the official acts there? What would the Spanish inhabitants of that island say of British good faith, if, in order to deprive them of the rights secured to them by capitulation and treaty, they were to be incorporated with some of the originally British West India Islands, required to send deputies to a general assembly, and when that assembly had passed an act totally changing all their municipal regulations, be told that they had themselves consented to the measure? Such is exactly the serious farce that is in rehearsal to be acted in Canada. But go home: look at Jersey, Guernsey, and Alderney, are not the French laws, and French language, the laws and legal language of those dependencies of the British empire? Nay is not the Isle of Man governed to this day by the Manks laws, administered in the Manks language? And even the little rock of Heligoland is, if I mistake not, in the same predicament. These are all, as it were, small independent commonwealths, living under the protection and imperial government of Great Britain, and do not all British subjects resorting to them, consider themselves, if they take up their residence there, as bound to become part of that community, and abide by their local laws. Shall then an exception be made as to Canada, which in itself so far outweighs the aggregate importance and population of all the others together? Look farther on, look at the Ionian republic, look at the British possessions in India; but the subject is so rich in matters of illustration that I must abandon that part of the field of argument, for fear I should bewilder myself and my readers in their multiplicity.

But Z. is wrong in saying that the maxim held up here is that the French laws shall receive no change. No. The maxim is, we will not have a change of them imposed upon us; if we judge proper to change them we will, but not upon compulsion.