

No. 4.
Sir John Colborne
to the Marquess of
Normanby,
19 August 1839.

In the Lower Province, I have already stated that the population of British origin earnestly desire the Union, and that the Canadian French population are not so averse to the measure as they formerly were.

Her Majesty's Government will naturally expect to receive from me at this crisis such suggestions, with reference to the proposed Bill for uniting the Provinces, transmitted to me with your Lordship's despatch of the 5th ultimo, No, 55, as I may be competent to offer from my long residence in Canada.

Some of the clauses of the Bill I imagine have been framed chiefly with a view of propitiating the parties in the colony who may not be attached to our institutions; but while this insufficient sacrifice is made to their political principles, a formidable obstacle must be encountered from the determination of a large and influential portion of the population of the Provinces to adhere closely to the constitution of 1791.

The discussion in Canada, of the clauses to which I advert, cannot fail to impede the progress of the Bill, and increase opposition to it at home, and consequently expose the tranquillity of the colony to great hazard. I should recommend, therefore, that all details which may probably create any decided contest of opinion among the parties known to be violently opposed to each other, should be withdrawn from the Bill, and that the clauses embodied in it should have reference only to such arrangements as will allow the Union to go safely into operation, and that any proposed innovation in the constitution should be left to the consideration and deliberation of the future united provincial legislature.

In the amended bill, which I should suggest for the consideration of the Imperial Parliament, it would be enacted:—

1st. That the Governor-general or Viceroy shall be empowered to declare by proclamation, with the sanction of Her Majesty's Government, that the two provinces of Upper and Lower Canada shall form one united province of Canada, at any time it may be deemed expedient to give effect to the Act, either before or after the year 1842.

2dly, That each county and riding of Upper Canada shall elect one member to sit in the United House of Assembly.

3dly, That the city of Toronto, and the town of Kingston, shall each elect one member.

4thly, That each county of Lower Canada shall elect one member to sit in the House of Assembly of the United Provinces.

5thly, That the cities of Quebec and Montreal shall elect each one member.

6thly, That each of the counties of Middlesex, Durham, Northumberland, Prince Edward, Frontenac, and Leeds in Upper Canada, shall be divided into two ridings, with the right of each riding to elect a member.

7thly, That the townships of Godmanchester, Hinchinbrooke, Hemmingford, Sherrington, and La Colle, in Lower Canada, be constituted a county with the right to elect a member; and also that the townships of Arundel, Harrington, Grenville, Chatham, Wentworth, and Howard on the Ottawa, be constituted a county, with the right of electing a member.

Thus, with these few alterations, Upper Canada would be represented by 42 members, and the Lower Province by 42; 80 of whom would be elected by counties and ridings, and four by cities and towns.

About one-fourth of the members of the Lower Province would be elected by a population of British origin; a fair proportion, admitting that the extent of the population of French origin is about 520,000, and that of British origin about 180,000.

The population of British origin of the two provinces, amounting probably to 680,000, would be represented by 52 members.

There are at present in Upper Canada 33 counties and ridings, the additional ridings proposed to be formed will increase the number to 40.

There are at present 40 counties in Lower Canada, seven of which contain a population of British origin.

For the two counties, Gaspé and Bonaventure, proposed to be attached to New Brunswick, two additional counties are substituted, containing a British population.

No party could justly complain of this arrangement, and if adopted, it would enable the governor or viceroy to direct the bill to go into immediate