

ANSWER of his Excellency the Lieutenant-governor to Address for further Information relative to the granting of Lands, &c.

Regulations of the
Land Granting
Department.

Gentlemen,

I WILL transmit to His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies this Address of the House of Assembly, and I can see no objection to the information requested being forwarded to the House, with the permission of His Majesty's Government.

Answer.

ADDRESS to His Majesty on the subject of U. E. Loyalist Rights.

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty.

Most Gracious Sovereign.

WE, your Majesty's faithful subjects, the commons of Upper Canada in provincial parliament assembled, beg leave humbly to represent to your Majesty, that a vast number of the most faithful and loyal subjects of His Majesty King George 3, Your Majesty's late father of glorious memory, residing in his colonies, now the United States of America, at the commencement of the American revolution, did unhesitatingly sacrifice, not only their possessions and worldly effects, but also the peace and comfort of themselves and their families, by voluntarily joining the royal standard of His Majesty, and on various occasions during the sanguinary struggle displayed the most uncompromising zeal and fidelity to His Majesty's cause, person and government; fought and bled; and many lost their lives, while almost all spent their best days of vigour and strength; suffered more or less fatigue, privations, and hardships; for which very conspicuous and meritorious conduct His Majesty was most graciously pleased, by his proclamations and instructions, to signify his royal will and pleasure that the first loyalists who had thus distinguished themselves, and who should become resident in the province on or before the year 1798, and their sons and daughters when of age or married, should receive a bounty of lands in any of the townships which they might desire, in proportion to their several grades, viz:—a private, 300 acres; a captain, 3,000 acres; the son or daughter of a U. E. loyalist, 200 acres; to be granted and obtained "free from any expense whatever;" and upon no other condition than that the head of the family should cultivate or improve some part of his own grant, or possess and reside upon some other lands in the province; and it was expressly declared as being intended, in the first place, as a recompense and reward for their valuable services, losses and sufferings, and in the next place, as a mark of His Majesty's royal munificence and favour; and further, it was ordered, that "a course should be taken for preserving a registry of the names of all persons falling under the description aforementioned, to the end that their posterity might be discriminated from future settlers in the parish registers and rolls of the militia of their respective districts and other public remembrances of the province, as proper objects, by their persevering in the fidelity and conduct so honourable to their ancestors, for distinguished benefits and privileges, in consequence of which they have been heretofore denominated and known by the title of U. E. loyalists;—That these grants, or rights of land, were always considered and understood in the shape of a debt due by the government to the several individuals claiming, or in other words, as a reward for meritorious services performed, and for which they considered they held the pledge and faith of government;—That although an order in council was made in this province, in the year 1797, that all claims by the above-mentioned persons for military lands must be made previous to the end of that year, yet the said orders were afterwards rescinded in the year 1806; and it was then ordered (of which public notice was given) that military claimants themselves were again admitted to make application, and upon proving their claim, to receive all their military land as if they had applied previous to the said orders in council, in the year 1797; after which time, the said description of persons continued to receive grants of land according to the gracious intentions of His Majesty, free from any expense or charge whatever, and with very little interruption or impediment, until the 20th of October in the year 1818, when the following order was made and acted upon by the executive government of this province.—"It is ordered, that no grant of land will issue in future to persons of any description, until a satisfactory certificate is filed in the surveyor-general's office, that a habitable house is erected on some part of the land to be granted, and sufficient clearing thereon, under fence, in the proportion of five acres for every 100." We would here beg leave to remark that neither your faithful commons nor the country at large are informed whether these restrictions were imposed with the approbation or direction of His Majesty's Government, or whether the whole matter originated with the executive government of this province, as the lieutenant-governor, in answer to an address of this house of the 16th of January last, almost unanimously adopted, declined affording us that information until he received, of your Majesty's Government, permission so to do.—That, from that time to the present, various restrictions and requirements have been imposed, and many obstacles thrown in the way of obtaining lands, by the Government, varying, it is true, from time to time, but in the opinion of your faithful commons and the country, altogether unjust, objectionable and injudicious; and the present restrictions, obstacles and impositions, the most so of any heretofore adopted by the government—viz: two years' actual residence on the grant in

Address to His
Majesty.