

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 18

PLAN FOR A HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.<sup>1</sup>

We conceive that the House of Assembly ought for the present, to consist of a Number not exceeding 70 Representatives, who ought all to profess the Christian Religion, And Speak and write the English or french languages.

When this plan was made out in fall 1784, the loyalists had not begun their new Settlements. As these new Settlements have been divided, and erected into five new districts,<sup>2</sup> it may be proper that each district send a certain number of Representatives, And that the two districts of Quebec and Montreal, containing the old settled part of the Country, be divided into a certain number of districts (for the purpose of electing Representatives only,) to choose Members for the house of Assembly.

That, to procure that Number, the City of Quebec (being the Capital) and Parish, and the City of Montreal and Parish, between them, elect 13. Members. The City of three Rivers 2. Members. And as there are in the province 120 parishes, that they be divided into Counties and districts according to the Number of Inhabitants, in such manner as each County or district may elect two or four Members.

That the Legislature have the power, on application to them, to erect such parishes as may in future be settled, into Counties or districts, to elect & Send Members to the Assembly, as the province increases in population.

That the qualification necessary to have a Vote at the Election of the representatives for the Cities shall be, a House, Shed or lot of Ground of the Value of forty Pounds Sterling ; And, for the Counties or districts, a real Estate, Estate of Inheritance or *Terre en roture*, of at least, one and a half Acres in front by 20 Acres in Depth, or other Estate of higher denomination, And of which the Voter shall have the absolute property; lying within the district or County, or City and parish he votes for.

That the qualification necessary for a person offering himself to serve as a representative shall be a real Estate of Inheritance or descent in Lands or Houses of the Value of thirty Pounds Sterling yearly Rent.—

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Archives, Q 42, p. 127. In his letter of July 24th, 1789, to the Hon. W. W. Grenville, Adam Lymburner, who was then in London as the agent of the subscribers to the petition of Nov. 24th, 1784, states.—“The Committee of Quebec and Montreal in the autumn 1784 apprehending there might be some difficulty about those matters in this Country—drew up a short sketch of a plan for a House of Assembly of which I have the Honour of inclosing a Copy.” Q 43, 2, p. 777. The plan, however, does not accompany the letter but is found in vol. Q 42, as indicated. Concerning the committees mentioned we find the following in Smith's History. “To prevent, in some measure, the pernicious effects of false reports on the objects of Reform, and for the information of the public in general, committees were named and appointed to carry forward and support the petitions, and they were printed and distributed in the French language, all over the Province. History of Canada, &c., p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> This marginal note was evidently added by Lymburner. The new Districts referred to were created by the Patent of July 24th, 1788, establishing and defining the Districts of Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nassau and Hesse. See Q 39, p. 122.