

*Education
Petition of Baptists
relating to King's
College 1823*

To the Honourable the House of Assembly,

In General Sessions convened.

The Humble Petition of the Undersigned Freeholders, and other inhabitants of New Brunswick.

Respectfully Sheweth.

That Your Petitioners deeply regret, the frequent unsuccessful applications of the Committee of the Baptist Education Society, to the Legislature of this Province, for pecuniary assistance towards defraying the expences incurred by them, in establishing and conducting a Seminary of Education at Fredericton.

That Your Petitioners are at a loss to ascertain the principle, whereon the repeated Grants of Your Honourable Body to that Institution, have been rejected by the Honourable Legislative Council, unless it be a principle of decided hostility, against all Educational Establishments, under the controul of any other Denomination, than that of the Episcopal Church. And if your Petitioners are right in this their conjecture, they would respectfully but firmly submit, that such a principle of action, is wide of those enlightened and just motives, which should ever influence the Councils of a young and thriving Colony, whose future successful progress must principally depend on the integrity and enterprize of its population, a vast and overwhelming majority of whom are without the pale of Episcopacy.

Indeed your Petitioners cannot understand why the middle Branch of the Legislature, should be so constructed as to be deaf to the importunities and blind to the wants of a large portion of the population, for whose welfare and good government, in common with all, that Honourable Body has been spoken into Legislative existence. And so frequent have been the rejection of the Grants of Your Honourable House by the Legislative Council—and so often have Petitions and Petitioners been treated with indifference by a majority of the members of that Honourable Body, that your Petitioners would have thought this their humble effort in vain, were they not satisfied with the justice of their application and assured of the ultimate triumph of those principles of justice, which should influence the deliberations of every branch of the government.

Your Honble. House is well aware, that large grants of land and money, have been made in this Province, for the support of Educational Institutions, professedly under the controul and direction of one religious denomination, and that not a Dominant Church, either by the Law of the Land or from its numerical strength—and in order that Your Petitioners, may not be misunderstood they would remind your Honourable House, of facts disclosed in the Journals.

King's College, an Institution avowedly of an episcopal constitution, has received from the Revenues of this Province, to which all denominations of Christians in the country have from time to time contributed, upwards of £40,000; and enjoys a settled annuity from those Revenues of £2200. About 6,000 acres of land have also been granted to this Institution in and near the Town of Fredericton, four and a half acres whereof in the centre of the Town are now producing upwards of £200 per annum.

The Madras School another Institution of the Church establishment, has not been forgotten in the distribution; as £500 per annum appears to be settled on the Governor and Trustees, besides the rents and profits of about 6,000 acres of land, granted to and reserved for its use.

Your Petitioners would observe, that repeated efforts have been made in vain, to liberalise those institutions by stripping them of their denominational character—and especially during the past winter with respect to King's College; and it is worthy of remark that the Charter Modification Bill, found a common grave in the Legislative Council, with the Assembly's appropriation in aid of the Baptist Seminary; the one was slain because it threatened to interfere with Episcopal supremacy, and the other because it appeared as a bounty to dissent from the Establishment.

*Baptist Petition &
Statements relating to King's
College*