able to make out such a case, by merely drawing new arguments from old facts; but I have studied these volumes, as attentively as possible, and as I believe none other ever did study them; and it is upon this close examination that I found my opinion. Their contents are not arranged in order either of time, or of place; and the French and English versions are not even arranged in the same order. This I mention, to show the difficulty of studying them; and from no intention of imputing blame to those who compiled them. In going over them, I soon found that to understand their contents, it would be necessary to arrange them in the order of their dates; and I have therefore so done. Thus arranged, I have carefully gone through them all, and have ascertained with tolerable accuracy to what Seigniory each title refers. I think I have made out a nearly perfect list of them; that I understand all the titles; and I now say, that from this examination of the whole, and from the comparison of each part with the rest, I have been forced to conclusions to which I never thought I should arrive,—to the conviction, that the fact in regard to this question is that which few of late years have believed. I enter into these explanations, because I may be thought to owe an apology to the House for laying down propositions, for which those who have not studied the subject so carefully as myself are not prepared. If I fail to bring forward good reasons, on my head must be the responsibility.

I believe there is no question of the truth of one proposition—that it has of late been held as the fixed tradition of the country, that the Seigniors are not proprietors—are not what an English lawyer would call holders of an estate in fee simple; but are rather trustees bound to concede at low rates of charge to all who apply to them for land. On this proposition alone, can the provisions of this Bill possibly be justified. If this be properly held, I admit that much is to be said in favour of it. If the Seigniors were originally merely trustees bound to concede at low charges and reserves, it may follow that only a moderate degree of mercy should be dealt out to them. Still, even on that supposition, much may be said, owing to the peculiar position in which they have stood since the cession of the country. It would have been easy—and it is common—to object to the measure before the House on this latter ground; for, supposing even that before the cession Seigniors were bound to concede without exacting more than a certain rent, or reserving water courses, wood, banality or any thing else, still it may be argued that for ninety-three years the machinery of such old law has ceased to exist; that the Courts and the Legislature and the Government have treated them as absolute proprietors, and thus have changed the quality, so to speak, of their tenure, and placed them in a new position. This being so, it has been argued, and I think properly, that it would be hard to fail to respect those rights of property which such a usage has established. My duty to my clients, however, and to truth leads me not to stop short at this argument. It is my duty to object altogether to the proposition on which it is attempted to defend the present Bill; and I do now distinctly deny the proposition, that the Seigniors are to be looked upon as trustees for the public—as agents bound to discharge duties of any kind whatever. My proposition, on the contrary, is, that the Seigniors are and always have been proprietors of real estate; that whatever interference may ever have taken place with reference to their property, has been arbitrary, irregular, inconsistent with principle, and not equal in extent to the interference exercised over the property of the *Censitaire*. The grants to the Seigniors were grants of the soil, with no obligation like that supposed; and though during certain periods, their property was interfered with, it was never interfered with to the extent to which similar interference took place in respect to the property of the *Habitant*. If the Seigniors were not holders of property, there were no such holders; if they were not proprietors, there were none who could consider themselves so. I am aware, that in this statement I run counter to traditions of late currently held—to doctrines which are supported by the authority of men for whom I have the highest respect, and from whom I differ with reluctance; but from whom I dare to differ nevertheless, because I believe that I have looked more closely than they have done, or could do, into the titles and *Arrêts*, which form the evidence on this subject. I neither reflect on their ability nor on their integrity; I do not doubt the honesty of their conclusions; but at the same time, I cannot help seeing that their doctrines were well fitted to obtain popular credence, because it is always popular to tell the debtor that his obligation is not justly incurred. I cannot resist the force of the evidence which has convinced me, that on this subject, circumstances have given currency to opinions which will be found on