

6-7 EDWARD VII., A. 1907

necessarily preserved to us, the Municipal laws which define them. And one of the Sections of the Statute of the 14th year of the Reign of His Most Gracious Majesty justly considering this Country a conquered one, has so clearly allowed them to us, that the Courts of Justice ought not to entertain a doubt that it was meant to introduce any other laws, which have never been promulgated in this Province, for their most celebrated Commentators declare that they have no force in Countries which are Conquered and already inhabited. We cannot even conceive that the Act of Parliament which allows us our possessions can be understood to Authorize reiterated Alterations, which would subvert their fundamental principles; or to mix with those laws, others, either general or particular, which differ in principle, and are but little adapted to this Country, with an Eye to indulge a certain class of Individuals only: Because from a mixture of different Laws, in one and the same Country, nothing but Confusion, a Disunion among the people, and an uncertainty destructive to families, can result. Alterations in our municipal Laws, Customs and usages, require the greatest moderation and circumspection. These laws are clear, simple, well understood, and just, even with respect to Commerce, for they greatly favour the speedy recovery of debts, they are equitable and promote equality among Creditors. They consist of Ordinances, which the Sovereigns, in cases concerning property and civil rights, would not issue without the Resolves of the Estates, that is to say, the three orders of the people. Our Customs also, were only committed to writing, in that manner, and the digesting of them was done upon the Resolves of the same Estates. Therefore it is, that the letters patent of the last Redaction expressly declare and ratify them as Law and Edict, perpetually and irrevocably; and that the former Government, for Ages, made but few Ordinances, not one of which struck at those Laws. Such are the Laws, Customs, and usages, in support of our Rights, real and personal, which the elder and Chief men, and even the younger Canadians, who live here, without distinction of birth, have agreed among ourselves to demand the exact execution of, from His Majesty; supplicating him to apply a remedy to the present state of the Province.

We therefore most respectfully intreat Your Lordship, to forbear giving your sanction to anything that may conduce to subvert the fundamental principles of the Laws, Customs, and Usages, which govern our properties, or introduce other Laws; seeing that all innovations, in matter of Law, should be done with the same Circumspection as obtained at their Establishment.

The firm protection which Your Excellency was pleased to give, heretofore, to our most precious Rights, assures it to us at present. It will double our Obligations, as it will our prayers for your preservation and prosperity.

Quebec 19th January
1787.

The Petition was signed by 345 Persons.

J. WILLIAMS C. C.