

COLONIAL.

LOWER CANADA.

TOTAL MEETING AT NORTH GEORGE-TOWN.

SPEECHES DELIVERED BY L. C. BROWN, AND JAMES DAVIDSON, ESQUIRES.

Mr Brown stated the object of the meeting, and expressed his satisfaction at seeing so large and respectable a body of freeholders assembled on the occasion, notwithstanding the urgency of agricultural labor at this important season. They were well aware that a mass of Resolutions had been adopted by a majority of the House of Assembly, in the last Session of the Provincial Parliament. To attempt any analysis or refutation of this tissue of mis-statements, ignorant usurpation, wilful misrepresentations, calumnious abuse, and unmeaning treason, would be a useless occupation of their valuable time. (A general cry of "we can all read, we know them well.") Indeed in many instances they betrayed such an ignorance of the first principles of political science, and of the general state of the country, that they might well be left to their inevitable fate of a rapid oblivion—were they not calculated to mislead, and were actually misleading the uneducated, but well-meaning Canadian country population. It was rather extraordinary that the framers of these resolutions, who claimed an almost exclusive knowledge of the principles and working of the British Constitution, should demonstrate changes totally at variance with them—that with strong professions of attachment and respect for Kingly office, and Kingly powers, they should urge the assimilation of our institutions to those of our republican neighbours. Would it not be much more manly, much more consistent with the high tone of language they assume, at once to declare their independence? Were these men worthy of the name of patriots, who coolly and deliberately state that their countrymen were groaning under a system of tyranny and oppression only—and hardly to be found under an Eastern despotism—borne down with grievances, which required ninety-two principal, and fifteen supplementary Resolutions to set forth—and yet after all this mountain labour and partition, only lead a pop gun with a team of Resolutions and send a small briefless lawyer to fire it off at the Imperial Government—at the men who had reformed the British Representation—abolished slavery in the West Indies—and quieted seven millions of turbulent Irish. Here, surely, was the *tertium quid*, and with much truth had it been stated by one of the cleverest and most intelligent men in the country, that the leading characteristic of these productions was "Ridiculousness." Did it not almost "exceed all power of face" to see every where convocations of peaceable, happy and contented people to complain of oppression and evils that were totally unfelt—to discuss questions of civil government, of which they were in the blissful state of ignorance—to ask for political changes which would inflict taxation and tyranny, of which they were most happily free—and insult a Sovereign and Government, whom they reverentially respected. An immense number of Resolutions were now lying about the country, and he was perfectly persuaded, that it would enjoy an unusual degree of prosperity, were money only as plentiful as Resolutions. (A laugh.) Indeed were these meetings conducted with proper discretion, were not the utmost pains taken to inflame the passions, and foster the prejudice of the ignorant, much good might result from them. They would make the Canadian population acquainted with the excellence of the political and social institutions under which they live. It was therefore the duty of the better informed to use their utmost endeavours to counteract the machinations and evil intentions of a few designing demagogues, who are using as tools for their own selfish purposes, one of the finest and best intentioned people on the whole earth. It is with these agitators that we have to grapple, and he flattered himself that the proceedings of this respectable meeting would have considerable effect in checking the seditious. For the question was now simply this, whether we were to continue to hold the British Constitution, as conferred on this Province by the Act of St Geo. III cap. 31—a form of Government, under which they had, and did at this day enjoy a degree of happiness, tranquillity and prosperity almost unknown in any other portion of the globe. Indeed the people of Canada might consider themselves like the ancient Jews—God's chosen people—and all these benefits were conferred without cost on their part. This was a subject he wished strongly to impress on their minds. Their almost total freedom from taxation—and under no other form of Government could they enjoy this inestimable privilege. All Government was evil, and the greatest of its evils was taxation. History and experience has shown that the misery and oppression of every civilized people had its origin in financial exactions. As long as they kept the tax-gatherer's hand out of their pockets they would be free. Give to rulers under whatever name they may be designated, money, and you give them the means of corruption, and hence of oppression. They would also do well to look to their numerous commercial and agricultural advantages through the Mother Country. The people of Great Britain were very good naturedly content to pay for the inferior Canadian timber a much higher price than that which they could obtain bulk of superior quality. The staple article of wheat was freely admitted to the British market. In short their appeared no general and strong desire on the part of Great Brit-

