

15



HISTORY OF THE CLERGY RESERVE QUESTION.

*Extracted from the Report of the Niagara District
Branch of the Church Society, D. T., 1864.*

The first object contemplated in the constitution of the Church Society is attention to the temporalities of the Church; and your managing committee consequently think that a dispassionate view of the Clergy Reserve question comes legitimately within the sphere of their duties. That they are the more ready to undertake inasmuch as the destitute portions of the diocese — for whose benefit especially the Church Society was so auspiciously established in 1842 — are those which will first feel the injury inflicted upon the church if we are deprived of our share of the Reserves. Such places as Toronto, Hamilton, Kingston, London, Bytown, and St. Catharines could easily support their clergy; nay, even Grimsby, Thorold, and Fort Erie might do the same, with some little exertion; but the back townships could do nothing of the kind, and these places which now gladly pay into the treasury of the Church Society in order that the Gospel, in all its fullness, may be sent to their destitute brethren in the back townships, would be fully occupied in supplying their own wants.

Our managing committee, moreover, believe that the vast majority of the people of this country do not understand the question, because of late years especially they have heard only one side of the argument; whilst no attempts have been made to bring the other side before them; and that consequently, they are more from want of knowledge than from perversity of mind in urging upon the Legislature the secularization of these lands.