

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 18

PETITION FOR A GENERAL ASSEMBLY.¹

To the King's most Excellent Majesty.

The humble Petition of Your Majesty's most dutiful and Loyal Subjects the British Freeholders, Merchants and Traders in the Province of Quebec in behalf of themselves and others.

Sheweth,

That induced by Your Majesty's paternal care for the security of the Liberties and Properties of your Subjects, and encouraged by Your Royal Proclamation of the Seventh of October in the third year of your Reign, "That you had been "graciously pleased to give direction to Your Governors of Your "Majesty's new Governments, that so soon as the state and circumstances thereof would admit, they should with the advice "of the members of Your Majesty's Council call General Assemblies within the said Governments respectively, in such manner "as is used in those Provinces in America under Your Majesty's "immediate government."²

Your Petitioners most humbly implore Your Majesty's gracious attention to their supplications, confiding as they do in your Royal goodness, that only to point out in general the present state and circumstances of this Province, is to obtain the Royal Mandate for calling a General Assembly within the same, which operating with Your Majesty's gracious intention for the good and welfare of your People, will strengthen the hands of Government, give encouragement and protection to Agriculture and Commerce, encrease the Publick Revenues, and we trust, will in time under Your Majesty's Royal influence be the happy means of uniting your new subjects in a due conformity and attachment to the British Laws and Constitution and rendering the conquest of this extensive and populous country truly glorious.

That as the great Source of the wealth and riches of a country principally consists in the numbers of its Inhabitants usefully employed, Your Petitioners cannot but lament that the great numbers of your Majesty's new Subjects in this Province for want of such publick encouragement as an Assembly only can properly give to improve its natural advantages, have hitherto proved rather a burthen than any benefit to themselves or advantage to the community; their extreme poverty and misery increasing with their numbers.

¹ Canadian Archives, Q 7, p. 359. The date of the petition is not given, but it would appear to be some time in 1770.

² See Proclamation of October 7, 1763, p. 163.