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THE FREE PRESS.

VOL. I.] MONTREAL, THURSDAY, 24th APRIL, 1823. [No. 27.

*Istuc est sapere, non quod ante pedes modo est
Videre, sed etiam illa, quæ futura sunt.* TERENCE.

To know what can be seen at every turn
Does not make knowledge; but who'd wisdom learn
The future, and the hidden, should discern.

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.....CONTINUED.

The session of 1818 forms a remarkable epoch in the annals of the provincial legislature, & more especially of the house of assembly. In that session the House began to possess, in their full extent, the rights which they might exercise; in that year His Majesty's representative in this province, Sir John Coape Sherbrooke, informed this house that it had pleased His Majesty to grant us, with confidence, what we, with liberality, had asked, in 1810; that is to say, "to supply the necessary sums for defraying all civil expenses of the administration of the government of this province."

Your committee deem it proper to give in this place, the part of his excellency's speech which relates to that matter; "I have received the commands of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, to call upon the provincial legislature, to vote the sums necessary for the ordinary annual expenditure of the province. These commands will, I am persuaded, receive from you that weighty consideration which their importance deserves." Then, addressing the House of Assembly, his excellency added; "In pursuance of these directions which I have received from His Majesty's government, I shall order to be laid before you an estimate of the sums which will be required to defray the expenses of the civil government of the province during the year 1818. I desire you, in His Majesty's name, to provide, in a constitutional manner, the supplies which will be necessary for this purpose. I shall also order to be laid before you, the accounts of the public revenue and expenditure for the last twelve months, by which you will be able to ascertain the means of supply that are at your disposal; and I anticipate, with confidence, a continuance of that loyalty and zeal for his Majesty's service on your part, which I have hitherto experienced, and a ready execution of the offer which you made on a

former occasion, to defray the expenses of His Majesty's provincial government, with a liberality which did you honour."

Thus your committee perceive that the House of Assembly had offered, in 1810, to charge itself with all the civil expenses of the government, without exception, and without restriction, and they also find from the speech above cited, that this offer was accepted in its full extent. They perceive also that, in consequence of this new order of things, the House of Assembly was forthwith called upon to provide for all "the civil expenses of the government," which in fact they did, so far as depended on them.

The same principles, and a demand altogether similar, are found in the speech of his grace the Duke of Richmond, at the opening of the session, in 1819, and also in the message of the 3d of March in the same year, by which his grace calls upon this house to make *sufficient appropriation for defraying the regular and contingent expenses of the province*

If your committee have entered into these details, it is only on account of the difficulties which, for some time past, have arisen in this province. It has been pretended that the provincial legislature, charged with all the expenses of the civil government of this province, had not at its disposal the whole revenue of the province, to meet those expenses, and especially that of the revenue arising from the act of the 14th Geo. III. cap. 88, which it was pretended remained at the disposal of His Majesty's executive government of this province, as well as the casual and territorial revenues.

Your committee will rather examine than refute this opinion, against which arguments and facts equally militate. In fact, the act of the 14th Geo. III. cap. 88, among other things, provided "a fund towards defraying the charges of the administration of justice and support of the civil government within the province of Quebec," at a time when no other means for defraying those necessary expenses were established. But in charging the provincial legislature, in 1818, with the payment of all the expenses of the civil government of the province, without exception, doubtless its entire means must have been placed in the hands of the legislature. In fact, the executive government being, by the new order of things, exonerated from the charge of defraying the expenses of the administration of justice, and the support of the civil government, has no longer any pretext for levying and disposing of the imposts specially established for defraying the expenses of the administration of justice, and the support of the civil government.

It may here further be remarked, that it is only since the year 1818, that the public accounts annually laid before the legislature, by order of the several governors of this province, have invariably mingled His Majesty's casual and territorial

revenue, as also the income arising from the 14th Geo. III. cap. 88, with the revenue levied under the several acts of the provincial legislature, in order to form one mass expressly designated in those accounts, as being at the disposal of the legislature.