ain, to promote the prosperity of its favorite Colony, that it was perfect insanity to trifle with such a disposition, he could express it much more forcibly by using a homely expression—it was "quarrelling with their bread and butter." He would now glance at some of the principal grievances. The head and front of these was the composition of the Legislative Council, which was declared so vicious as to be the *origo malorum*—the source from whence flowed all the miseries that press so heavily on the country, and the remedy proposed was to make the council elective, but, was an elective council consistent with monarchical institutions? Must it not be a counterpart of the Assembly, and of what service could it then be as an intermediate branch or check? The fact was, that an Elective Council, without an Elective Executive, could not work—it was of no use. Make them the three branches elective and you have a republic. It could not be denied that the composition of the council, as complained of in 1828, was defective and vicious, and though since greatly extended and improved, and now actually containing some of the most intelligent, well informed and independent men in the Province, still it required reformation—and this would be effected by the bill passed last session. He would wish to see all placemen excluded from it. But the real cause against the Council was not its composition, theoretical or actual, its damning sin consisted in the encroachments of the Assembly, its opposition to the democratic and anti-British enactments, its protection of British interests, in short, to its affording the only barrier between us and the most oppressive tyranny by the popular Branch. The absurdity of making the Council analogous to the House of Lords was also insisted upon, for the want of materials here, as in England, to form an aristocracy. Would this meeting allow so disgraceful a stigma to be attached to the country? Would they assent to so humiliating an avowal? Was it "the tenth transmitter of a foolish race"—was it the mark of a thousand acres, and ten thousand pounds—the man of painted coach doors and party coloured retinue, that had the exclusive patent for aristocratic legislation? Was there not the nobility of nature—the seal of ennoblement impressed by the hand of the Creator. Wherever talents, acquisitions, education, and above all, wherever the "honest man, the noblest work of God" were to be found, there were the materials for a real aristocracy, and these equally abandoned here as elsewhere.

The Land Tenures Act was another many headed monster grievance, the repeal of which was so strenuously demanded. This Act was intended, and ought to confer the greatest benefits. It was passed by the Imperial Parliament in 1826, not surreptitiously, it was alleged, but after mature deliberation, and the best information. Its object and purpose were the removal and extinction of seigniorial and feudal burthens, by empowering the seigniors to relieve, on a fair compensation, from seigniorial obligations, all lands granted in *censive or roture*—and to commute all ungranted land into free and common socage. Was it not to be supposed that the men who pushed democratic principles to the extreme verge—nay, even asserted the abstract rights of man in long strings of common places, would have hailed an enactment so consonant to every idea of the most extended freedom. How strongly inconsistent in these mighty champions of liberty, those doughty assertors of rights which could only exist

While wild in woods the noble savage ran, to be so desirous of retaining and perpetuating a system that took its origin in military feudalism, in the darkest, and most tyrannical period of European history. Well might our republican neighbours smile to see us advancing to fraternize with him (the old French revolutionary phrase for this international operation,) with our seigniorial code in one hand, and a tythe paid priesthood in the other, the two most aristocratical institutions that the wit of man had ever devised. No wonder that Jonathan fought shy of such an assimilation of our institutions to his.

The unequal distribution of officers between those of British and Canadian origin was the cause of much complaint and vituperation—but admitting this inequality to be actually the case, was it not more the effect of necessity than choice. It arose in a great measure, not from the want of intellectual capacity, but from the general low state of education among the latter. In the country with every intention to bestow them, there was the greatest difficulty to find Canadians qualified to fill administrative offices. But was it not the wish of every liberal mind to see the removal of these disabilities by the spread of knowledge, and our Canadian fellow subjects participating in their full share of every privilege and advantage. But how stood the case in all those employments that were open to general competition, where the public and not the Government was the Judge, and bestowed its patronage where the *Deus dignior* was the inflexible rule. Did commerce particularly rejoice in the number and wealth of her Canadian sons? Were our harbours crowded with ships bearing French names? Had they any share in the direction of that tremendous power that had in Great Britain created a separate interest? Had they their just preponderance in mechanics and mechanical science? Were the highest and leading medical practitioners Canadian? Even in the law, their favorite profession, had they the largest share of the harvest of litigation? In the Assembly, to be sure, there was a large sprinkling of Canadian juris consults, some of whom had been styled "young and pro-

missing Members," who got their hard earned ten shillings a day, (and "twere a sin to rob them of their might") in the revolutionary manufacture, whilst their British brethren were gaining as many pounds in the courts, their proper sphere.

