

as to its being desirable to conclude an arrangement on the terms offered by the seminary; and it is only as to the means by which the arrangement can be carried into execution that there is any essential disagreement. The other Commissioners think it not only desirable that the adjustment should be effected under the authority of the Local Legislature, but that it would be wrong to seek the settlement of it by other means, until such an attempt has been made and shall have failed. Sir Charles, I believe, thinks, not only that there is no chance of its being effected by bringing the matter before the Assembly, but that new obstacles to an adjustment will be created by appealing to that body.

S. CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PROVINCE.

The Commissioners have not, in any of their Reports, recommended a change in the fundamental principles of the constitution, though in the 32d paragraph of their Report on the Legislative Council, a doubt is expressed, whether a suspension of the Constitutional Act might not be judged less objectionable than the specific measure recommended by them; the meaning of which is (at least the meaning in which I understood it when I subscribed to it), that it may be doubtful whether, on general political grounds, it is not better to suspend for a time, either in whole or in part, the Constitutional Act of 1791, upon the broad ground that the dissensions arising out of antipathies between Canadians of French and those of British origin, have rendered the working of the constitution impossible, than to break in, even in appearance, upon a principle which, since the declaratory Act of 1778, has been constantly looked on as a leading rule in the policy of England towards her colonies, the rule, that is to say, of leaving them to dispose as they please of their own money.

Upon this point I must confess I have still some doubt, and also some apprehension, as to the result of a measure that should repeal or suspend the 1st & 2d Will. 4, c. 23, though less certainly than I had in the month of March last, when I hazarded some speculations in the 6th, 7th and 8th paragraphs of a Minute appended to our Second Report, upon the way in which any legislative Act that should resume the proceeds of the 14 Geo. 3, c. 88, might be received in the province. Many circumstances have occurred to make me look with less apprehension upon the consequences of a repeal of the 1st & 2d Will. 4, c. 23, now than I did in last March; the progress that has been made in gaining the good will of all but the extreme party in the Assembly, is of course one of these, and I should not now be afraid to resort to a strong measure, provided only it could be passed through Parliament in a decided manner.

The project, however, brought forward by Sir Charles Grey for an alteration in the constitution, is quite of a different nature; and though it has often been spoken of by the Commissioners amongst themselves, is one on which they have not ascertained the opinions of any leading party, or even of any leading individuals in the province.

The measure recommended by Sir Charles would have the effect of breaking up the province of Lower Canada into five or more districts or divisions, each of which should have a qualified jurisdiction, or

some inferior legislative powers of its own, whilst a general legislature would regulate the affairs that were common to all, so that the whole province would form a sort of federal union, and bear a resemblance, in miniature, to the neighbouring States of North America. Of these five subordinate districts or states, the population of two, viz. Sherbrooke and Hull, would be almost entirely of British origin; the former might contain about 50,000 inhabitants, but the latter not more than from 12 to 15,000. Three Rivers would be almost entirely French Canadian, with any amount of population that might be thought proper to give to it as by giving to it more or less territory, the population might be made anything not less than 50,000 or more than 130,000.

In the municipalities of Quebec and Montreal, the French Canadian interest would also prevail, however small might be the extent of territory annexed to each city, and the superiority of this interest would be more or less permanently secured, in proportion to the extent of territory over which the municipality was made to extend.

Whether it may not be prudent ultimately to make some arrangement of this sort, is quite a different question from that of its immediate adoption. Like the project for the re-union of Upper and Lower Canada, it is, I think, a measure that never ought to be resorted to without its being first demanded by a considerable proportion of the people. It is therefore one that requires time and discussion; and whatever may be, its merits, and particularly as laying the foundation for a more extended federal union of all British America, it is evidently not of a nature to meet the immediate emergency which we have to provide for.

Of other projects for a different territorial arrangement, it would also be premature for me to speak on this occasion; but whilst upon the subject I may perhaps be permitted to observe, that the idea of annexing the island of Montreal to Upper Canada for the sake of giving it a sea-port, would seem to me an act of very questionable justice. Montreal is the shipping port of a district of Lower Canada, which contains a population not much (if at all) inferior to the whole population of Upper Canada; and though the banks of the St. Lawrence might offer many favourable situations for the foundation of a new commercial city (as, for instance, the point where the Richelieu falls into it), it would appear to me a strange sort of justification for taking away the present town from the people of Lower Canada, to plead that they have the power of building another. A fairer sort of arrangement might be, I think, to declare Montreal an absolutely free-trading port, making it contribute to the general revenue, in some other shape, an equivalent for the loss that would be sustained by the remission of import duties on all articles consumed within it; or if this could not be done for the whole city or island, to do it for a portion of it that should be well divided from the rest.

In the concluding part of Sir Charles Grey's paper, he intimated an intention of furnishing some further observations on the subjects that he then left untouched, such, for instance, as commutation of tenure, the establishment of registry offices, the ap-