

United States than to those of the mother country. A few persons, chiefly of American origin, appear to have entertained these designs from the outset; but the number has at last been very much increased by the despair which many of those who started with more limited views conceived of their being carried into effect under the existing form of government.

Each party, while it possessed the ascendancy, has been accused by its opponents of having abused its power over the public funds in those modes of local jobbing which I have described as so common in the North American colonies. This, perhaps, is to be attributed partly to the circumstance adverted to above, as increasing the difficulty of obtaining any accurate information as to the real circumstances of the Province. From these causes it too often happened that the members of the House of Assembly came to the meeting of the Legislature ignorant of the real character of the general interests intrusted to their guardianship, intent only on promoting sectional objects, and anxious chiefly to secure for the county they happen to represent, or the district with which they are connected, as large a proportion as possible of any funds which the legislature may have at its disposal. In Upper Canada, however, the means of doing this were never so extensive as those possessed by the lower province; and the great works which the province commenced on a very extended scale, and executed in a spirit of great carelessness and profusion, have left so little surplus revenue, that this province alone, among the North American colonies, has fortunately for itself been compelled to establish a system of local assessments; and to leave local works, in a great measure, to the energy and means of the localities themselves. It is asserted, however, that the nature of those great works, and the manner in which they were carried on, evinced merely a regard for local interests, and a disposition to strengthen party influence.

The inhabitants of the less thickly-peopled districts complained that the revenues of the province were employed in works by which only the frontier population would benefit. The money absorbed by undertakings which they described as disproportioned to the resources and to the wants of the province, would, they alleged, have sufficed to establish practicable means of communication over the whole country; and they stated, apparently not without foundation, that had this latter course been pursued, the population and the resources of the province would have been so augmented as to make the works actually undertaken both useful and profitable. The carelessness and profusion which marked the execution of these works, the management of which, it was complained, was entrusted chiefly to members of the ruling party, were also assumed to be the result of a deliberate purpose, and to be permitted, if not encouraged, in order that a few individuals might be enriched at the expense of the community. Circumstances to which I shall hereafter revert, by which the further progress of these works has been checked, and the large expenses incurred in bringing them to their present state of forwardness, have been rendered unavailing, have given greater force to these complaints, and, in addition to the discontent produced by the objects of the expenditure, the governing party has been made responsible for a failure in the accomplishment of those objects, attributable to causes over which it had no control. But to whatever extent these practices may have been carried, the course of the parliamentary contest in Upper Canada has not been marked by that singular neglect of the great duties of a legislative body, which I have remarked in the proceedings of the Parliament of Lower Canada. The statute book of the upper province abounds with useful and well-constructed measures of reform, and presents an honourable contrast to that of the lower Province.

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