

French. But I have no hesitation in stating, even more decidedly, that the circumstances in which the English have been placed in Lower Canada, acting on their original political education, have endowed the leaders of that population with much of that practical sagacity, tact, and energy, in politics, in which, I must say, that the bad institutions of the colony have, in my opinion, rendered the leaders of the French deplorably deficient. That a race, which felt itself thus superior in political activity and intelligence, should submit with patience to the rule of a majority which it could not respect, was impossible. At what time and from what particular cause the hostility between such a majority and such a minority, which was sure sooner or later to break out, actually became of paramount importance, it is difficult to say. The hostility between the Assembly and the British government had long given a tendency to attacks, on the part of the popular leaders, on the nation to which that government belonged. It is said that the appeals to the national pride and animosities of the French; became more direct and general on the occasion of the abortive attempt to re-unite Upper and Lower Canada in 1822, which the leaders of the Assembly viewed or represented as a blow aimed at the institutions of their province. The anger of the English was excited by the denunciations of themselves, which, subsequently to this period, they were in the habit of hearing. They had possibly some little sympathy with the members of the provincial government of their own race; and their feelings were, probably, yet more strongly excited in favour of the connection of the colony with Great Britain, which the proceedings of the Assembly appeared to endanger. But the abuses existing under the provincial government, gave such inducements to remain in opposition to it, that the representatives of each race continued for a long time to act together against it. And as the bulk of the English population in the townships, and on the Ottawa, were brought into very little personal contact with the French, I am inclined to think that it might have been some time longer, ere the disputes of origin would have assumed an importance paramount to all others, had not the Assembly come into collision with the whole English population, by its policy with respect to internal improvements, and to the old and defective laws, which operated as a bar to the alienation of land, and to the formation of associations for commercial purposes.

The English population, an immigrant and enterprising population, looked on the American provinces as a vast field for settlement and speculation, and in the common spirit of the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants of that continent, regarded it as the chief business of the government, to promote, by all possible use of its legislative and administrative powers, the increase of population and the accumulation of property; they found the laws of real property exceedingly adverse to the easy alienation of land, which is, in a new country, absolutely essential to its settlement and improvement; they found the greatest deficiency in the internal communications of the country, and the utter want of local self-government rendered it necessary for them to apply to the Assembly for every road or bridge, or other public work that was needed; they wished to form themselves into companies for the establishment of banks, and the construction of rail-roads and canals, and to obtain the powers necessary for the completion of such works with funds of their own. And as the first requisite for the improvement of the country, they desired that a large proportion of the revenue should be applied to the completion of that great series of public works by which it was proposed to render the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa navigable throughout their whole extent.

Without going so far as to accuse the Assembly of a deliberate design to check the settlement and improvement of Lower Canada, it cannot be denied that they looked with considerable jealousy and dislike on the increase and prosperity of what they regarded as a foreign and hostile race; they looked on the province as the patrimony of their own race; they viewed it not as a country to be settled, but as one already settled; and instead of legislating in the American spirit, and first providing for the future population of the province, their primary care was, in the spirit of legislation which prevails in the old world, to guard the interests and feelings of the present race of inhabitants, to whom they considered the new comers as subordinate; they refused to increase the burthens of the country by imposing taxes to meet the expenditure required for improvement, and they also refused to direct to that object any of the funds previously devoted to other purposes. The improvement of the harbour of Montreal was suspended, from a political antipathy to a leading English merchant who had been the most active of the commissioners, and by whom it had been conducted with the most admirable success. It is but just to say, that some of the works which the Assembly authorised and encouraged, were undertaken on a scale of due moderation, and satisfactorily perfected and brought into operation. Others, especially the great communications which I have mentioned above, the Assembly showed a great reluctance to promote or even to permit. It is true that there was considerable foundation for their objections to the