

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 18

their error ; and in the Petition to the King (of which Major Ross was the Bearer) they testified their disapprobation of an House of Assembly and the innovations consequent upon it.¹ I would upon this occasion be more explicit in my sentiments on the present system, if I did not know that His Majesty and Ministers may have the most ample information on that head from the General Officers who have since the conquest of the country had the honor to serve as Governors in it—The Generals Gage, Murray, Sir Guy Carleton and Gov^r Haldimand are in England ; their abilities and experience render them in an eminent degree competent to judge of the system which is best calculated to secure this Country, to promote the happiness of the people and to render it useful to Great Britain.² Permit me only, My Lord, to suggest with great deference an Opinion that provided the present system is persevered in without any further Parliamentary Interference, an Instruction or permission should be given to His Majesty's Governor or Commander in Chief for the time being, to recommend more than six Canadian Catholics for seats in the Legislative Council—for as this Body has authority to make alterations in the Laws, customs and usages of Canada, the measure appears to me only consonant to equity and could not fail to have the best effects in reconciling the people to such alterations as it may be necessary to make, in the enacting of which an equal or at least a more proportionable number of their Countrymen shall have a voice. Some transactions in the last session of the Legislative Council to my knowledge created these just reflexions in the minds of many of the most moderate and intelligent Canadians—and I have reason to think that such an additional proof of His Majesty's Generosity and confidence would give great satisfaction to the people of Canada, as it would in their opinion secure to their Posterity, the Possession of their religion, laws and liberty. Another measure which in my humble conception will attach the Canadians still more firmly to His Majesty's Government, would be to establish a corps

¹ See p. 762.

² General Haldimand on his return to England drew up a memorandum respecting public matters in the Province of Quebec, which he submitted to the consideration of Lord Sydney. Among the topics discussed were those of Civil Affairs and Deputies from Canada. Under these heads he had this to say:—"6th. The Spirit of Opposition to every Measure which I have proposed in, or out of Council for the King's Service, has been so strongly manifested by some Members of the Legislative Council, and by the Attorney General, particularly since Lieut. Governor Hamilton's arrival at Quebec, who has thought fit to place Himself at the Head of that Party, and the Inflection has been so industriously spread by means of the Clergy, and other Agents, that I despair of seeing that mutual Confidence and Harmony subsist in the Council or amongst the People, which is so indispensably necessary to the King's Service and well being of the Province, while these gentlemen remain in Office. The Instances I allude to are many, some of them, particularly the last, are upon record in the Minutes of the Council—This party is composed of the Lieut. Governor, Messrs. Finlay, Grant, Allsopp, Cuthbert, DeLery and Levesque." * * * * * "7th. It is highly necessary to discountenance the Correspondence carried on by the People styling themselves deputies from Canada, and supported by Mr. Maseres and others, applying for a change of Government by the establishment of a House of Assembly and other changes entirely contrary to the Interests of the King and Happiness of His good Subjects in that Province. The Clergy, whose devotion to the Interests of France has of late been strongly manifested, are deeply engaged in this Party, & unless Measures are speedily taken to cheque the Progress of it, so as to deter the Clergy from persisting, it will, ultimately, be necessary to withdraw some of them from that Country.—" Q 25, pp. 306-308. Carleton afterwards submitted a Memorandum of 20th Feb., 1786, which showed a very great change of mind on his part as he recommended the good policy of removing, unasked, every grievance or burden which would render the position of those in Canada inferior to that of their neighbours of the United States, in order to render any change of allegiance on the part of those in Canada undesirable. See Q 26—1, p. 53.