

Report of Committee on searching Journals of Legislative Council on Seat of Government.

pression, most injurious to the Government, and inimical to the tranquillity of the Province; to find the place which leaves the least foundation for complaint on any side, has therefore been the object of the Committee of the Council in the present inquiry, and it is one which, they think, ought to be paramount to all others.

Quebec, it is true, has its fortifications; it is the mart of the Timber Trade, in which a portion of the people of *Upper Canada* are connected; it has Houses of Parliament already constructed, which might temporarily answer for the meeting of the Legislature, and part of which would serve the same purpose in future; and it is not materially different in climate from most other parts of the Province. But its distance from *Upper Canada*, its want of equal commercial connection with the Upper Province, except as regards one branch of trade, the little personal common intercourse between its inhabitants and people from the western portion of the Colony, form, in the opinion of the Committee, strong objections to its being chosen as the Seat of Government. Upper Canadians having business to transact with Government, or who are engaged in public affairs, would feel themselves forced to go to a distance from their Country to a place where everything would appear strange, and where even the distance from, and expense of communication with their own Section of the Province, would be considered unnecessary inflictions. Toronto, though a flourishing and rapidly rising City, situated in a fertile Country, and having a large extent of territory in its rear, peopled, and, in the course of settlement has, nevertheless, little interests in common with the Lower Province, unless as a place through which its Commerce must pass. And its strangeness to Lower Canadians, would ever be greater than would be felt in *Quebec*, by people from *Upper Canada*, whilst its distance from *Eastern Canada* would cause many and constant inconveniences, too great to admit the continuance of the Capital there. *Kingston*, it is true, is somewhat nearer to a central position, but its importance, except as a Military Post, depends mainly upon the forwarding trade, and, not having an improved back country, its progress has not been rapid, notwithstanding its being one of the most ancient Towns in the Province, and favoured by the presence of large Naval and Military establishments. The coming of the Government caused improvements, which, however, must be limited to the wants of the influx population consequent upon that occasion. It is close upon the American frontier; many of its supplies are taken from the *United States*, and the inhabitant of *Lower Canada* feels himself alienated from his own people as much in this City as he could well be any where in *Canada*; while it is not a place in which any considerable number of the inhabitants of *Upper Canada*, besides its own Citizens and the Country in its neighbourhood, have any interest. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the question was discussed, in the two last Sessions, in the Legislative Assembly, a very large majority of Members declared decidedly against *Kingston*. Of *Bytown*, it may be said that it is comparatively safe from attack in the interior; that when the Country of the *Ottawa* comes to be settled, it promises to rise into importance, and that it is situate on the Provincial Boundary, but then its position makes it inconvenient both for *Upper* and *Lower* Canadians; it is, in fact, out of the way of both; and thus possessing disadvantages which would be equally felt by both divisions of the Province, it would, probably, unite both in one feeling, and that not in its favour.

The Island of *Montreal* was chosen as the site of a great City, by the *French* Government, in the early times of the Colony. In making this choice,

the acknowledged sagacity and foresight displayed by the Officers of that Nation, in their selection of positions, for either Civil or Military occupation, along the course of the *Saint Lawrence* and down the *Mississippi*, in a country then a forest wilderness, was scarcely required, when *Montreal* was designated as a future City. No discoveries of localities claiming to be equal, no development of the vast resources of later times, no improvement in Canal navigation, and not even the discovery and use of steam (which, in other instances, have set at naught the calculations of the wisest and most profound of early politicians), have made any change in the prospect of importance to *Montreal*, except as they have confirmed and advanced all prognostications of its future greatness. Situate at the head of navigation from the Sea, and at the foot of the River and Canal navigation, not only of *Canada* but of *North Western America*, *Montreal* has long been the Commercial Capital of the Province, and bids fair to be the Mart of Commerce of a larger portion of the vast North Western country of the *American States*. It is not merely a City through or by which the Commerce of the country passes, but it is the depôt and place of exchange of that Commerce, and, consequently, it is, beyond all comparison, the centre of the wealth of *Canada*, a wealth, not derived from any partial or changeable source, but flowing to it alike from the *Atlantic*, from the distant Western Lakes, and even from waters whose natural outlet is to be found at *New Orleans*, but which, by means of Canals, have been made to communicate with the *Canadian* Lakes, and to bring contributions to the favoured City of *Canada*. Ships from the Ocean and Vessels from the interior, lie together in the Port, and men from all quarters meet there in the ordinary course of business. *Montreal* has no concern in the sectional jealousies of the different positions in the Western Country, but it is impossible to imagine an improvement in condition of that country, by which that City is not benefitted, while, on the other hand, the *Upper Canadians* having little to do with the affairs of the other Ports of *Lower Canada*, have a deep interest in *Montreal*, as their own Sea Port and their own market; *Montreal* is, therefore, essentially a City of both the late Provinces; one in which each claim an interest, and it is, moreover, a City familiar to *Upper Canadians* as it is to the inhabitants of the section of which it forms a part; it is the place, of all others, in which to study the statistics and policy of the whole of *Canada*—in which there is the least chance of partial Legislation; or of the interests of any part of the people of the Province being overlooked or disregarded.

There can be no stronger proof of the correctness of these opinions, than the claim set up by the Inhabitants of the Western Country, long before the Union, to the City of *Montreal*, as a place built up with the result of their industry, and sustained by their Commerce; but the resources arising from the wealth of which they were deprived, in consequence of that City forming part of a different province. That the Lower Canadians resented and resisted a proposition for the dis-memberment of their Country, and the loss of their chief City, is undoubted, and surely this contest for a place in which both claimed a deep and obvious interest, shared by no other locality, ought to be conclusive evidence in favor of the disputed position, when the inquiry is made where shall be the United Capital of these contending Provinces. That the Capital of the United Provinces ought to be placed in the position which would enable *Upper Canadians* most effectually to look after the concerns of their own sea-born and outward trade, and in the place in which *Lower Canadians* can most effectually investigate and control the internal management of communications, of which they share the expense, and in

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