

Quebec; and in 1763, the whole province of Canada was ceded to this country. Till the year 1774, the colony was governed without a Constitution; in that year a very imperfect Constitution was given; consisting of a Legislative Council of twenty-three members, to be appointed by the Crown. But in 1791 a much freer Constitution was granted by Parliament; the proprietors of the soil were allowed to choose representatives, eighty-three in number, who were to form the House of Assembly (or Canadian House of Commons), and to act in a legislative capacity in conjunction with an Upper House, called the Legislative Council, originally composed of fifteen members, and now of nearly twice that number, nominated by the Crown. The Executive Government consisted of the Governor and an Executive Council, both appointed by the Crown—the Executive Council answering to our Privy Council. Such continues to be the form of government to the present time. The Catholic religion, being that of the inhabitants of French descent, is established in Canada by Act of Parliament.

Since the colony came under the British dominion, a considerable number of English, Scotch, and Irish have settled in Lower Canada, and a greater number in Upper Canada; but in the Lower province the French population still forms a great majority. Mr. McGregor, in his work on British North America, estimates the population of Lower Canada at 580,000 in 1832: it must now exceed 600,000; and of these 450,000 are French, and 150,000 British and Irish; the proportion of Catholics is about four-fifths of the whole population. On the same authority, the population of Upper Canada, is stated at 310,000 in 1832: it may now amount to 400,000, nearly the whole of whom are British and Irish.* Of the British inhabitants of Lower Canada, a considerable number live in the cities of Quebec and Montreal, and these are either connected with the government, or are merchants and tradesmen: the emigrants are scattered about the country.

A mere glance at the form of government in Canada will show an extraordinary anomaly. A high degree of constitutional liberty is given by the enjoyment of representation on a wide basis, with elections every four years: but one branch of the legislature and the whole of the executive are in the hands of the British minority, who have no sympathy with the bulk of the population, or with the House of Assembly. Nothing can be more natural than that the government, with a view to strengthen the British interest in the colony, should appoint nearly all the members of the Legislative and Executive Councils from among the British; and, alas! nothing can be more natural than that all the patronage of the colony should be distributed by the home and the colonial governments on a system of favouritism, and that this should lead to the most improper appointments, to much jobbing, and to the formation of a British faction, hating and hated by the French Canadians. The House of Assembly, on the other hand, is almost exclusively composed of the popular or French Canadian party. Thus the legislature is divided betwixt the majority and the minority of the population,—betwixt French and British,—betwixt Catholic and Protestant. One branch is half-popular, the other anti-popular; but the Executive is quite irresponsible, and exclusive in its character. Here are the most discordant materials of government put together. The natural consequence is dissension; and this has been realized to the largest extent. The system produces haughtiness, corruption, and indifference in the officials; and these excite the liveliest discontent in the members of the representative body, who have the utmost *liberty of discussion*, but *no power to do any thing* without the Council. When we add to the above causes the difference in race, in language, and in religion, and when we remember the close contiguity of the

* The population of all the British Provinces in North America is thus given by Mr. McGregor:—

Lower Canada.....	580,000
Upper Canada..	310,000
New Brunswick	110,000
Nova Scotia.....	196,000
Prince Edward's Island.....	34,000
Newfoundland and Labrador	76,000

Total1,307,000