

assessments levied on real estate, at the will of the clergy, for building and repairing Churches, *Poslyters* or Mansees, and other ecclesiastical edifices. Under this compulsory system it is easy to see how all parts of the country are adorned with magnificent religious structures, while the people dwell in hovels, eat scanty or unwholesome food, and wear coarse and home-made fabrics. No country however fertile, no people, however industrious and frugal, can prosper under these conditions. It is true that the people are supposed, under certain limitations as to a majority of them being agreed, to have a voice in determining the amount of such assessments, but when we take into account the almost universal ignorance in which they are kept, and the overwhelming power of the clergy exercised through spiritual penalties and otherwise, and the fact that all such assessments and dues are recoverable by legal process, in the same manner as municipal or school taxes in Ontario, the rights of the people and their ability to resist the will of the priesthood become purely nominal. Protestants may feel little or no force in the spiritual penalties of Rome, they may ridicule the thought of being stripped of their property and reduced to want through fear of purgatory, because they have no confidence in this Pagan institution. But to a people who fully believe in it, and are convinced that the sacraments are the only channels of grace, and that these are entirely in the hands of the clergy, and may be granted and withheld at their pleasure or caprice, nothing can be more terrible than ecclesiastical censures and the fear of being eternally ruined for lack of these sacraments. Romanism is thus doubly fastened on the necks of this people, both by civil and by spiritual jurisdiction, which is most absolute and potent. This was the state of things established under French rule; and the conquest of the Province by Britain did nothing to unsettle it. On the contrary the British Government sanctioned and confirmed the claims of the Hierarchy. By the Articles of Capitulation in 1759 and 1760, by the treaty of peace in 1763, and by the Act of the Imperial Parliament in 1774, all previous rights and powers of the clergy were conserved, and the Church regarded as virtually established by law. In the Act of 1774 it is expressly declared, that "the Clergy of the said Church (of Rome) may hold, receive, and enjoy their accustomed dues and rights with respect to such persons only as shall profess the said religion."

The exemption from tithes, etc., thus secured to Protestants is satisfactory; and under the provisions of this Act Papists, too, have been allowed to free themselves from such payments by serving a written notice on their priests to the effect that they have abjured Romanism; and thus not a few have escaped from bondage, and are to-day prosperous citizens enjoying the freedom of Protestants and British subjects.

But this boon has been accompanied with a counterbalancing drawback. Through the skill and persistent efforts of the clergy, and the negligence, if not something worse, of our legislators, one of the provisions of this same act has been most flagrantly set aside, and that to the serious detriment of the country. The ninth clause stipulates, "That nothing in this act shall extend, or be construed to extend, to any lands that have been granted by His Majesty, or shall hereafter be granted by His Majesty, his heirs and successors, to be held in free and common socage." In utter defiance of this guarantee, the Romish Church has secured legislation by which she has extended the parish system, with all its machinery and impoverishing disabilities, over many portions of the province previously free, and is thus