

children. This was intended to prevent the children from settling themselves in a supine and indolent manner upon their little portions of land, which were not sufficient to maintain them, and to oblige them to set about clearing new lands (of which they had a right to demand of the seigniors sufficient quantities at very easy quit-rents) by which means they would provide better for their own maintenance, and become more useful to the public. But now this law is intirely disregarded; and the children of the freeholders all over the province settle upon their little portions of their father's land, of thirty, or twenty, and sometimes only ten acres, and build little huts upon them, as if no such law had ever been known here: and when they are reminded of it by their seigniors, and exhorted to take and clear new tracts of land, they reply that they understand that by the English law every man may build a house upon his own land whenever he pleases, let the size of it be ever so small. This is an unfortunate practice, and contributes very much to the great increase of idleness, drunkenness, and beggary, which is too visible in this province.

Further, many persons who have purchased seignories in this province, and amongst them some Canadians, have hitherto declined paying to your Majesty's receiver-general the mutation-fine, or fifth part of the purchase money, due to your Majesty upon the admission of every new seignior by the custom of Paris. The English purchasers say that this, being part of the custom of Paris, is now abolished by the introduction of the laws of England; and the Canadian seigniors say that it is not due to your Majesty till they have been regularly invested with, or put in possession of, their seignories, with all the rights and jurisdictions thereunto belonging, by your Majesty's officers of government, and have been admitted to take the oath of fealty and perform the ceremony of homage to your Majesty for the said lands; which has not hitherto been done.

Thus it appears that in many respects the Canadians apprehend the laws of England to be in force in this province, and that they endeavour to apply them and put them in practice whenever they take them to be for their advantage; though in other points, and particularly in those of inheritance and dower, and the distribution of the effects of persons who die intestate, they have universally adhered to their former laws and usages.

Criminal
proceedings.

In criminal proceedings the Canadians as well as English universally suppose the laws of England to be in force. No others are ever mentioned or thought of; and the Canadians seem to be very well satisfied with them.