

Right Hon.
C. P. Thomson to
Lord John Russell,
13 March 1840.

gratulate your Excellency on your Excellency's return to this Province, and to express our ardent hopes that the efforts of your Excellency to promote the welfare and prosperity of Her Majesty's Canadian subjects may be crowned with the fullest success.

It is our duty to represent to your Excellency that the extinction of the feudal tenure has long been earnestly desired by the industrious and intelligent population of the Province, and that, more especially with reference to the city and island of Montreal, a commutation, based upon equitable and liberal terms, will meet with the approbation as well of the censitaires, as of that large body of persons who are deterred by the continuance of an oppressive and obstructive system from the investment of capital in real estate, and from prosecuting those improvements which indicate an advance in civilization and in the arts of life.

We have great satisfaction in being able to state to your Excellency that the signers to the accompanying petition regard the conditions of the Ordinance passed by the Special Council of his Excellency Sir John Colborne, late Governor-in-chief, and again submitted by your Excellency in November last to your Excellency's Special Council, as most equitable and highly liberal. We are instructed to express to your Excellency the deep sense entertained by the petitioners of the honour and wisdom of the British Government in exerting itself to effect an amicable and satisfactory adjustment of a question in which the feelings and interests of the petitioners are so largely involved.

The petition we lay before your Excellency is signed by 6,370 persons, representing the great mass of the censitaires and inhabitants of the three seigniories. Although it has not been deemed necessary to distinguish proprietors of lots and houses from other signers, we beg leave to inform your Excellency, that of 2,000 censitaires, being the entire number in and about the city of Montreal, a large majority have affixed their names to the petition, and that the signers from the country parishes, where the petition was submitted to the people at public meetings convoked according to custom at the church doors, and where in no instance was manifested any difference of opinion, are almost exclusively censitaires and heads of families, representing in each case the sentiments of the parish to which they belong.

We rejoice in having it in our power to state further to your Excellency, that although a majority of the signers are Roman-catholics of French origin, the petition has also been signed by a large number of English, Irish, and Scotch, of various religious persuasions: we are confident that your Excellency will perceive with pleasure, that differences of religion and origin have not altogether banished from our soil a sense of justice and spirit of liberality, and that while we seek by all legal and constitutional means to forward our individual and collective interests, we are not insensible to the sacred nature of established and possessory rights.

[Signed by the Chairman, Secretary, and 43 others.]

Montreal, 13 March 1840.

To his Excellency the Right Hon. C. Poulett Thomson, Governor-general of British North America, Captain-general and Governor-in-chief in and over the Provinces of Lower and Upper Canada, &c. &c. &c.

THE Petition of the undersigned proprietors of lands, houses, and lots, in the city and in the seigniorie of the Island of Montreal, in the seigniories of St. Sulpice, and the Lake of the Two Mountains, and other citizens and residents thereof, most respectfully represents;

That it is the anxious desire of your petitioners that the projected arrangement between the Government of Her Majesty and the Reverend Ecclesiastics of the seminary of St. Sulpice of Montreal, for the gradual commutation and final extinction of the feudal tenure on the said seigniories, may be brought to immediate completion; and that it is the opinion of your petitioners that the arrangement is liberal on the part of the seigniors, and advantageous to the censitaires.

Wherefore,

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be pleased
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