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ANSWER

OF THE HON. MR. MERCIER TO THE

Pamphlet of the Equal Rights Association Against the Majority of the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec.

It would require a large volume to refute in succession the errors and misrepresentations forming Mr. Sellar's pamphlet. The public could not have the patience to read a work of such a nature...

the province of the State. All that which is purely temporal belongs to the State. The Church therefore cannot under any proper claim meddle with matters purely temporal.

challenge him to have such legislation accepted by the majority of the Protestants of the Province of Quebec. With what grace therefore does he dare to place among the so-called disabilities of the Protestants of Quebec legislation by which they benefit as well as Catholics...

and philanthropic spirit manifested by these in charge of these institutions, and then made up my mind that every assistance I could render them I would gladly do to the best of my ability.

Province is given exactly in the calendar; it is 1263, the number of members of brotherhoods and sisterhoods devoting themselves to teaching, is given in the Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; it is 3889 and add 1000, which is more than the actual number...

As to servants, whom he estimates to be 12,000 in number, I assert that they do not exceed 3000 and I challenge him to prove the contrary.

THE SO-CALLED DOMINATION AND WEALTH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC. Speaking of the Catholic Church as it exists in the Province of Quebec, the author of the pamphlet says: 'In one sense it is a church, in another it is a government, having the province divided into sections and controlled by its deputies...

No; outside of purely religious matters, the Catholic Church does not claim an authority superior to that of the State; on the contrary, one of the fundamental principles of its doctrine is its submission to civil authority.

WALTH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. But where this brave Mr. Sellar completely loses his head when he speaks of the so-called wealth of the Catholic Church.

There is not a country in the world where classical and university education costs so little as it does to the Catholics of our Province.

Our teaching communities secure to us also incomparable educational advantages.

What is returned to the Catholics of the Province of Quebec by the 5153 persons? Most perfect religious services, superior education in all its branches, commercial and agricultural instructions, the care and maintenance of the poor, the orphan, the infirm, the sick and of all these unfortunate who depend upon public charity.

Now to say that this "government is irrefragable to Crown or people, claiming an authority above and beyond that of the State," is to state a thing true in itself, but false in the sense that Mr. Sellar gives to his assertion, which is general and without restriction.

As to the extent of the land, it is fixed in the following manner by article 3450 of our Revised Statutes: 'The quantity of land to be acquired for the purposes aforesaid, within the walls of the cities of Quebec and Montreal, respectively, shall not, in the whole, exceed one arpent...

NUMBER OF MINISTERS OF RELIGION. Happily, the census of 1881, an authority almost as worthy of belief as the editor of the Gleaner, gives totally different figures.

Let us have in this province three asylums where the insane and idiots are maintained at the expense of the government.

TAXATION OF RELIGIOUS PROPERTIES. Willfully confusing together the properties of religious communities with those of the churches, Mr. Sellar says that they are held in mortmain, and are "exempt from taxation."

At all events, this ownership in mortmain is not an attribute of the religious character of these orders; it is merely the application of the general law which governs all corporations of this kind.

To this objection an answer is easily made by distinguishing how two sovereignties may be in opposition in the same territory and over the same persons. When two sovereignties are of the same kind, but another State of a different kind, in this there can be nothing repugnant for the reason that all created things are limited to one order and one kind.

Wrong; ecclesiastical property is not placed outside the jurisdiction of the laws governing real estate; when a congregation purchases or sells a property the title deeds are subject to the formalities of registration, in the same way as all other real estate transactions.

REVENUE OF THE CATHOLIC PRIESTS. And what are the revenues and resources of this clergy which Mr. Sellar represents as so rich? The title alone and a very small amount of perquisites commonly called 'le casuel.'

Where is there a reasonable man who conscientiously and sincerely would wish that such orders live at the expense of the people? It is indeed the contrary which is true; it is the people who live to a great extent at the expense of these orders.

As to taxation, Mr. Sellar is simply untruthful, when he says in a general manner that the property of religious corporations is exempt from taxes.

There exists a decided difference as to the respective positions of the Catholic priest and the Protestant minister. Owing to solicity, the former has to provide only for his own support whilst the latter has to maintain a whole family.

It is not that there is a question of two sovereignties, whose order, object, and subject-matter are distinct and different. In other cases, the one imposes no limits upon the other in the sphere which belongs to it.

At any rate if this system be wrong and worthy of condemnation, the Protestants of the Province of Quebec are quite as blamable as the Catholics, as the law of which Mr. Sellar complains applies indiscriminately to all religious congregations.

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