

FURTHER PAPERS

RELATIVE TO

THE CLERGY RESERVES IN CANADA.

(No. 21.)

No. 1.

CANADA.

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COPY of a DESPATCH from the Earl of ELGIN and KINCARDINE to
Earl GREY.

Government House, Toronto, February 4, 1851.

(Received February 24, 1851.)

MY LORD,

WITH reference to a communication which I lately received from your Lordship, intimating that you had been apprized that petitions to Her Majesty and the two Houses of the Imperial Parliament against any disturbance of the existing arrangement of the Canadian Clergy Reserves had been already sent to England from the diocese of Toronto, and desiring me to furnish any information on this subject which I might possess, I have the honour to state that I have no knowledge of the petitions in question. Soon after the adoption by the Legislative Assembly of the Address to Her Majesty transmitted in my Despatch, No. 198,* of the 19th July, 1850, a circular letter, of which I herewith enclose a printed copy, appeared in a provincial newspaper, addressed to the clergy of the diocese of Toronto, and signed by the archdeacons in the absence of the Lord Bishop, urging members of the Church of England to petition against the prayer of that address. I am not, however, cognizant of any proceedings which may have taken place in pursuance of that recommendation.

2. An application was indeed lately made to me, with the view of ascertaining whether it would be proper to transmit through me certain petitions to Her Majesty on the subject of the Clergy Reserves, which, it was alleged, were in course of preparation by congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Lower Canada in connexion with the Church of Scotland. This application was answered in the affirmative, but I have not received the petitions alluded to. I may observe, however, with reference to this point, that the present position of the Presbyterian Church in Canada greatly increases the difficulty of maintaining intact the settlement of the Clergy Reserve question, effected by the Imperial Act, 3 and 4 Vict. chap. 78. By that statute a certain proportion of the proceeds of the Clergy Reserves was set apart for this body, which was then united. Since the period of its enactment, however, the unhappy disruption of the Scotch Establishment has taken place, and a considerable section of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, by joining in the secession, has disqualified itself from sharing in this portion of the endowment. By this means the original intention of the Act has been to a certain extent frustrated.

3. Although, as the usual practice of transmitting such documents through the Governor-General has in this case been departed from, I am unable to give any information respecting the petitioners, I think it by no means improbable that petitions against the prayer of the address of the Legislative Assembly, signed to the extent which your Lordship describes, or even more numerous, may have been sent from this province. It is notorious that a large portion of the clergy of the Church of England and of the Presbyterian Church in connexion with the Church of Scotland are favourable to the maintenance of the existing settlement of the Clergy Reserve question. It would indeed

* See Papers relating to the Clergy Reserves in Canada, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command, February 1851,