

much outnumbered by the signers of petitions avowing opposite opinions. The Provinces of Canada are a most valuable portion of the British Empire, and their rapidly growing importance well justifies the anxious interest, and the minute attention, with which the welfare and the wishes of their people are consulted by our paternal government; but for the sake of the very numerous population which now inhabits this portion of the King's dominions, and for the sake of the millions who at no very distant period will be comprehended within their limits, we earnestly hope, that the stability of those institutions upon which our social happiness depends, is so far secure, that there are some points which, from their vital importance, will be firmly and inflexibly maintained, and for reasons more satisfactory and conclusive than an accidental preponderance in the number of petitioners on one side or the other; and that the government of our mother country will feel it to be an indispensable duty to uphold them with constancy against any unfounded prejudice or complaint, however supported. The Legislative Council feel it right also in candour to declare to your Excellency, that they have perceived in various parts of his Lordship's despatch, and not without extreme regret, that to the complaints urged against the executive government of this colony, and its officers, charging them with actual misconduct, or with culpable indifference to the interest of the colony and the happiness of its people, it seems to have been thought material, if not satisfactory, to reply in substance, that if indeed such imputations could be truly made, no blame can attach to His Majesty's Government in England, either because these abuses occurred in times that are past, or because the responsibility rests wholly with the persons inculpated; and in some instances a degree of colour is given to the complaint, by an express direction to your Excellency not to practice or to suffer any such abuse in future, or to give your utmost attention to the particular subject in discussion, which it might from thence be supposed has thus been brought, for the first time, under the attention of His Majesty's Government.

The Legislative Council trust they may be permitted to remark, that if the many faithful subjects of His Majesty in this country, whose knowledge of the truth, and whose sentiments led them justly to appreciate the acts and intentions of His Majesty's Government, had always contented themselves with vindicating them in the same spirit against aspersions unsupported by evidence, and advanced for the sole purpose of weakening the respect which should be felt for them, there might have been found somewhat less of that confidence in the government of the mother country, which every good man has felt it to be his duty to maintain and cherish.

And they cannot but think it much to be deplored, that on some most interesting public questions, whatever the Government and the Legislature of this colony have done, and are doing, in the zealous discharge of their duty, seems to have been unfortunately for the time lost sight of, so much as to leave ground for the inference, that it was necessary to quicken attention even to the obvious duty of promoting the religious and moral instruction of the people, by enforcing the suggestions of an individual, who unhappily employs the education he has received in misleading public opinion, and in sowing discontent among a happy and loyal people. We have not failed to remark, that in the observations which His Majesty's Secretary of State has made upon the subject of the Legislative Council, it seems not to have been present, at the moment, to his Lordship's recollection, although it must, of course, have been familiarly known to his Lordship, that that branch of the Legislature is not composed here, as in many chartered governments, of the same body which constitutes the executive council of the governor. It is therefore, as we most respectfully suggest, not accurately spoken of as "a board," being in fact a deliberative assembly, distinct from the executive department, constituted by a British Act of Parliament, and composed of members from various districts of the province who hold their office for life, whose duties are exclusively legislative, and in which all that is done is openly and publicly discussed, and proceeded in according to the same formalities as are observed in the representative branch of the legislature. Under this constitution, which created and preserves them an independent body, the Legislative Council has, for a long series of years, and for many successive parliaments, proceeded in a spirit of perfect harmony with the House of Assembly, with but one interruption, occasioned by a discussion on a point of privilege, in which each branch doubtless maintained those principles which it thought essential to its just independence.