

District of
Gaspé.

and to provide for the due administration of Justice therein, reported that the Committee had gone through the Bill, and had made several amendments thereto, which amendments were again read at the Clerk's table.

Ordered, That the said Bill be referred to a Committee of the whole House, tomorrow.

Imprisonment
for Debt.

The Honourable Mr. *Boulton* from the Special Committee, to which was referred the Bill to abolish imprisonment on Execution for Debt, and for the punishment of fraudulent Debtors, reported that the Committee had gone through the Bill, and had made several amendments thereto, which amendments were again read at the Clerk's table.

Ordered, That the said Bill be referred to a Committee of the whole House, on Tuesday next.

Report on Petition of the Inhabitants of Indian Reservation, Eastern District.

Mr. *Chesley* from the Select Committee, to which was referred the Petition of *Alexander McDonald* and others, Inhabitants of the Indian Reservation, in the Eastern District, presented to the House the Report of the said Committee, which was again read at the Clerk's table, and is as followeth:—

"That they proceeded in the enquiry referred to them, and took certain Evidence in the matter, which is hereunto appended.

"By this evidence it is established, that the Indian Tract was set apart as an Indian Reservation in 1785; that the Settlers thereon have been there since 1794, and that they are as industrious, loyal, intelligent, and well conducted as any other class of persons in the Province; and are all of Canadian French origin, or from the Mother Country. The evidence further proves, that although the nature of the tenure be leasehold of ninety-nine years, yet those leases have been recognized by the Government and a Superintendent appointed by the Governor, in order that the rents might be properly collected for the benefit of the Indians, for whose advantage the Tract was set apart. That the Inhabitants of this Tract have been assessed the same as in other parts of the Province, and whilst they have contributed their portion of the wages of Members of Parliament, the privilege of electing them has hitherto been denied them,—whilst Settlers, exactly under similar circumstances, on the Indian Tract in the County of *Beauharnois*, settled at a far more recent date, viz., since 1819, and holding their leases only for thirty years, and not called on to contribute their portion to the payment of wages of Members, have been and are allowed, the full and free exercise of the Elective Franchise.

"That before the Act of Union, the peculiar Constitution given to the Province of *Upper Canada* by the Imperial Act 31 *George III*, precluded the extension of the Elective Franchise to this description of title, but by the Act of Union this disability is now removed, and the Province has liberty to grant, fully and fairly to all, one of the most invaluable rights of the subjects of *Great Britain*,—that of electing their own Representatives.

"They therefore, most respectfully recommend that the prayer of the Petition be granted, and that a Bill be introduced to carry this recommendation into effect.

"MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

"Friday, 10th November, 1842.

"Colonel *Donald McDonald* called in, and examined:

"Will you be pleased to state your name, profession or calling?—*Donald McDonald*, Colonel of the *Glengarry Regiment*, and formerly Member for the County of *Glengarry*.

"Are you acquainted with the Settlement upon

the Indian Reservation in the County of *Glengarry*,—if so, how long?—what is the description of Settlers generally upon that Reservation?—are they such as in your opinion, would use a sound discretion in the exercise of the Elective Franchise?—I am, and have been acquainted with the Settlement for the last forty years—indeed nearly from its commencement; I look upon the Settlers to be a most respectable class of Farmers, principally Highlanders, of great industry; there are also many Canadian families, loyal, industrious and well behaved, to whom the Elective Franchise might safely, and should justly, be extended.

"Were you present at a meeting held at *Martintown*, in the month of January last, by the Inhabitants on said Reservation,—If so, please state what took place at that Meeting, and your opinion thereon?—I was present at that Meeting; it was a fair representation of the intelligence and respectability of the Tract.—A Petition was presented at that Meeting, asking for the Elective Franchise, and was most fully and generally concurred in, indeed without one dissenting voice.

"Are the Inhabitants on the Indian Reservation, in wealth, influence, enterprize and loyalty, equal to those in the surrounding Townships of the *Eastern District*?—Fully so, in every qualification equal to any part of the Province of *Upper Canada*, or that of *Lower Canada*, in which I have been.

"Are you aware that they are, and have been, since their earliest settlement on said Indian Reservation, rated and assessed alike with the other Inhabitants of the District?—Certainly they are, and always have been, even to the tax for the wages of Members of Parliament, though they were excluded from voting for and against, which they have long and loudly complained of.

"What is your opinion as to the propriety of conferring on those inhabitants the right to exercise the elective franchise, and the best mode to effect that object?—The first part of that question I have answered before; I cannot see why a distinction should have been made with persons similarly situated in other Provinces; those residing within the former limits of *Lower Canada*, have always exercised their elective rights, whereas those occupying lands under the same tenure in *Upper Canada*, have been denied that right; further I am informed that by a Provincial Act of *Lower Canada*, settlers under location tickets now, are entitled to vote for Members of the Provincial Parliament.

"Would the annexation of the Indian Reservation to the present constituency of *Glengarry*, tend to produce any political change or bias at future elections, or in other words, do they differ in any material points from the other inhabitants of the County?—Certainly not, the composition of the people of that tract is the same as that of the County of *Glengarry*.

"Monday, 20th November, 1843.

"Lieutenant-Colonel *Duncan McDonald*, called in and examined:

"Be pleased to state your name, place of residence, profession and additions?—*Duncan McDonald*, Lieutenant-Colonel in the Militia, J. P., and Surveyor of Land.

"Are you acquainted with a tract of Land in the Eastern District of *Western Canada*, known as the *Saint Régis Indians' Reservation*?—if so, state its position, length, breadth, and area of acres?—I am; upwards of 30,000 acres of land, twenty-five miles long, nearly two broad, bounded on the East by the Townships of *Charlottenburg* and *Kenyon*, on the West by *Cornwall* and *Roxborough*, in the rear by the *Ottawa District* in front of the River *Saint Lawrence*.

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