

can be no doubt that it is the intention of the French-Canadians to take entire possession of the Province of Quebec, and to drive the English out of the province. There can be quite as little doubt that in pursuance of this object, and in order to further their own peculiar ends, they have repeatedly so used their legislative power as to discriminate against the English minority, and to trample on and set at naught the rights of the latter. A few instances will suffice to make this clear :

Under the municipal law of the Province of Quebec, no territory forming part of what is called a township municipality can be separated from the municipality of which it forms part, in order to be erected into a separate municipality, except on petition of two-thirds of the municipal electors of the territory which it is sought to separate, and of half of the electors of the remainder of the municipality. This is obviously a just and salutary provision of law. A few years ago (I think in 1884), it was sought to divide up a township municipality in the county of Shefford ; the ratepayers of this municipality were for the most part English. The French ratepayers in the territory which it was proposed to set aside, though somewhat less in number than the English ratepayers dwelling in the same territory, were proportionately far more numerous than in other parts of the township. There was no good reason why the new municipality should have been created—the change was unnecessary, and it was opposed by a majority both of the ratepayers of the township and of the ratepayers of the proposed new municipality. But it had this to recommend it, that it would increase the influence of the French ratepayers in the municipal affairs of the county, and correspondingly diminish that of the English ratepayers.

As there was a majority against it, the change could not be made *under the law*. Accordingly recourse was had to special legislation. A bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly, and despite the indignant protests of the English Members in the House, of the English ratepayers of the townships in question, and of the English-speaking people of the province it in due time became law, and the new municipality was duly created.

This shows that the French in Quebec, when prevented by the law of the land from obtaining an unjust advantage over the English citizens of the province, are not above resorting to special legislation to secure such advantage. Further commentary is needless.

Another example of an equally startling kind will suffice by way of illustration. I refer to what is commonly known in this province as the "Ste. Barbe case."

At the time of the Conquest, part of the land in the present Province of Quebec had been already granted by the French Crown, while a considerable portion was still ungranted. The former class of lands were held under what was called the seigniorial tenure. The Crown lands, however, when granted after the Conquest, were held under what is known as free and common socage. These lands were commonly known as township lands, and were mainly situated in the present Eastern Townships, and in the counties of Huntingdon, Chateauguay, etc. The seigniorial lands were then and are still subject to the French system of municipal law, under which the Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese, with the consent of the Executive, has the power of setting apart certain territories, under the name of parishes, not only for ecclesiastical but also for municipal purposes. These parishes thus set apart are regular municipal corporations. Whether the township lands are subject to this French municipal system is a matter which I shall not attempt to discuss as a question of law. As a matter of fact, however, there can be no doubt that it was universally believed, and that the belief was acted upon, that these lands were not subject to the peculiar parish system. It was believed that municipal corporations in the townships could be created in one of two ways only : (1) by the county council in the manner prescribed by law, and (2) by Act of the Legislature ; and such until very lately has been the practice. This belief and practice were the more natural because the townships were originally peopled by English settlers, it being reasonable to suppose that those men should live under a municipal system to which they had been accustomed, and which suited their requirements, instead of under a system peculiar to people of a different race.

About seventy years ago a number of Old Country immigrants settled in what is now the township of Godmanchester, in the county of Huntingdon. They were assigned land, which in course of time they brought into a good state of cultivation. At that time all or nearly all of the inhabitants of the county were of English descent or spoke the English language. There were no French, or none to speak of. By degrees, however, French came in, in considerable numbers, and bought (generally on credit) swamp lands of little value which the English settlers did not think it worth their while even to cultivate. These men were of far less intelligence and social standing than the English settlers ; their lands were far less valuable, and altogether they were no great acquisition to the county. Up to 1855, the local municipalities in the county of Huntingdon were township municipalities, and were so-called. In 1855 certain territory was separated from the township of Godmanchester, and erected into a municipality under the name of the parish of St. Anicet. This new municipality, though called a parish, was not of the nature of the parish municipalities in the French Roman Catholic parts of the Province. In every-thing but name it was an ordinary township municipality. In 1882 the Roman Catholic Bishop of Montreal was asked to erect a part of this so-called parish of St. Anicet into a regular parish municipality. He complied with the request ; his action was approved by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, and an Order-in-Council was passed by which this

territory was declared to have become a parish municipality under the name of Ste. Barbe.

