

mend to them the free choice of a constitution for themselves. On what then was the House to found its competence? There was another code, on which men of all ages had acted, viz. the law of nations; and on this code he thought the competence of the House must rest. This country had acquired the power of legislating for Canada by right of conquest; and in virtue of that right, all the rights and duties of the old government had devolved on us. In the second place, came the right by the cession of the old government; and in the third, the right of conquest, which we had held for about thirty years. As we were, according to the law of nations, enabled to do so, to legislate for the people of Canada, bound us to afford them an equitable government, and them to allegiance. Setting aside, then, the doctrine of the rights of mankind which was never preached any where without mischief, the House was bound to give to the people of Canada the best government that their local situation, and their connexion with this country, would admit. How was this to be done? He could not refer to the experience of old governments, for that was exploded by the academies of Paris, and the clubs of London; who saw too much by the light of their new lantern, to have recourse to any other. The great examples to be considered were the constitutions of America, of France and of Great Britain. To that of America great attention, no doubt, was due, because it was of importance, that the people of Canada should have nothing to envy in the constitution of a country so near to their own. Situation and circumstances were first to be considered:—*non michi res sed rebus minding submittere conor*. They were not to imitate the example of countries that had disregarded circumstances, torn asunder the bonds of society, and even the ties of nature. In the local situation, was there any thing to give a preference to the American constitution, or in the habits of the people? Part of the province was inhabited chiefly by persons who had migrated from the United States. These men had fled from the blessings of American government, and there was no danger of their going back.