The opposition to Land Companies, could only arise from a determination to resist British Emigration—for it was impossible to suppose men who aspired to be Legislators, so ignorant of what the merest tyro in political economy could teach them—that the great desiderata in a new country, were capital and labourers. From such a noted specimen of their progress in political science, the Colonial Secretary would be impressed with a high notion, no doubt of their governing themselves.

Of Lord Aylmer's administration he would only say that it had been characterized by mildness, and a desire to promote the interest and happiness of the Province. At all events his Lordship deserved to be treated with respect, as a British nobleman—as the Governor in Chief—as the Representative of the Sovereign. The gross and insulting language that was used, was far more degrading to those that offered, than to him that received it. He was confident that the British people would not thus tamely submit to see their King, who was extremely beloved, thus shamefully insulted through his Representative. Whilst on this subject he would remark that a Civil Governor, for many reasons, would suit this commercial and agricultural country far better than a military one.—*Cheers.*

He would not conclude without adverting to some real grievances they had to complain of. Among these he could not help noticing the misapplication of the time of the Assembly in those interminable debates, and other equally unfruitful proceedings, to which were sacrificed some of the most important enquiries that could engage legislative attention. If, for instance, a proper inquiry, with a view to improvement, were instituted into the very defective state of agriculture, the thousands that were so frequently given to prevent actual starvation, might be saved. The insecurity of real property from secret mortgages and unknown encumbrances, was another cruel and afflicting evil. The expense and trouble of obtaining confirmatory judgments in every case of acquisition, were far too great to make the measure generally beneficial, whereas, the process of a Register Office was so simple, and answered the purpose so well, that it was astonishing that they were delayed, even for a moment.

The state of the winter roads required legislative interference. By their extraordinary destruction, a heavy tax was imposed in a variety of shapes that ought not to be borne—and a still more heavy tax was imposed on country people, by the necessity of resorting to towns for all law proceedings from the want of permanent County Courts. Would not every reasonable man admit that the time of the Legislature would be far more beneficially occupied by these, and many other important considerations, than in the way it now is. There were several other matters to which he would be desirous of calling the attention of the meeting, but he felt that he had already detained them too long, particularly at this season, yet, he could not conclude without earnestly recommending them to support that Constitution, and those Institutions, under which all had been born, bred and educated—those institutions, which the greater part had left in the country of their nativity, and found again in the country of their adoption, the distinction was in fact unnecessary, for whatever claims or pretensions might be set up on the other side they merely removed from one side of their own country to another. British blood and treasure had won this—and British prowess and power would wear it.—(Cheers.) A series of Resolutions would now be moved, and he hoped the movers would deliver their sentiments. He thanked them for the indulgence and patience with which they had heard him, and besought them for every other gentleman desirous of addressing the meeting.—(Mr. Brown sat down amidst loud and continued cheering.)

Mr. James Davidson having been called on by the meeting, readily came forward, and in strong and energetic language deprecated the conduct of the House of Assembly—condemned its revolutionary tendency—and pointed out the numerous and great advantages enjoyed under our present Constitution and form of Government. He maintained the inconsistency of an Elective Council with our present institutions. It was in the council alone that the voice of the British population could be constitutionally heard, or British interests protected—make it elective, and introduce the same Canadian preponderance as in the Assembly, and we had no security left. It was for these very reasons that he was desirous the Council should be truly effective, independent and pure. He would rigorously exclude all placemen from it, and none should have a seat there that was not thoroughly qualified by independent circumstances, respectability, education and acquisitions. In the view that the Chairman had taken of the most of the subjects that he had brought under consideration, he entirely coincided. His strenuous support should be given for the maintenance of that tranquillity and happiness we now enjoyed.—(Cheers.)

The following is the substance of a Letter addressed to LOUIS JOSEPH PAPINEAU, Esquire, Speaker of the House of Assembly of Lower Canada, and published in the Montreal Gazette:—