Your committee think it proper here to dwell upon the message of his grace the Duke of Richmond, dated 3d March 1819, already alluded to. His grace informs the House that he had directed to be laid before the House of Assembly, estimates of the regular and contingent expenses of the province, for the year commencing the 1st November, 1818, and ending the 31st October, 1819, inclusively, in full confidence that the House will provide by sufficient appropriations for the same. His grace adds that the amount of these estimates may be considered as the sum which will be annually necessary for the support of the civil list, subject nevertheless, from time to time, to such diminution or augmentation as the circumstances of the times may require, and the wisdom of the legislature shall deem expedient.

Your committee do not think it possible to reconcile the pretension of permanent appropriations, foreign to the provincial legislature with the tenor and letter of that message. But could any doubt in this respect remain, your committee conceive that it must for ever disappear before the solemn judgement of a competent tribunal. There exists an act of the provincial parliament which decides the question. This act is the 58th Geo. III. cap. 4. It is therein enacted that Upper Canada shall receive one fifth of the revenue raised by virtue of the act of the 14th Geo. III. cap. 88. No one surely will venture to accuse his excellency Sir John Coape Sherbrook, then governor of this province, of having, on that occasion, compromised the rights of the crown, by giving the royal assent to that bill which acknowledged in the provincial legislature the right of disposing of the revenue arising from the act of the 14th Geo. III. cap. 88, and the rather, as His Majesty has never signified his disallowance of that provincial act. It might, at the most, be pretended that the provincial legislature can only appropriate the monies levied by virtue of that act, to those purposes for which it was passed, as also the five thousand pounds sterling, voted by the act of the 35th Geo. III. cap. 9, sect. 17, but it is not, on that account, the less true, that the revenue arising from them can not be applied without their concurrence.

(To be concluded in next No.)

MR. MACCULLOH,

As you have approved of my suggestion to devote, occasionally, a page of your Free Press, to subjects of a blended colonial, commercial, and agricultural nature, I will commence up-

on them, more with a view to awaken, and encourage other communications, than compelled by the importance of the subject, which is in itself but trifling, by calling the attention of the public to the article of GINSENG as one of some consideration, and one of use and traffic, among the hitherto neglected, and some unknown, productions of the extensive province of Lower Canada.

It is well known that in the early commercial intercourse which took place between the Europeans and the empire of China, GINSENG obtained a high rank as an article in the greatest demand and estimation amongst the Chinese, and that its value was generally estimated by its own weight in silver. The Chinese, at that time, derived their supplies of this root, which, not only on account of its sanative and medicinal qualities, but also of its aphrodisiac virtues (its highest recommendation amongst that sensual people,) was an object of numerous Imperial ordinances, from their Tartarian provinces; but when it was discovered that the genuine Ginseng could be procured, of the best quality, from the wilds of North America, not only did the price decline, but the avidity of trade sought after, and discovered various substitutes and imitations, which were introduced into China, and tended to reduce both the current value, and the general estimation, of the real Ginseng. Altho', however, the large profits which were made upon the first importations of the article into China, have vanished, it always has been, and still continues, an eligible and lucrative article of investment for that market. In the United States, the merchants of New-York, and Boston, who fit out vessels for the East India trade, are well aware of the benefits to be derived from this article, and purchase it from those who gather it in the interior, reckoning upon no less a gain than 100 per cent even upon the most inferior and unseasonably gathered roots. It is true the annual exportation of Ginseng from the States to China, is not considerable, from 6 to 300 cwt. being the outside; but as the root is indigenous in Canada, and indeed is produced in greater perfection to the north of the boundary line, there is no reason why it ought not to be sought after, collected, prepared, exported, and become an additional resource to this country. Small, very small, quantities of it occasionally appear in the list of annual exports from Quebec, but these are only such as the limited demand of the English druggists call for. To become an object of any importance, it ought to be sent in to the New-York and Boston markets for the East India demand.

To enable the inhabitants of Canada to avail of this natural production of their country, as an article of traffic, a few particulars relative to it may be necessary for their information.

Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolia*) is not cultivated, and indeed is said not to be susceptible of cultivation, (but this I much

doubt;) it grows throughout all the woods of Lower Canada, on the south side of the St. Lawrence, in abundance, though very scantily on the north side. The 38th & 48th degrees of latitude are said to be the limits in which it is produced; and it is abundant throughout all the unsettled parts of the Eastern townships. It loves a fertile soil, and cool shady spots, on the declivities of mountains; open plains, swamps, and hollows never yield it: it is generally matted, entangled, and intermixed with the other spontaneous productions of the luxuriant soil, but is easily distinguished, at the time of its maturity, which is the proper season for collecting it, by its tall stalk, and bright scarlet berries. A strait stalk of a red colour, grows up direct from the root to about five inches in height, and then divides into four branches, which each bear five serrated leaves, three large, and two small, of a light and rather shining green, from the centre of these four branches rises a continuation of the stalk which is whitish, and at about five or six inches is terminated by the flower, which is white and very small, and is succeeded by a cluster of berries twenty-four in number, small and of a bright red colour, containing a nut or seed, which, when the berry dries, becomes of a dark blackish red. The root is about three or four inches in length, white, generally forked, but sometimes strait. It annually withers, and sprouts anew in the spring, bearing at the bottom of the stalk, the marks of each preceding year's growth, so that the age of the plant may be ascertained thereby: the roots are said to be best at about seven years growth. It should not be gathered but in Autumn; in America the great fault is generally committed of collecting it in the spring and summer; it is then always soft and watery, and shrinking up in drying, loses both in weight and goodness one person can collect from eight to nine pounds a day, where it is at all plentiful. The roots may be dried in the sun or by the fire, but must be thoroughly cleaned from the soil; and they must be kept in a dry place. In China they understand the art of preparing the ginseng in such a manner that it appears semi-transparent, and then a much higher value is set upon it. In America they have also learnt this art, and the process employed is said to be very simple. The prices in New-York and Boston, fluctuate from 25 to 45 cents per pound, but during the whole of 1822 averaged 35 cents, or 1s0d Halifax. There is no duty on its importation into the United States from Canada.

CARDO.

MORE LAST WORDS.

It appears that the friends of that unfortunate malefactor, SAWNEY UNION, have buoyed him up with very fallacious hopes, that the warrant for his execution would be countermanded by a reprieve. In consequence of which, sundry other

dying speeches of this notorious disturber of the public peace, have been hawked about, and published in the papers. Circulation has even been given to a letter, by which it is stated, that the clerk of the deputy of the under sheriff, told it in confidence to somebody, who said it in the hearing of one who the writer of the letter believes reported it correctly, that it was said that a respite might be granted, but in order that the hangman may not be accused of precipitancy, it is intended to await the arrival of some communications expected from his friends and accomplices; this, joined with a number of other conjectures, rumours, surmises etc. appears to have inspired great hopes amongst the partisans of the criminal. But it is really very uncharitable, and in fact cruel, to encourage the poor wretch to hope for any reprieve, much less to expect a pardon. Let him be hanged in peace, and be buried and forgotten, is what every true Englishman, and every true Canadian must unite in wishing.

Joking apart, it is incomprehensible how the unionists, can lay "the flattering unction to their souls," from that inconsistent, and foolish letter which has been published in the papers as having been received by a gentleman in Montreal, from his correspondent in London, that their favourite project will not "die and be damned." They, in fact, tell us that the reported opinion of a clerk, re-reported to a friend, repeated by him to his correspondent, and by him sent abroad to the public, is to be more believed than an official communication from the Secretary of state for the colonies, transmitted to the Governor-in-chief, for the express purpose of being made public in these provinces; that a bulletin from St. Gabriel Street, is of more authority than an annunciation from the castle of St. Lewis; and that the private opinions and wishes of a very few are deserving of more consideration than the united voice of hundreds of thousands, blended with the wisdom of parliament, and the penetration of ministers. *Oh, pectora cæca! O ye blind buzzards!*

L. L. M.

UPPER CANADA DEBATES ON THE UNION, continued.

Mr. Ruttan's Speech against the Union, though very argumentative, embraced only that view of the question by which it might be considered beneficial or otherwise to Upper Canada alone, without reference either to Lower Canada, or to the general effect it would have upon the whole of the British North American possessions, and the colonial system altogether.

