

TO INJURE THE LIBERAL PARTY

at the coming elections, and thereby, as you and I believe, to injure the Province; and as the letters indicate the impressions of three justly esteemed ministers of our Church, they may naturally be expected to have more or less the effect which our political opponents desire. I therefore feel it my duty to make a personal statement of the facts bearing on the matters to which the letters refer; and I do so in the present form, rather than by a speech at one of the great Reform gatherings which are taking place in different parts of the Province, because I have been advised, in consequence of my recent recovery from a second somewhat severe illness, to avoid for a time speaking at public meetings.

All three letters express an apprehension that the Church of Rome has an undue and injurious influence with the present Ontario Government, and that unwarrantable interferences by the Roman Catholic clergy have been permitted; and you all refer to certain transactions at, or in relation to, the Central Prison as affording examples of this influence and illustrations of its danger. The *Presbyterian Review* has had a number of articles on the same subject, written, however, in a very different spirit from the letters. These articles greatly enlarge the indictment, and manifest a strong animus against the Government and a strong desire to do us all the harm possible. I shall show you the injustice of those articles, and shall show you some of the errors into which (I say with great respect) you have all fallen, and but for which I am sure that the letters would not have been written.

As a Protestant, I heartily recognize the reasonableness, and the duty, of your taking an active interest in preventing injurious concessions to the "Romish hierarchy," or to any other hierarchy, or to any other body, and also in resisting any undue influence or unwarrantable interference. But I emphatically and unequivocally affirm that, as regards the present Ontario Government, there have been no such concessions as have been suggested and no such influence; and that there is no danger of anything of the kind as long as that Government is constituted as it is now; every statement to the contrary notwithstanding.

Before going into any details let me observe, that

THE POLICY OF THE LIBERAL PARTY,

as I have always understood it, is, to be just to Roman Catholics, and to be unjust to none. There may be an honest difference of opinion as to what justice requires or warrants; but our views on that subject, and our practice in carrying them out, are now what they have been always, and they have hitherto received as large

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