

taking its advice on most of the important questions of his policy. But as there is no division into departments in the council, there is no individual responsibility, and no individual superintendence. Each member of the Council takes an equal part in all the business brought before it. The power of removing members being very rarely exercised, the Council is, in fact, for the most part composed of persons placed in it long ago; and the Governor is obliged either to take the advice of persons in whom he has no confidence, or to consult only a portion of the Council. The secrecy of the proceedings adds to the irresponsibility of the body; and when the Governor takes an important step, it is not known, or not authentically known, whether he has taken the advice of this Council or not, what members he has consulted, or by the advice of which of the body he has been finally guided. The responsibility of the Executive Council has been constantly demanded by the reformers of Upper Canada, and occasionally by those of the Lower Province. But it is really difficult to conceive how a desirable responsibility could be attained, except by altering the working of this cumbersome machine, and placing the business of the various departments of Government in the hands of competent public officers.

Civil Secretary's office.

In the ordinary course of public business in the Colony, almost all matters come, in fact, before the Governor, or his immediate assistant, the Civil Secretary of the Province. The Civil Secretary's office is, in fact, the one general public office in which almost every species of business originates, or through which it passes in some stage or other. The applications which every day reach this office show the singular want of proper organization in the Province, and the great confusion of ideas respecting the functions of Government, generated in the minds of the people. A very considerable proportion consist of requests to the Governor to interfere with the course of civil justice. Every decision of subordinate officers is made matter of appeal; and no reference to the proper department satisfies the applicants, who imagine that they have a right to claim a personal investigation of every case by the Governor or the Civil Secretary. The appeals from the past are equally numerous; and it appears to be expected that every new Governor should sit in judgment on every decision of any or all of his predecessors, which happens to have dissatisfied the applicant.

No regular administration in the rural districts.

But if such is the bad organization and imperfection of the system at the seat of Government, it may be easily believed that the remainder of the Province enjoyed no very vigorous or complete administration. In fact, beyond the walls of Quebec, all regular administration of the country appeared to cease; and there literally was hardly a single public officer of the civil government, except in Montreal and Three Rivers, to whom any order could be directed. The Solicitor General commonly resides at Montreal; and in each of the districts there is a Sheriff. In the rest of the Province there is no Sheriff, no Mayor, no constable, no superior administrative officer of any kind. There are no county, no municipal, no parochial officers, either named by the Crown, or elected by the people. There is a body of unpaid Justices of the Peace, whom I will describe more particularly hereafter. The officers of the militia used to be employed for purposes of police, as far as regarded the service of criminal warrants; but their services were voluntary, and not very assiduous; and the whole body is now completely disorganized. In every case in which any information was required by the Government, or any service was to be performed in a remote part of the Province, it was necessary either to send some one to the spot, or to find out, by inquiry at the seat of Government, the name of some resident there whom it was advisable and safe to consult on the subject, or direct to do the act required. In the state of parties in the country, such a step could hardly ever be taken, without trusting to very suspicious information, or delegating power to persons who would be, or be suspected of being, likely to abuse it.

French population incapable of aiding central authority.

This utter want of any machinery of executive government in the Province is not, perhaps, more striking than might be observed in some of the most flourishing portions of the American continent. But in the greater part of the States to which I refer, the want of means at the disposal of the central executive is amply supplied by the efficiency of the municipal institutions; and even where these are wanting, or imperfect, the energy and self-governing habits of an Anglo-Saxon population enable it to combine whenever a necessity arises. But the French population of Lower Canada possesses neither such institutions, nor such a character. Accustomed to rely entirely on the Government, it has no power of doing any thing for itself, much less of aiding the central authority.

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