

I believe I am safe in saying, that the great majority of the inhabitants, among whom are comprehended the Land Company's settlers, are of the Church of England; and the services of some of our missionaries, who have partially visited this tract of country, have been thankfully received by those who pass under other names. Between Wodehouse upon Lake Erie, and St. Thomas, a distance of upwards of 50 miles, which may be travelled by two different roads, there is not one clergyman upon either. From the reports made to me by one of our travelling missionaries, and by a solitary catechist stationed at Port Burwell, I know that there is a great body of church people scattered through this part of the country. In the whole of the newly-erected district of Wellington, which is every where scattered over with a Church population, there is only one clergyman of the Church. In the district of Newcastle there are six. I have good reason to know, that if 10 more could be immediately added, there would be full employment for them, with regular congregations. In one or two of the districts there is a missionary engaged in labours exclusively of an itinerant character; but how sparingly the word and ordinances of God are supplied, even to those among the unprovided settlements which are thus far favoured, your Excellency will have no difficulty in conceiving. The clergy, however, except in the few comparatively large towns, are almost all more or less itinerants. I take one example almost at hazard from the returns officially made to me, to which I could produce many parallel instances: it is that of a clergyman in the Bathurst district, a place noted at certain seasons for the excessive badness of the roads, who performs three full services every Sunday, distributing his labours in such a way in four different places, that once a fortnight he travels 28, and once a fortnight 16 miles; besides which, he has in the winter months four week-day appointments for divine service. Most of the clergy have what they call out-stations, which they serve in this manner on week-days, to supply settlements which would otherwise be wholly destitute; and many of them make occasional visits during the year to places still more remote. These objects they do not accomplish without many sacrifices, and much severe exertion; but the reward which they seek is not in the praise of men, and it is the value rather than the merit of their services to which I desire to solicit the attention of your Excellency. I do not speak here of those higher effects which constitute the ground and ultimate object of their ministry, but in proportion as means are taken for the extension of their influence, in such proportion, my Lord, I have no hesitation in saying,—for the effect is every where sufficiently marked,—that the loyalty, the good order, the steady habits, the peaceable and industrious deportment of the population will be promoted, and the ties strengthened which bind the colony to the parent state. Apart, also, from any consideration of preserving the supremacy of Britain over the Canadas, there is a sacred duty to be performed in laying such a foundation for the moral and religious character of the inhabitants in time to come as will best ensure their happiness and welfare; and it is not for me to point out to your Excellency that it is now that this foundation must be laid. In the young settlements now struggling into existence, or beginning to develop the signs of prosperous improvement, we see the germ of a great and important future, which must be vitally affected by the mould given to the population in this early stage of its formation. Millions who are yet unborn will have cause to bless or to reproach the present Government of Britain for the measures taken to provide for them those advantages, and to transmit to them those habits, principles and attachments, which form the only sure basis of national happiness.

Up to this period, although not a few people have been lost to the Church from the want of her ministrations, and a far more extensive defection must inevitably follow if things are left much longer upon their present footing; yet very generally the privations which have been experienced in this respect have served to teach our congregations the full value of those privileges which are enjoyed at home. The importunate solicitations which I constantly receive from different quarters of the province for the supply of clerical services; the overflowing warmth of feeling with which the travelling missionaries of the Church are greeted in their visits to the destitute settlements; the marks of affection and respect towards my own office which I experienced throughout the province; the exertions made by the people, in a great number of instances, to erect Churches even without any definite prospect of a minister, and the examples in which this has been done by individuals at their own private expense; the rapidly increasing circulation of the religious newspaper, which is called "*The Church*:" these are altogether unequivocal and striking evidences of the attachment to Church principles which pervades a great body of the population.

I would here beg leave to draw the attention of your Excellency to the bearing of these facts upon the question of supporting the clergy in Canada by the voluntary contributions of the people. Here is a deep sense of the value of religious services, and a strong manifestation of attachment to the Church. The moving principle, therefore, is not wanting; and if, with this advantage, the system cannot work successfully in Canada, it may be inferred that it cannot succeed there at all. And I am more deeply convinced than ever that such is the fact. In the few examples in which the experiment has been tried, it has rarely been otherwise than a failure, and in most cases it would be hopeless to attempt it. Even if the country were far more advanced, and the people had some command of money, I am persuaded that a faithful, respectable and independent body of clergy, sufficient for the wants even of that part of the population who already appreciate their labours, much more of that whom it is their duty to win to a care for religion, can never be provided by the operation of the voluntary system.

Your Excellency, I doubt not, is alive to the necessity of bringing at last to an issue the long-protracted questions respecting the clergy reserves, and putting an end to the painful