

149

UPPER CANADA.

COPY of an ACT passed by the LEGISLATURE of UPPER CANADA to provide for the SALE of the CLERGY RESERVES, and for the DISTRIBUTION of the PROCEEDS thereof;

TOGETHER WITH

COPY of a DESPATCH from the GOVERNOR GENERAL of CANADA, dated 22d January 1840.

No. 1.

The Right Hon. C. POULETT THOMSON to Lord JOHN RUSSELL.

(No. 36.)

My Lord,

Toronto, 22d January 1840.

THERE is no Subject of such vital Importance to the Peace and Tranquillity of this Province as the Question of the Clergy Reserves; there is none, with reference to the future Union of the Two Provinces, which it is more necessary to determine without Delay. The Records of the Colonial Office will afford ample Evidence of the fatal Effect upon Public Affairs in Upper Canada of the State in which this Matter has now for some Years rested. But no one who has not had the Opportunity of examining upon the Spot the working of this Question can correctly estimate its Importance. It has been for many Years the Source of all the Troubles in the Province; the never-failing Watchword at the Hustings; the perpetual Spring of Discord, Strife, and Hatred. So universally is the Truth of this Proposition admitted, that I have scarcely met with one Man of any Party, or of any Opinion with regard to the Mode of Settlement, who has not declared to me that it would be far better that these Reserves should be altogether taken away from the Province than that they should remain an Object for contending Parties to dispute about.

To leave this Question undetermined, then, is to put an end to all Hope of re-establishing Tranquillity within this Province, even should it remain under a separate Government; but to establish the Union without a Settlement of it, and to transfer the Decision to the United Legislature, would be to add to the Sources of Discord which already unhappily prevail in the Lower Province an entirely new Element of Strife; for amongst the various Evils by which Lower Canada has been visited one, and one only,—perhaps the greatest of all,—has been wanting,—religious Dissension.

Deeply impressed, therefore, with the immense Importance of obtaining from the Legislature a Solution of this long-agitated Question, and in compliance with your Lordship's Instructions, as well as with my own Feelings, I have used every Effort in my Power to bring together the contending Parties; and after much Negotiation I determined on transmitting a Message to the Legislature upon the Subject, and on recommending a Bill which I thought offered some Chance of being accepted by both Branches of the Legislature.

I enclose Copies of my Message and of the Bill which was introduced into the House of Assembly by the Solicitor General; and I am happy to say, that with some Alterations, to which I entertain no Objection, the Measure has received the Sanction of both Houses, and I have now the Satisfaction of transmitting to your Lordship the Bill as passed, with the Addresses from the Council and House of Assembly, as required by Law, and of my Answer.

The Bill was passed by the House of Assembly by a Majority of 28 to 20, and in the Legislative Council, as I have been informed, by 13 to 5. The

(70.)

A

Address

No. 1.
The Right Hon.
C. P. Thomson
to
Lord J. Russell,
22d January 1840.
