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QUÉBEC, SATURDAY, 8th. JANUARY, 1809.

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DEBATES ON THE QUEBEC BILL.

[It is intended that this paper should contain all the debates in Parliament relative to this Country; and it has been thought proper, to begin with the Debates on the Quebec Bill of 1774. These debates, we believe, never have been published here; and they contain, more of authentic information, concerning the Political State of the Country, during the first fourteen years after the Conquest, than is to be had from any other source. We shall continue to make such extracts from them, and from the subsequent debates of the nature mentioned, as may be found convenient; without omitting any matter more immediately important.]

House of Commons.

May 26. This day came on the first reading of the Bill to establish a Government in the Province of Quebec; sent from the Lords.

Right Hon. T. Townshend—As it may seem a little extraordinary, that I, who for so many sessions have been calling on the Ministers to give a Government to Canada, and reproaching them with its not being done sooner, should now, that a Bill is brought in for doing it, be the first to oppose it: as this, Sir, may seem more inconsistent than it is, I think it necessary to explain the reasons for this apparent contradiction. When I called for a government of Canada, little did I think I was calling for a despotism for Canada; little did I think that I was calling for an immense country, not belonging to Canada, being included under this despotism; little did I think I was calling for a numerous people being deprived for ever of all those blessings of freedom which were held out to them, and promised them. Sir, I shall not enter into particulars, without apologizing for doing it in this stage of the Bill; but really, I think it so replete, that I cannot vote even for reading it at all.

The Bill establishes a despotick Government in that country, to which the Royal Proclamation of 1763 promised the protection of the laws of England. I call it despotick; for so it is, as the Council of 17 or 23 is, with the Governor, the legislative authority of the province. This Council the Governor can appoint, suspend, and turn out at his pleasure: there is no quorum appointed—for what purpose omitted, no one can tell. Now, Sir, this is rendering the Governor securely absolute: you had much better have made him literally so, and then he would not have had a Council to screen him: he is responsible in England, if he acts tyrannically; but by means of this convenient Legislative Council, he can do any thing with impunity.

Well, Sir, not content with constituting this Legislative Council, the mere creature of a Governor, who must necessarily be the creature of a Minister, you go farther, and throw under this absolute power a country never considered as Canada, and peopled by British subjects alone; for you extend the government to the Mississippi on the West, to the Ohio on the South, to Hudson's-Bay on the North, and on the East to God knows where; for no mortal can tell from the Bill where the Eastern boundaries are, so exceedingly indefinite and unintelligible is the Bill. I should be glad to know for what purpose the colony is thus amazingly extended.

In the next place, Sir, the internal arrangement of the colony consists in leaving the inhabitants the civil law of France, you take away the trial by jury, in civil matters, and you cut off