These proceedings, assuming, as they did, the right of the Roman Catholic hierarchy to intermeddle in the municipal government of the township lands, caused the English inhabitants of the county no little alarm and indignation, and both the county council and the English ratepayers in the territory concerned refused to recognise the pretended municipality. Matters went on in this way for several years till, in the session of 1886, application was made to the Provincial Legislature for a special bill to erect Ste. Barbe into a parish municipality. The application was opposed, and, after a great deal of dispute, a bill was passed in which the proclamation of 1882 was referred to, some errors contained in the proclamation corrected, and Ste. Barbe was recognised as a civil and ecclesiastical parish. Nothing was said as to the granting of municipal powers, unless the word "*civil*," contained in the Act, is to be taken as a broader term, including within its meaning the narrower term "*municipal*." The question then arose as to whether the Act referred to had created a canonical parish, the creation of which merely affected the Roman Catholic inhabitants of the parish, and even them for religious and school purposes only, or whether it created a parish municipality. The majority of the ratepayers of the alleged municipality had already elected a municipal council. This council attempted to obtain recognition from the county council, and also seized the goods of certain English ratepayers who had refused to pay their taxes. The county council again refused to recognise the new municipality, and again declined to allow the *soi-disant* mayor to take his seat as a county councillor. A writ of *mandamus* was then applied for to compel the county council to recognise the mayor of Ste. Barbe. In September the judge of the district rendered judgment, holding that Ste. Barbe was a duly constituted parish municipality, and ordering the county council to allow the mayor of the parish to take his seat.

If this judgment is not reversed its effects will be most disastrous. It virtually maintains that the Roman Catholic bishops in all parts of the province have the right to create municipal corporations, or, in other words, that the municipal system of the province is under the control, not of the State, but of the Roman Catholic Church. Such a state of things is bad enough in those parts of the province which are almost exclusively Roman Catholic ; but that it should exist in those counties where the English are in the majority, where they were originally the only settlers, where a form of municipal government suited to their ideas and requirements has existed almost from time immemorial ; in short, that the English inhabitants of the province, in their municipal affairs, should be subject to the clergy of a church of which comparatively few of them are members, is really shocking. That such things could exist under the British flag, and in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, seems well nigh incredible.

To multiply instances would be useless. The two adduced satisfactorily show that the political and religious rights of the minority in the Province of Quebec are in danger. To protect those rights they have need of all the weapons at their command, and they are at least entitled to every protection which the political constitution of their country now affords them. The power of Disallowance is a power which may at any time be used for their protection. It imposes a certain restraint upon the majority in the Provincial Legislature, and tends to check their abuse of the power which circumstances and the Constitution have given them. The safeguards provided for the English minority are, as it is, slight and insufficient. If Disallowance is abolished, these safeguards, slight as they are will be still further weakened. The day when the Province of Quebec will be exclusively French, and when the Roman Catholic Church will rule the province supreme and uncontrolled, will be greatly hastened.

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D. C. R.

LONDON LETTER.

To the clang of wedding bells, and the yells of the unemployed assembled on the Embankment, I went to the Savoy Church the other day in order to assist at the marriage of one of Sir William Hardman's daughters. It is the oddest, ugliest of gray buildings, with a queer stunted open tower, and walls (round which the ground has risen to a height of six or seven feet) which look as if they never had been young, and over which the masons and their foremen gossiped of Henry VIII. and his matrimonial troubles as they put the finishing touches. Unusual as it is for a sacred edifice to have a wicked and disreputable appearance, yet this little skulking building, built in among the Great Strand houses, manages, I can't tell you how, to impress one most unfavourably as to its moral character. Melancholy graves, with undecipherable inscriptions, line the weedy footpath leading to the low-browed door. Melancholy graves, on which lie, scattered thinly, the last yellow and brown leaves from the tall swaying plane-trees, and in which lie (surely ?) swash-bucklers from Alsatia yonder, bullying, cowardly rascals, lonely students from the Temple near by, Lincoln's Inn Scrooges, or miserable discontented spinsters who yawned and scolded their lives away in the decayed streets about Clare Market. Irving, with his fine fifteenth-century face, passed in just in front of me, glancing on this side and that at the dingy prospect ; perhaps he was looking for the last resting-