

that to you, whether I was a member on the floor, or an auditor in the gallery? I was in that house, and I did hear that debate. But,

"Awake, St. John, and leave all meaner things,  
To low ambition, and the pride of kings."

In this province, devoted not only to be the victim of erroneous information given to the supreme government of Britain, but likewise to be the resort of the most uncultivated, the rudest, the poorest, and the least instructed, part of her exuberant

is like the French, built upon the Roman law and follows, even more servilely, the civil jurisprudence of Justinian; and as to the English, they come with a knowledge, (at least they ought to do so,) that such are the prevailing laws here, and, in becoming inhabitants of Lower Canada, they have voluntarily subjected themselves to them; so that, if it be a hardship, it is a hardship of their own choice. But I have strong doubts whether it is not a very erroneous construction of the Québec act, to extend the operation of the French civil laws beyond the boundaries of the seignories; for I can not but, looking at the preamble of that act, explain the VIIIth section, where it is enacted "that all His Majesty's Canadian subjects, within the province of Quebec, the religious orders and communities only excepted, may also hold and enjoy their property and possessions, together with all customs and usages relative thereto, and all other their civil rights, in as large, ample, and beneficial manner as if the said proclamations, &c. had not been made, and as may consist with their allegiance to His Majesty, and subjection to the crown and parliament of Great Britain, and that in all matters of controversy, relative to property and civil rights, resort shall be had to the laws of Canada, as the rule for the decision of the same; and all causes that shall hereafter be instituted in any of the courts of justice to be appointed within and for the said province, shall with respect to such property and rights, be determined agreeably to the said laws and customs of Canada," to apply alone to the inhabitants of the seignories, and the property and rights of those inhabitants; and by no means as extending to new British settlers upon the waste lands of the crown, since erected into townships; particularly when the section immediately following, (IXth) declares, that "Nothing in this act contained shall extend or be construed to extend to any lands that have been granted or shall be hereafter granted, to be holden in free and common socage." In this opinion I do not stand alone: *inter alia* I can refer to that of an eminent luminary of the law, and one personally and deeply versed in the early politics of Canada, Francis, Baron Mascars, formerly attorney-general at Quebec, and now