

sure is, it is a mistake to say that it is a violation of the Canadian constitution. The violation is clearly with the other side. They, the Legislature, call for a change of the constitution; they endeavour to force that change by stopping the wheels of government; and upon seeing these means of coercion fail, they break out into open rebellion. But it is said, that a change of the constitution, if so evidently desired by a large majority of the people, must be for their benefit, and should be yielded. Why should we object to that modification of power which the people to be governed think conducive to their happiness? If the change should work ill, would not they be the sufferers? Why should we not let them please themselves? This argument would be unanswerable if the case were not one of great complication, — if the colony to be governed were one homogeneous race of people, with one single, universal interest, as was the case with our former colonies, the present United States; — and this view of the subject brings me to the consideration of the peculiar circumstances of Lower Canada, — its social condition, — its geographical position, — its connection with our other colonies. I am not about to fatigue your Lordships with a long dissertation on a subject with which you are all so well acquainted, but the peculiarities and anomalies of this case are the very essence of this question: it can only be understood and determined by considering them.

A large majority of the people of Lower Canada are of French origin, — an honest, sober, good-hearted, but ignorant people. Their degree of instruction has been variously represented; but I can, from my own knowledge of them, say that they are, in intelligence and information, far behind their neighbours and the British settlers who are mixed with them. These last have nearly monopolised, by their activity and enterprise, all the branches of internal and external traffic. Between these two races jealousies and hatred have