

Your Committee are further of opinion, that means should be found of bringing into effective operation the Clause in the Tenures Act which provides for the mutation of tenure, and they entertain no doubt of the inexpediency of retaining the seigneurial rights of the Crown, in the hope of deriving a profit from them. The sacrifice on the part of the Crown would be trifling, and would bear no proportion to the benefit that would result to the Colony from such a concession.

In addition to these recommendations, it appears to be desirable that some competent jurisdiction should be established to try and decide causes arising out of this description of property, and that Circuit Courts should be instituted within the Townships for the same purpose.

The Committee cannot too strongly express their opinion, that the Canadians of French extraction should in no degree be disturbed in the peaceful enjoyment of their religion, laws and privileges, as secured to them by the British Acts of Parliament; and so far from requiring them to hold lands on the British Tenure, they think that when the lands in the Seigneuries are fully occupied, if the descendants of the original settlers shall still retain their preference to the tenure of *Fief et Seigneurie*, they see no objection to other portions of unoccupied lands in that Province being granted to them on that tenure, provided that such lands are apart from, and not intermixed with, the Townships.

Your Committee are now desirous of adverting to the Representative System of Lower Canada, with respect to which all parties seem to agree that some change should take place; to this branch of their enquiry they are desirous of recalling to the recollection of the House, that under the provisions of the Act of 1791, the division of the Province for the purpose of exercising the elective franchise, was entrusted to the Governor; and it appears that Sir Alured Clarke took the numerical amount of the population, as the sole basis on which his calculations were formed, and divided into counties as much land as was found to contain a given number of inhabitants; on the thickly-peopled banks of the Saint Lawrence a small district was found to suffice, while in the more distant parts vast territories were comprehended in one county, in order to obtain the required amount of population; thus it happens that the Counties of Kent, Surrey, Montreal, Leinster and Warwick, do not, altogether, equal in extent the single County of Buckinghamshire; the small Counties, too, are composed wholly of lands holden as Seigneuries. A Bill actually passed the Assembly, the object of which was to increase the number of the Representative Assembly. This Bill did not become a law; and it appears to have been founded upon the same principle, and to have involved the same error as the original arrangement by Sir Alured Clarke. It has been stated by one of the witnesses, that under the proposed division, a disproportionate increase would have been given to the Representatives from the Seigneuries.

In providing a representative system for the inhabitants of a country which is gradually comprehending within its limits newly peopled and extensive districts, great imperfections must necessarily arise from proceeding, in the first instance, on the basis of population only. In Upper Canada, a representative system has been founded on the compound basis of Territory and Population. This principle we think might be advantageously adopted in Lower Canada.

One of the obstacles which is said greatly to impede the improvement of the Country, is the practice of making grants of land in large masses to individuals who had held official situations in the colony, and who have evaded the conditions in the grant by which they were bound to provide for its cultivation, and now wholly neglect it. Although powers have been lately acquired by the Government to estreat these lands, and although we think that under certain modifications this power may be advantageously used, we are nevertheless of opinion that a system should be adopted similar to that in Upper Canada, by the levy of a small annual duty on lands remaining unimproved and unoccupied contrary to the conditions of the grant.