

and to obviate that inconvenience, the inhabitants of each county, whilst yet below the required number, were authorized to vote in the least populous adjoining county.

Thus, without being betrayed into a sacrifice of the substance of good government by a superficial attention to a merely nominal equality, the legislature of Upper Canada, in the year 1820, justified the confidence reposed in them by the constitution. They were too conversant with the real business of life to suppose that a great social system could be practically carried on without advancing a little beyond the most obvious and elementary maxims, or that the inevitable intricacy of the public affairs of the province could be met without some degree of complexity in its political institutions. They, therefore, embraced in their law provisions for the protection of all classes, however obscure and remote from the notice of the local government, for the control of that undue influence which mere wealth and density of population would otherwise have exercised, and for the gradual enlargement of the representative body as the constituency should itself increase.

I cannot suppose that a gentleman who has taken so active a part in the affairs of the province as has fallen to the share of Mr. M'Kenzie, should have been really unapprised of considerations so familiar to every man acquainted with the subject as those to which I have adverted, though, as a controversial writer, he may perhaps have not consulted ill for the momentary success of his argument, in suppressing all allusion to them.

I proceed to the next objection which Mr. M'Kenzie has made to the Act of 1820, which in his own language is, that it created a "borough interest." In less invidious terms, the fact appears to be, that it gave one member to every town in which the quarter sessions of the district might be holden, and which contained at least 1,000 inhabitants. Those towns were, therefore, placed in precisely the same predicament as the counties of the province. Now if Mr. M'Kenzie's principle, that wealth is the proper criterion, be just, this civic representation was wisely established; for it can scarcely be denied, that 1,000 persons inhabiting the same town will generally be the proprietors of a larger collective capital than a rural population of the same extent. If the principle of numbers be correctly assumed by Mr. M'Kenzie, then also it follows that the towns were rightly enfranchised, since it is in the towns that the most rapid enlargement of population usually takes place; and since, if members had been refused to them on the ground of paucity of numbers, a similar refusal must have been extended to all the newly-settled counties. But I greatly understate the argument. A town possessing 1,000 inhabitants will yield a much larger number of actual voters than a county equally populous, supposing the qualification to be in either case of equal amount. In the one case the franchise is exercised with the greatest facility, and in the other at an expense of time and labour, which comparatively few will incur. Nor can I forget, that in every part of the world, a civic population is more intelligent and more disposed to watch over public interests, than a rural population of equal numbers; because the first enjoy the constant advantage of mutual intercourse and co-operation in public affairs, of which the latter are in a great measure destitute.

It is not at all surprising that so enlightened a people as are the great body of the inhabitants of Upper Canada should have expressed, in very strong terms, their dissent from the views which Mr. M'Kenzie thus advocates; or that a people so conspicuous for their zeal for civil liberty should be so decidedly opposed, as by their petitions they appear to be, to plans which would sacrifice its substance to a very superficial theory.

It is further objected, that the law of 1820 placed the projected university in the list of constituent bodies; and, from the terms of the charter subsequently issued, it is inferred that the university was to become what is termed "a nomination borough under the especial patronage of Church and State." I should scarcely have anticipated that any man, and least of all a man devoted to literary pursuits, would have denied the propriety of giving a representative to the principal seat of learning in the province. It would be superfluous to expatiate on the importance of institutions for the education of youth in literature, science and religion, especially in a newly-settled country; and I am well assured that neither in the Council or Assembly could a single gentleman be found who would not gladly receive as a colleague, a person representing the collective body of literary and scientific men in Upper Canada, or who would not gladly support, by that distinguished honour, the cause of sound learning. You will observe that I do not here

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