

British institutions, he was, no doubt, freely consulted about the form of government to be given to them.

Report of Committee to Commons House of Assembly.

The following extract from Lord Rawdon's observations in the House of Lords, in the discussion on the passage of the 31st of the King, will give an idea of the estimation in which Governor Simcoe was held.

His Lordship said, "that the gentleman whom he had heard was to be honoured with the appointment of Governor, was one of all others the fittest and most to be wished for by the country; his intelligent mind, his generous and liberal manners, his active spirit, and peculiar abilities for that situation, rendered him, in an eminent degree, the properest person that Ministers could have selected for that appointment; and certain he was, that the choice would redound to their honour and credit.

"If Canada was to be governed under the present Bill, it would be well for this country, and well for Canada, that Colonel Simcoe was the Governor."

When the British Nation conceded to the United States the right of forming a free government for themselves, after their own choice, it is scarcely credible that they intended to confer a constitution less acceptable upon the loyalists, who had fought, bled, and sacrificed their property and homes in defence of the unity of the Empire; and it does seem humiliating to your Committee, after the lapse of half a century, to find a new Lieutenant-Governor drawing so unfavourable a contrast between our local institutions and those from which they were borrowed, as to subject us to his arbitrary government, by superseding the functions of that important branch of the Constitution, called the Executive Council.

The Government of this province was, in fact, the subject of one of the most interesting and memorable debates ever witnessed in the British Parliament; and while Mr. Fox urged the extension of the elective principle in the new constitution farther than it existed in the British Constitution, no one proposed that the form of government should be less popular or less free. Governor Simcoe heard the debates on the subject, and, in fact, took part in them; he was the bearer of the Act to this country; was the first Lieutenant-Governor of the province; and was well qualified, and appears to have been authorized by His Majesty's Government to explain to the people the new constitution which was established for their benefit. This enlightened British statesman and legislator, who certainly knew what the principles of the British Constitution were, on the very opening of the first Session of the first Provincial Parliament, addressed the Legislature from the Throne, and in The King's name, in the following terms:—

"I have summoned you together under the authority of an Act of the Parliament of Great Britain, passed last year, *which has established the British Constitution, and all the forms which secure and maintain it in this distant country.*

"The wisdom and beneficence of our most gracious Sovereign and the British Parliament have been eminently proved, not only in imparting to us the *same form of government*, but also in securing the benefit, by the many provisions that guard this memorable act; so that the blessings of our invaluable constitution, thus protected and amplified, we may hope will be extended to the remotest posterity.

"The great and momentous trusts and duties which have been committed to the representatives of this province, in a degree infinitely beyond whatever till this period have distinguished any other colony, have originated from the British Nation upon a just consideration of the energy and hazard with which its inhabitants have so conspicuously supported and defended *the British Constitution.*"

Still more striking was the following language used by him, as the King's representative, from the throne, in the speech with which he closed that Session:

"At this juncture I particularly recommend to you to explain, *that this province is singularly blest, not with a mutilated constitution, but with a constitution which has stood the test of experience, and is the very image and transcript of that of Great Britain.*"

Such were the emphatic words of this great and good man. Were they, after all, a mere delusion? An empty-sounding, unmeaning mockery? So they are now regarded by his Excellency, who, in an answer to an Address from the inhabitants of the city of Toronto, declares that it would be *unreasonable* to expect that the people of this province should be *ruined* in vainly attempting to be the "exact image and transcript of the British Constitution," and that "the constitution which His Britannic Majesty George the Third granted to this province, ordained no such *absurdities.*" That this is strong language the Committee admit; but it is language they have read with pain. The "*absurdities*" in which his Excellency's doctrines have involved him, must be apparent to every one, from this "vain attempt" to depreciate the authority and tarnish the memory of Simcoe, the first and ablest of our Governors, by holding him out, either as being unable, from want of knowledge or discernment, to judge whether our constitution was "an exact image and transcript of that of Great Britain," or as being an artful and unprincipled deceiver, attempting in the name of the King to palm off on a *confiding* and *deserving* people a "*mutilated constitution,*" by a mere high-sounding flourish of words. In despite, however, of his Excellency's sneers, this testimony of Governor Simcoe stands recorded on the journals of your Honourable House, a solemn assurance in the name of the King, that his subjects in this province shall have all the blessings of the *British Constitution*, secured and "*amplified*" to them and their children; a pledge that we trust will yet be made good to them, to the disappointment of any Lieutenant-Governor who may *deride* their expectations, and oppose their wishes and constitutional rights.