The Speaker, Mr. Sherwood, whose eloquence on this occasion has been much extolled, was as deficient in the argumentative, as he was brilliant in the declamatory, part of his speech. He stated, certainly upon no historical authority, that after the conquest of Canada, although "the British government

meditated a constitution for the people of the conquered country, founded on principles of English liberty, a more intimate knowledge of the political tenets of the inhabitants, soon made it apparent that those recent subjects of France had no rational idea of true liberty, or of the inalienable rights of man: the imaginary greatness and glory of their *grand monarque*, engrossed their whole attention, and formed the prominent feature of their political creed." What would he attempt to make us believe that the infatuated, and despotic ministers, that lost the fairest gem in Britain's diadem, by their temerity, tyranny and imbecility, contemplated giving a free constitution to one colony, while they were trampling freedom under foot in all the others? And as to the fanciful and exaggerated picture here drawn of the attachment of the old French Canadians to the monarchical power and principles of Old France; it must only be considered as some of the honourable gentleman's flowers of rhetoric; for all know there never was the shadow of ground for an imputation upon the Canadians, after they became dependants of England, of disaffection to that country, or predilection for their old metropolitan government, beyond that same kind of historic veneration, and love, which all nations bear to the parent-stock whence they are, or conceive themselves to be, derived.

The argument which Mr. Sherwood used, by stating it as his opinion, that "the wisdom of man could never devise a system by which two separate parliaments," (meaning the parliaments of Upper and Lower Canada,) "legislating at the distance of 600 miles from each other, on the same principles, for the same purposes, and to the same end, could ever succeed so well, or promote the general interest so effectually, as if they were brought together and joined in council;" might be applied to prove that neither, *a fortiori*, could the Imperial parliament of Great Britain, and the colonial parliaments, legislating, as regards the mutual interests of the colonies and the parent-state, on the same principles, and for the same purposes, at the distance of 5000 miles from each other, succeed so well, as if they were brought together; and that therefore we ought either to have no parliament at all, or should send our representatives to London.

The trade-bill, he contended, was not an effectual remedy for the difficulties and disputes that had arisen between the two provinces, and he certainly pointed out, in a very able manner, many of its discrepancies, and inconveniences. But, because a measure of that kind has not been, all at once, made one that is perfect; or because it may be found, as I am sure it will be, to trench upon the constitutional rights of both provinces, are we to adopt a measure still more pregnant with imperfection, one that, instead of merely infringing in some minor points upon the constitution of the country, must destroy it altogether,

root and branch? That the tradebill is insufficient, unjust, improper, unconstitutional, may be all true, but that does not prove that the union ought to be adopted, but only that the trade bill ought to be altered and amended.

One sentence in Mr. S's speech deserves a particular remark. Speaking of the fancied advantages which the united provinces would derive from the union, he enumerated, amongst others, that of the probable endowment of English colleges, and added, "their exertions and influence might be productive of the most beneficial effects in *advancing the cause of our holy religion.*" This looks very much like the cloven foot of missionary crusading: the lurking wish, if not the intention, of the union-party to put down the Roman Catholic faith in these provinces, may fairly be inferred from this sentence. Who set you up, Mr. Sherwood, as a judge of what is or is not a holy religion? Are there *unholy* religions in your creed? It is CHRISTIANITY I consider as a *holy religion*, not Catholicism, or Protestantism, or Presbyterianism, or Methodism, or Quakerism, or any other of the *isms* and *schisms* into which Christianity is split and divided. Beware how you touch that string: the feelings and suspicions of the French Canadians have already been roused by the insidious and undermining clause in the union bill, to vest the appointment of their clergy in the Governor instead of in their own bishop; and when they see one of the greatest and ablest advocates of the union, the speaker of the common's house of Upper Canada, sounding the missionary tocsin announcing that it is one of the objects of the union to advance the cause of what he calls his *holy religion*, in opposition to that which they have been taught to consider as *holy* and venerable, and ancient, and CATHOLIC, must they not look upon the unionists, as a kind of propagandists, not only aiming at making proselytes, but at subverting, or at least undermining, all but their own sectarian mode of worship?

(To be continued.)

ADVERSARIUS and PRINEAS on the subject of the Montreal general hospital shall receive attention next week.

N. B. On the first of May next the FREE PRESS OFFICE in Montreal, will be removed to No. 4, St. Jean Baptiste Street.

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