The present form of Government is the very best that could be devised to represent the great interests of this flourishing Colony. You have yourself stated that the population of French origin in Lower Canada amounts to 625,000, while that of British origin amounts to only 75,000. Now, if the wealth and intelligence of the French bore the same proportion to their numbers that the wealth and intelligence of the British bear to their numbers, there would be less objection to the Council becoming elective. But, Sir, you have yourself acknowledged that the people, meaning, it is presumed, the *en fans du Sol*, are without education, and ignorant of the rights of man and society, and it cannot be denied by even you, unscrupulous as you are with respect to the statements which, from time to time, you have the audacity to make before the public, that the wealth and enterprise of the Colony are altogether in the hands of the British. Of the unequal degree of pros-

perity in agriculture, but more especially in commerce, to which Canada has risen within the last few years, no part of the merit can be claimed by the French Canadians. It is not most assuredly to them that any improvements in agriculture are to be attributed, and it was neither by their capital nor enterprise that the waters of the Saint Lawrence are yearly whitened by one thousand sail of foreign vessels. Were the British Government, therefore, to render the Legislative Council elective, they would at once throw the whole power into the hands of the least valuable part of the population, and leave the British entirely without representation. They would invert the whole order of political affairs; they would permit the ignorant to govern the wise; the poor the rich; and, in short adopt the best means of effecting the ruin of the colony, by granting every facility for the accomplishment of your favorite but wicked scheme—a bloody revolution, and the extermination of every Briton within the Colony. As, therefore, the government is at present constituted, no better means could have been devised for representing the various contending interests of all classes of the King's subjects in Lower Canada, and of advancing its general prosperity. In the House of Assembly by far the greater proportion of the Members are French Canadians, by whom every measure is enacted, which has for its object the interest of the British, and by consequence the prosperity of the Colony. The Council being chosen by the Government from among the most wealthy and intelligent part of the community, forms an excellent corrective to the ignorance and folly of the House of Assembly. So long, therefore, as the government is constituted as it now is, we are sure that no measure can pass into a law, which has for its object the subversion of British interests. Were the Council to become elective, both the balance of power and the balance of interest would be completely destroyed.

Again, Sir, there is no man whose capital is invested in the country who will ever consent to the completion of your schemes. You have been permitted to proceed a certain length, but beyond this we are determined you shall not go. You have been allowed to proceed so far, merely that your ulterior objects might be made obvious to all. It has been discovered that you meditated the ruin of your country by a revolutionary movement, and we have therefore determined that our own individual efforts should be put forth, abetted by the strength and power of the Imperial Government, to blast and confound the projects of yourself and your infamous coadjutors in the works of blood and crime. We are aware that the very agitation of revolutionary proceedings produces stagnation of trade, mutual distrust and suspicion of credit. We know what took place in our beloved England when the Bill for Reform was in progress—a Bill which, but for the friends of order, would have ended in revolution. At that time, Sir, we are told upon the authority of even a Reform journal, that the ordinary course of trade and business in London had never been so bad, and that the great channels of popular employment were almost dry. Upon similar authority it is stated that with respect to trade, nothing could be more deplorable, that the money market was filled with Exchequer Bills, that the Bank had contracted its discounts, and that trade, except in mere necessities, was at a complete stand still. Now, Sir, if the very approach of this Bill, like that of the Simon, caused every thing within its reach to wither, what would have been the reality, if the revolution which was anticipated had actually taken place? Having all this before our eyes, think you, Sir, that we will even permit the very agitation of your iniquitous projects to continue?

But in case you have never fully considered the subject, and that you may be enabled to form an exact idea, of what might be expected in Canada by the overthrow of the present Government, let me quote for your deliberate consideration what was stated by even the Republic Thiers as the consequence of the first French Revolution. "Paris, during the winter of 1794, endured all the horrors of a besieged city. Six hundred and ninety thousand citizens daily received their food from the Committee of Subsistence, which amounted only to the miserable pittance of a pound of black bread a day for each soul. Even for this small allowance, they were compelled to wait at the bakers' shops, from eleven at night till seven in the morning, during the severity of an arctic winter. Such were the quarrels which ensued at the gates of these, the sole fountain of subsistence, that the Convention were compelled to enact, that a rope should be attached to the door of each bread shop, and each comer as he arrived, should take it in his hand, and remain there without losing his hold, till the doors were opened in the morning. From this regulation has arisen the common cry *a la queue, a la queue*, still to be heard at the doors of our theatres and places of public resort. It was a deplorable spectacle to see two or three hundred citizens, who had deserved as well of the Republic, standing in mournful silence round the door of every bread shop in Paris, during the whole night, amidst the severity of a Russian winter, not venturing to drop the rope from their hands, even when congealed by the frost, lest they should lose their only chance of obtaining food for the following day, for their starving families. With truth did the petitioners, from the working classes of Paris, say at the bar of the Convention, on the occasion of the great revolt in April 1795. 'Such have been our sufferings for the last five years that we are ready

