

be an infallible method of maintaining its own dignity. At all events, it is, in my opinion, desirable that the number of freeholders and electors should be increased. The elective franchise ought not, upon any account, to be confined to a few persons. Whether it should be extended to those who are not freeholders, it is not necessary for us to consider. There might be well-founded objections against such an extension of it. Our constitutional act does not give us the power so to enlarge it, nor would this bill produce such an effect. But that it ought to be extended by multiplying the number of freeholders, and increasing them in proportion to the whole population, seems to me undeniable. In this respect, the bill would have a gradual, but salutary and favorable political effect.

The operation of this bill in another point of view is not unworthy the consideration of the committee.— We have a large provincial debt, and there is a fine prospect, I think, of its gradually, and, I am afraid, rapidly increasing. For this debt the land really is pledged. We may certainly, directly or indirectly, tax industry and labor and personal property, in order to liquidate it: but they may be removed, and if the burthen should be heavy, it is likely they will be removed to other countries. But the landowners cannot remove their property. By increasing their number, you increase the number of those who must pay the debt; and what is still more important, you increase the number of those who have a direct and special interest in preventing the accumulation of a debt. And, Sir, when I look at the history of our finances, and see how inconsiderately and imprudently our present debt has been contracted: and when I consider how many inducements the members of this House have, to grant money, when they can leave to their successor the odious task of providing ways and means to raise it: and how likely it is, that our debt will be greatly augmented, I confess I am in favour of every reasonable method of multiplying checks against its increase.