

different forms, and the interests which each individual complainant represents as in peril are too petty to attract the due attention of the empire. But if these important and extensive colonies should speak with one voice, if it were felt that every error of our colonial policy must cause a common suffering and a common discontent throughout the whole wide extent of British America, those complaints would never be provoked; because no authority would venture to run counter to the wishes of such a community, except on points absolutely involving the few imperial interests which it is necessary to remove from the jurisdiction of colonial legislation.

It is necessary that I should also recommend what appears to me an essential limitation on the present powers of the representative bodies in these colonies. I consider good government not to be attainable while the present unrestricted powers of voting public money and of managing the local expenditure of the community are lodged in the hands of an Assembly. As long as a revenue is raised which leaves a large surplus after the payment of the necessary expenses of the civil government, and as long as any member of the Assembly may, without restriction, propose a vote of public money, so long will the Assembly retain in its hands the powers which it everywhere abuses, of misapplying that money. The prerogative of the crown, which is constantly exercised in Great Britain for the real protection of the people, ought never to have been waved in the colonies; and if the rule of the Imperial Parliament, that no money vote should be proposed without the previous consent of the crown, were introduced into these colonies, it might be wisely employed in protecting the public interests, now frequently sacrificed in that scramble for local appropriations, which chiefly serves to give an undue influence to particular individuals and parties.

The establishment of a good system of municipal institutions throughout these provinces, is a matter of vital importance. A general legislature, which manages the private business of every parish, in addition to the common business of the country, wields a power which no single body, however popular in its constitution, ought to have—a power which must be destructive of any constitutional balance. The true principle of limiting popular power is that apportionment of it in many different depositaries, which has been adopted in all the most free and stable states of the Union. Instead of confiding the whole collection and distribution of all the revenues raised in any country for all general and local purposes to a single representative body, the power of local assessment, and the application of the funds arising from it, should be intrusted to local management. It is in vain to expect that this sacrifice of power will be voluntarily made by any representative body. The establishment of municipal institutions for the whole country should be made a part of every colonial constitution, and the prerogative of the crown should be constantly interposed to check any encroachment on the functions of the local bodies, until the people should become alive, as most assuredly they almost immediately would be, to the necessity of protecting their local privileges.

The establishment of a sound and general system for the management of the lands and the settlement of the colonies, is a necessary part of any good and durable system of government. In a report contained in the appendix to the present, the plan which I recommend for this purpose will be fully developed.

These general principles apply, however, only to those changes in the system of government, which are required in order to rectify disorders common to all the North American colonies; but they do not, in any degree, go to remove those evils in the present state of Lower Canada, which require the most immediate remedy. The fatal feud of origin, which is the cause of the most extensive mischief, would be aggravated at the present moment, by any change which should give the majority more power than they have hitherto possessed. A plan by which it is proposed to insure the tranquil government of Lower Canada, must include, in itself, the means of putting an end to the agitation of national disputes in the legislature, by settling, at once and for ever, the national character of the province. I entertain no doubts as to the national character which must be given to Lower Canada; it must be that of the British empire—that of the majority of the population of British America—that of the great race which must, in the lapse of no long period of time, be predominant over the whole North American continent. Without effecting the change so rapidly or so roughly as to shock the feelings and trample on the welfare of the existing generation, it must henceforth be the first and steady purpose of the British government to establish an English population, with English laws and language, in this province, and to trust its government to none but a decidedly English legislature.

It may be said, that this is a hard measure to a conquered people—that the French were originally the whole, and still are the bulk, of the population of Lower Canada—that the