to regret all the sacrifices we have made for the Revolution.' Miserable as was the supply thus doled out to the inhabitants of Paris, it was obtained only by inflicting as great suffering as it relieved: the law or the maximum which compelled the farmers to sell their produce at a ruinously low price, prevented them from bringing any grain voluntarily to market; and what was obtained by the Government for the public necessities, was procured only by forcing from the miserable cultivators, by the terrors of military execution, and in virtue of the law of forced requisitions, a portion of their hard earned produce. Ten thousand persons were engaged in this odious employment, by the Committee of provision and subsistence; and their duty may truly be described as being to wring from the poor in the country the supply of the poor in towns."

Such, Sir, is the picture given by even a violent Republican, of what the first French Revolutionary movement accomplished, and oh! terrible man, would you attempt after this to make Canada the theatre of such miseries. It would appear, that though the Revolution of 1830 was effected by milder means than the former, and was altogether of a gentle character, it yet carried along with it universal ruin and distress. In that year the French were burning with the wildest enthusiasm, and imagined that they were to acquire by a bloodless Revolution all the happiness and prosperity which had been denied them by all the miseries and spoils of that which had preceded it. Vain hope! They were yet to learn that under even a Citizen King—a King of their own choice, their burdens and misfortunes were to become yet greater than they had been under even the Government of Charles the Tenth, and the administration of the haughty but erring Polignac. It appears, upon the most inaccurate authority, that immediately after the three glorious days, which overthrew a dynasty, and erected a throne, surrounded by Republican institutions, that the efforts of industry were in no demand, that commerce was depressed, and suffering general. That one half of the whole mercantile houses in Paris and other large towns became bankrupt, and that not less than two hundred bookellers had failed. But what may serve to shew you in the most forcible manner the little that is to be gained by Revolutions, attend to the fact that the expenditure of the last year of Charles the Tenth, amounted to only the sum of £39,000,000, while that of the first year of Louis Philippe, the man of the people, was no less than £60,000,000. It thus appears that while the Revolution of the three glorious days, diminished every man's property by one third, it added to the national burdens by one half.

From what I have stated in my former letter and what I have now advanced in this, I trust I have established the fact, that your projects must of necessity be opposed by His Majesty's Government and by every man who has any interest at stake in these Colonies. May I be permitted therefore to hope, that you are now convinced of the groundlessness of all your expectations, and that you at length see clearly the error of your way. Should such be the case, you will regain much of the good opinion of the public, which you have lost, by immediately desisting from your present perilous and destructive course, and by speedily sinking in those shades from which it is obvious to all but yourself and a few other "wretched self-tormented and unhappy men," you should have never emerged. To induce you to act as I could wish, let me inform you, that it is not by such men as you, that Revolutions are usually accomplished. You may have all the demagogues, all the thirst of blood, and all the reckless ambition of Robespierre, whom you are reputed so much to resemble. But, Sir, you have neither the political talents of that man, nor the same physical power at your command. But granting that you had both his talents and his power, the same circumstances do not exist in Canada in your day which existed in France in his, to entitle you to entertain the slightest hope of effecting your chimera projects. To retire, therefore, from the public gaze as a political character, your safety is ensured—to proceed in your perilous course, you are now well aware of the consequences. We have nailed the colours of the Constitution to the mast, and by God's help, they shall float over our heads in their own unsullied purity and grandeur.—Advance to attempt their dishonour and you perish.

SOUTH AMERICA.

AWFUL EARTHQUAKE.

The City of Pasto destroyed.

One of those fearful convulsions of nature, which sometimes occur to make man feel his impotence, as compared with the omnipotent power of his Creator, occurred on the mountainous districts of New Grenada, near the western frontier, and also near the Equator, on the 20th and 21st January, which has been attended with results of the most terrible fatality. The City of Pasto with a population of from 12,000 to 15,000 inhabitants, has been almost completely destroyed, and upwards of fifty lives lost. The city of Popayan, containing near 30,000 inhabitants, has also been destroyed. The entire country for leagues around Pasto, has been converted into a scene of complete desolation and mourning. A volcanic mountain overhanging the city of Pasto, which is situated in latitude 1, 13, N. long. 77, 11—and as the ridge of the Andes, which stretches a little to the westward, was severely affected, there is every reason to apprehend