

They complain that, although the Ecclesiastics at Montreal are dependent for their Existence in this Province upon the Royal Will and Pleasure, restricted within the Limitation "in as far as the Laws of Great Britain permit," and were and still continue subject to the same Royal Authority which suppressed the Communities of Jesuits and Recollets, and assumed the Possession of their Estates for public Purposes, the Ordinance altogether liberates the Ecclesiastics at Montreal from such Royal Supervision, and renders them independent of Imperial Legislation, contrary to the limited legislative Powers of the Governor and Special Council in this respect, and in violation of the Laws of Great Britain.

They complain that, although the Ecclesiastics at Montreal have unjustly received from Alienation of Real Estate in this Island an Amount exceeding 300,000*l.*, equal to Twenty Times the Value of the entire Island at the Proclamation of the Royal Promise, an Increase in Value mainly to be attributed to British Industry and Enterprise, the Ordinance proposes to invest them with additional Wealth, to be drawn chiefly from the same Sources of Improvement, in extreme Disproportion to the general Wealth of the Province, and infinitely greater than their previous Demands or Expectations; and moreover enables them to purchase and take in Mortmain any Real Property, and to an unlimited Amount, without any Restriction by the Royal Authority or any Permission required for such Acquisitions; whereby municipal as well as general Improvement will be greatly retarded, and an Influence both civil and ecclesiastical conferred upon the Ecclesiastics, which cannot fail of being exceedingly dangerous to the future Tranquillity and Welfare of the Provinces.

They complain that, although by the Imperial Statute, 14th George the Third, Chapter 83, making more effectual Provision for the Civil Government of Quebec, the Canadian Subjects were secured in the Enjoyment of their Properties and Possessions, with the express Exception of the Religious Orders and Communities, and the Inhabitants professing the Religion of the Church of Rome were fully and freely tolerated in the Exercise of their Religious Faith, subject to the Supremacy of the Crown, and that although the Clergy of the said Church were restricted to claim and receive their accustomed Dues and Rights from such Persons only as should profess that Religious Faith, the Provisions of the Ordinance subject all other Inhabitants of this City and Island, professing a Belief different from that of the Church of Rome, to support and maintain the Ecclesiastics and Institutions of that Church, by the Payment to the proposed Ecclesiastical Corporation of a large Amount of the Commutation of Seignioral Tenure, in violation of the Pledge of the National Faith and Honour contained in the Imperial Statute, and in violation of the express Exception contained in the recent Imperial Statute above referred to.

Whatever be the gracious Dispositions of Your Majesty with respect to the Ecclesiastics of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice at Montreal, your Petitioners humbly conceive that the Royal Munificence in favour of the Ecclesiastics should not be effected at the Expense of British and Irish Commercial Enterprise, practical Agricultural Improvement, and active untiring Industry; and your Petitioners should not, either in Justice or in Equity, be required to provide a Compensation to the Ecclesiastics for their Willingness to settle this important Question, however desirable it may be definitely to adopt and carry that Settlement into effect, or for their Readiness to agree to a Commutation of the Feudal Rights in this Island, to which they enjoy no legal Title and over which they possess no legal Control.

Your Petitioners are sensible that by the mere Sufferance of the Crown the Ecclesiastics of Montreal have collected and received for many Years the Seignioral Revenues arising from the Island of Montreal, but your Petitioners humbly conceive that mere Sufferance of Possession for any Length of Time cannot confer upon the Ecclesiastics a Title in derogation of the Rights of the Crown, and that they cannot complain if that Sufferance should be withdrawn, inasmuch as they would not thereby be deprived of Property previously secured to them, which they had continued to enjoy in good Faith and in Ignorance of their absolute Want of Title to possess the same.

Your Petitioners submit that the Ecclesiastics at Montreal have not at any Time been in ignorance of the Justice of their Pretensions, but upon various Occasions