

## SESSIONAL PAPER No. 18

We the said Merchants whose Names are underwritten for ourselves and agreeable to the urgent and reiterated complaints and Applications of the Inhabitants of the province of Quebec think it necessary and expedient that a Representation be made to his Majesty's Ministers of the distressed and deplorable State of that Province stating and submitting to them the following Measures which we humbly apprehend to be most likely to prove effectual for quieting the Minds of his Majesty's subjects there extending and securing the Commerce and protecting the property of the British Merchants.

Viz<sup>t</sup>

Laws  
Constitution  
House of  
Assembly.

The present Code of Laws, if the mixture of French and English Laws may be so call'd, not being well understood the Execution of them is subject to much Difficulty and Uncertainty. among other Inconveniencies persons often claim the Right of both and take the Advantage of that which best suits their purpose by these and other means the payment of Debts are evaded and right and property is rendered uncertain and insecure. The Losses the British Merchants have suffered from this evil within the last three years has occasioned the ruin of many and such is the present want of Confidence and want of Credit in consequence of these Disasters, that Common Ruin and General Distress must ensue if some effectual Remedy be not immediately applied.

From the Petitions<sup>1</sup> delivered last Year to the Right Honorable Lord Sydney signed by upwards of 1800 of the principal Inhabitants from the Letters lately addressed to us from the Committees of Quebec and Montreal on this Subject (Copy's of which are hereto annexed)<sup>2</sup> And moreover from our own Knowledge and the particular Information our Connections in that Country afford us, we are clearly and unanimously of opinion that for the Relief and Redress of these evils and the many other Defects of the present Constitution of that Government a provincial Legislature or House of Assembly Established on the principle as in every other British Colony in America will be effectual.

We are equally confident that it is the earnest wish and desire (whatever may have been represented to the Contrary) of the principal as well as the Generality of the Inhabitants of the province both old and new subjects (and to which the Loyal Refugees have also added their testimony by Petition)<sup>3</sup> to be governed by British Laws to be made and administered according to the British Constitution—They found their Claim to it not

<sup>1</sup> Referring particularly to the petition of Nov. 24th, 1784, presented in the spring of 1785; see p. 742.

<sup>2</sup> See below pp. 801 and 803.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 773.