

# To the Electors of Lower Canada, And those of the County and Towns of Quebec in particular.

**S**INCE the cautionary address which we made you in the Gazette of the 17th. instant there have been distributed among the people a variety of Hand-bills, some recomendatory of Candidates and some justificatory of themselves; and among the number is one *defamatory*; all of them are innocent and decent except the last mentioned, which abounds with illiberality and falsehood; we shall therefore dissect it and endeavour to confute the arguments and destroy the insinuations contained in it.

The author of the "AVIS AUX CANADIENS" states, 1<sup>st</sup>. That it appears to be agreed upon between the British Merchants that they ought to be the only Representatives in the House of Assembly.

2<sup>d</sup>. That by their canvassing jointly---they have concerted a Coalition, which discovers their great illiberality (which he ironically calls *liberality*) for the Canadians.

3<sup>d</sup>. That if the English Merchants are elected, the fundamental Laws of the Canadians will derive no advantage or be perhaps altered and injured.

4<sup>th</sup>. That the smallest "*Reverse*" may take them out of the Province, and therefore they ought to have no pretensions to concern themselves about it.

5<sup>th</sup>. That there should be such a union of interests between the Electors and Representatives, that whatever Laws may be made by the Legislature shall equally affect all the members of the House of Assembly as well as the body of the people, by which he would insinuate that there is no connexion or communication of interests between the British Merchants and the Body of the people.

The first and second assertions are proved to be palpable falsehoods, by the division that every man sees exists in the Lower Town; where the English Interest is divided by four or five Candidates standing on their own strength unconnected with each other and supported by different friends. It is likewise too notorious that the Merchants never affected to think that they had an exclusive right to be returned Representatives; they possess too much good sense and equity to look for a monopoly, it is their common conversation that the Election should be free and open to every man, that the people should choose without Bias such characters (whether Merchants or Seigneurs or No-seigneurs) as they think will make the best Laws for the Agriculture, as well as for the Commerce of the Country. And, it is we believe the first time that the Mercantile body have ever been suspected of want of *Liberality* towards the Canadians, either in the line of trade or in personal respect;

They have been exceedingly liberal in their dealings with the Canadians, and instead of treating them with hauteur, scorn, and insult, they have considered them as men, friends, neighbours and Fellow citizens, equal in the Eye of the Law with themselves.

In answer to the third insinuation, we do insist no proof appears that the British Merchants have ever attempted to get the fundamental Laws of the Country altered. They wished for good and salutary Laws for all ranks of people, that every man might be secure in the free Enjoyment of his Liberty and property; and where they felt a grievance, they complained and applied for Redress; when they asked for laws to secure circulating commercial property, they did at the same time in a very pointed manner recommend that the rights and interests of the Seigneur, the Miller, the Curé, and the Habitants should be secured.

The Author of "AVIS AUX CANADIENS" by the fourth insinuation betrays either great Disloyalty or gross ignorance; for if by the word "*Reverse*" he means the *change of Sovereigns*, he may be pronounced a Traitor to the King and People of Great Britain from whom he enjoys a very honorable and lucrative place, and we are bold to say that he is the only Traitor in the Country; if by "*Reverse*" he means only the vicissitudes of fortune among individual Merchants, and that if they do not succeed in their commercial enterprise, they must return from whence they came, we may laugh at his stupidity, and while we despise the impotence of his malice, we will inform him that, under the British Government, the generation of Merchants is like the generation of men; and that if by any wise Resolution of the Author of the handbill and his Coadjutors all the British Merchants were expelled the Country, double the number would resort to the Province from Great Britain; so truly may the ancient Proverb "Non deficit alter" be applied upon this subject. We see (almost daily) that "*Reverses*" in the course of Nature take away the Merchants as they do *Seigneurs*, and yet we find no vacuum in the Mercantile system; others rise and spring up to fill the place of those that death has called away; and though the sythe of time mows them down without distinction (Merchants Seigneurs and others,) it destroys not Commerce, for that will live as long as time itself; nothing can destroy Commerce but oppressive and arbitrary principles, such as the author of the handbill possesses, and it is to be hoped that among the few Corners of the earth where it may find refuge it may be countenanced in Canada hereafter. The British Merchants have a million and a half of money circulating in the two provinces of Canada; There are some hundreds of thousands of Bushels of wheat annually exported from Lower Canada by the British Merchants, besides many other exports to a great amount; surely these are great and important enterprises and risques; they have caused the value of lands and Houses from one end of the province to the other to be doubled at least, and under our present Government there is every reason to expect they will still increase. The British Merchant may be considered the best friend to the Farmer and to the Cultivator of the land, whose industry he rewards, and towards whom he always carries himself with respect and civility. It may therefore be presumed that he has a very strong title and great pretension to concern himself in the welfare and Legislation of the Country.

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