

No 2.

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Message from
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MESSAGE from the GOVERNOR GENERAL on the Subject of the CLERGY RESERVES, and Bill for the Disposal of said Reserves, and Disposition of the Proceeds thereof. Governor General, 6th January 1840.

C. POULETT THOMSON.

Toronto, 6th January 1840.

PURSUANT to his Notice the Governor General now begs to call the Attention of the House of Assembly to the State of the Clergy Reserves.

As will appear from his Message to the House of Assembly of the 23d ultimo, Her Majesty was compelled to withhold Her Royal Assent from a Bill passed last Session, for reinvesting the Clergy Reserves conditionally in the Imperial Legislature, and Her Majesty's Government were desirous that the Provincial Legislature should itself afford a Solution of this much debated and very complicated Question.

The Governor General does not conceal from himself the Difficulties by which this Subject is surrounded. The frequent Agitation of it in both Houses—the various Opinions which have been announced upon it—and the different Schemes which have unsuccessfully been brought forward, render the Settlement of it, even in this Province, a Work of great Embarrassment; but it becomes yet more difficult to arrive at a final Solution from the peculiar Position in which the Question stands as contradistinguished from other Subjects which may engage the Attention of the Legislature,—since not merely is the Assent of the Crown required to whatever may be ultimately determined upon here, but the Decision of the Provincial Parliament is open to Rejection by Address from either House of Parliament in England.

Still, in the Opinion of the Governor General, the Circumstances of the present Time imperiously demand a Settlement of this long agitated Question. The probable Approach of the Union of the Two Provinces would at once suggest the Expediency of bringing to a Termination before that Event shall occur a Matter so peculiarly affecting Upper Canada; nor is it less necessary, with a view to remove a Source of unceasing Excitement and Discord within the Province, the protracted Existence of which opposes a Bar to that Tranquillity so necessary for its Prosperity.

Deeply impressed with these Feelings, the Governor General has given to the Subject all the Attention in his Power; and he has directed a Measure to be prepared, to which he earnestly invites the Consideration of the House of Assembly, in the anxious Hope that it may lead to a final and satisfactory Adjustment.

He proposes that the Remainder of the Land should be sold, and the annual Proceeds of the whole Fund, when realized, be distributed, according to Terms which will be clearly defined, between the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, and such other religious Persuasions as are recognized by the Law of Upper Canada, for the Support of religious Instruction within the Province, and for the Promotion there of the great and sacred Objects for which these different Bodies are established or associated.

He trusts that there will be found in such a Plan a just Regard to the Objects for which this Property was destined, tempered by a due Consideration of the State of Society and of the Feelings which have grown up in this Province and in the Legislature upon the Question; and he confidently recommends it for Adoption as the Measure which, in his Opinion, will afford the surest Prospect, if assented to by the Legislature here, of proving final, and, if final, of conducing to the Peace and Happiness of the Inhabitants of this Province generally.

DRAFT OF BILL.

WHEREAS it is expedient to provide for the final Disposition of the Lands called Clergy Reserves in this Province, and for the Appropriation of the yearly Income arising or to arise therefrom for the Maintenance of Religion and the Advancement of religious Knowledge:

Draft of Bill.