

son's Corps, the Half Pay of which he is said to receive, and the additional Salary of Fifty Pounds, which the late Province of Quebec did pay, and which, by Lord Dorchester's Directions, I now pay, signed the Petition, and is said to be the Author.

Upon some of the Members having a Sort of confidential Communication with me on the Subject I thought it proper to say, in the most decisive Terms, to the Purpose that "The Petition was the Product of a wicked Head and most disloyal Heart, and as such I not only would not assent to, nor reserve for His Majesty's Pleasure, any Bill whatever that should be founded thereon, but would give it my most absolute and decided Negative." On this Ground, the Impropriety of the Terms of the Petition in which the Members of both Houses concurred in the most proper Manner, have I, for this Session, been able to pass by any Consideration on the Subject. Mr. Bethune has the Character of a most loyal Man, and there are those, I am sorry to say, who believe this Petition had its Origin in Montreal, and received Authority from some unadvised Speeches of those who should discountenance all such Proceedings.

No. 8.
Lieutenant
Governor Simcoe
to
the Duke of
Portland,
20th June 1796.

Your Grace will observe that the Artifice of the Petition lies in combining all Orders and Degrees of Dissenters from the Established Church under the indeterminate Name of Presbyterians.

By the Attorney General's Opinion it seems probable that the Bishop or his Commissary can license Ministers who dissent from the Church of England to perform Marriages. If this Opinion can be acted upon I shall endeavour to counteract the Union of the Dissenters by separately enjoining their several Pastors to take out Licences. In the meantime I hope your Grace will take the Subject into your serious Consideration, and give such Directions as may seem expedient before the meeting of the new Provincial Parliament. I have long foreseen this Event; and on the Probability of an improper Association against the National Church did I state my Ideas of the Propriety of establishing, as fast as possible, Clergymen of the Church of England throughout the Province. It is obvious that the next Claims of the Dissenters would be a Partition of the Sevenths set apart for the National Clergy. To enable your Grace more readily to compare the Fallacy of the Petition with the Marriage Act I beg to transmit to your Grace the Acts of the Four Sessions of this Legislature.

No. 2.

Enclosure No. 1.

To the Honourable Representatives of the People of Upper Canada for the Redress of Grievances.

The Petition of the Presbyterian Inhabitants of the County of Grenville in the said Province,

Most humbly sheweth,

That an Act passed in the Second Session of the Legislature of this Province, intituled "An Act to confirm and make valid certain Marriages," &c., which confines the Solemnization of Marriages to the Clergy of the Church of England, and thereby renders those solemnized by Presbyterian Clergymen null and void in Law, and the Issue of such Marriages illegitimate, had greatly astonished and hurt your Petitioners, who are not conscious of a single Blemish in their public Character, from the Memorable Era of 1775 to this Hour, that deserved any disqualifying Distinction.

That Religion being a personal Thing, amenable only to the Divine Jurisprudence, and its outward Forms having no more Connexion, in the Nature of Things, with Civil Government than with Military Discipline, your Petitioners conceive that an honest Man is more deeply interested in Liberty of Conscience than in any thing else in this World, and every good and peaceable Subject is as much entitled to the Exercise of private Judgment in choosing the Form of Worship and Church Government that is most agreeable to his own Ideas, as he is in regard to the Management of his Land or the Model of his House; they can therefore see no Reason why all Christian Marriages, solemnized in the Fear of God, and agreeably to his Law, should not be equally valid by the Laws of Man.