

REPORT ON JURIES IN CRIMINAL MATTERS:

list does not include the names of more than from fourteen to fifteen hundred Jurors selected from forty two parishes, including that of Montreal, in which alone a number of qualified Jurors might be formed equal to one half the number of which the said list is composed.

But Your Committee must at the same time remark, that even supposing that neither of these lists were liable to objections of this nature, it would still be to be regretted that the selection of Jurors was not subjected to more precise regulations, adapted to the circumstances of a Province, wherein certain of the institutions which in England tend greatly to facilitate the execution of the laws on this subject, neither prevail to the same extent nor are based upon a system of equal regularity. Regulations of the same nature, and adapted to the present circumstances of the Country, would afford the means of banishing all those apprehensions which form the subject of an uneasiness on the part of the people, but too well founded, with regard to the danger of malversation or negligence on the part of those on whom the selection of Jurors and the formation of Juries for the Trial of Causes of a Criminal nature, may devolve in this Country.

Your Committee do not think it necessary to dwell upon the urgent and pressing necessity of adopting at the earliest moment some method of removing those subjects of complaint, and of ensuring the absence of an anomaly of which the consequences can lead only to the reciprocal demoralization of the rulers and of those under their charge, to sap the foundations of the authority of the Government, as well as of the liberty of the people, and to destroy the feeling of virtuous respect for the Laws; to ruin all confidence in the Courts, by contaminating the sources of Justice itself, by rendering them liable to be considered as tools subservient to the power and to the passions of the moment, instead of being the faithful guardians of public morals, and above all, of being equally the protectors of the reciprocal rights of His Majesty's authority, and of His faithful subjects in this Province.

Your Committee, by reason of the remote situation of the District of Gaspé, and of the difficulty of intercourse at this season, have not been able to obtain information as to the mode of selecting Jurors adopted in that part of the Province. At the same time, it appears that the mode adopted in the Districts of Three Rivers and of St. Francis, does not appear to have been the subject of complaints equally serious with those in the most extensive Districts, and more particularly in that of Montreal; at the same time, they may remark, that it would nevertheless be equally desirable that the selection of Jurors should be there also at length subjected to rules, the precision of which should leave the least possible room for any apprehensions of the consequences of an arbitrary selection.

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