

Hence the 3rd and 4th Victoria, chap. 78, recognizes them all, and makes this recognition the basis of the settlement; nor does it exclude the Roman Catholics, although they are not distinctly named.

The proceedings under the provisions of this Act, since it became law in August, 1840, are simply thus:—The two National Churches of England and Scotland in the Province have taken their shares of the Reserves annually, as allowed them by the State. The Wesleyan Methodists and Roman Catholics receive such a portion as the Governor General in council judges right and reasonable. The Free Church of Scotland has not, so far as I know, yet spoken; but taking the principles of that large and respectable denomination to be those of the late Dr. Chalmers, there is nothing to prevent her from doing so.

The other denominations, it is said, refuse to receive any relief from the Clergy Reserve; and some of them allege that they do so from conscientious principles.

Be this as it may, and referring to the census of 1848, it appears that out of 723,332, the population of Canada West, more than two-thirds feel disposed to avail themselves of the advantages which the 3rd and 4th Victoria, chap. 78 allows them, and less than one-third decline such advantages. Or, if we deduct the Free Church, because she has not yet decided, we have still nearly two to one content with the statute, and therefore not inclined to disturb it.

Moreover, since its enactment in 1840, there had been, till the last session of the Provincial Parliament, no agitation or complaint against it in the colony. The settlement was deemed by all parties absolute and final. It is true the Church of England respectfully petitioned the Legislature to grant her the management of the small portion of the patrimony left her, as there was ample proof of its being unreasonably wasted and sacrificed by the Provincial authorities; but the prayer was refused; and seeing no remedy, she quietly submitted, and instead of disturbing the colony, sought to do her best with the scanty revenue which this injudicious management was likely to allow her. We had even learned to trouble ourselves no longer with the painful departure from honourable trusteeship, which was daily passing before our eyes.

But from this patient and general acquiescence we were suddenly awakened, by the Commissioner of Crown Lands again introducing the Clergy Reserve question, on the 18th of June last, to the notice of the House of Assembly. This gentleman, not satisfied with what has been admitted by both Governments, that the subject had been finally settled, now seeks to confiscate the small remainder, and thus to deprive the Church of every vestige of endowment.

That a member of Government could have so far forgotten the duty of his position, or have been suffered by his colleagues, to re-open a question which, after producing infinite trouble, had been settled in the most solemn manner by the Imperial Legislature, and in which all the most eminent statesmen took an anxious interest, was not to be anticipated. Yet such is the case; and for the convulsions and evils which this fatal step may produce, the Executive Government of Canada is wholly responsible.

We were the less prepared for this extraordinary movement on the part of the Provincial Government, because, on the 29th of April, 1846, a select Committee of the Legislative Assembly, of which the same Commissioner of Crown Lands was a leading member, made a Report on the Petition of the Church of England, praying for the management of her share of the Reserves, which report was received and accepted by the Assembly; and although it refuses the prayer of the Petition, establishes the following points:—

1. That the question of the Clergy Reserves was considered, by the Imperial Parliament, finally settled by the 3 & 4 Victoria, chap. 78.

2. That it was accepted as such final settlement by the inhabitants of the Province of Canada.

3. A strong recommendation is added, that no change or deviation from this settlement be sanctioned by the Legislature.

Hence we find that the pledged faith and solemn guarantee of the Imperial and Colonial Legislatures have been given to this settlement; that the property, so far at least as regards the two National Churches, has been granted and received by them; and though under trust, is actually in their possession. We therefore contend that it is not competent to any power to legislate again upon their shares without their consent and approbation.

Again, the main question of renewing agitation on the Clergy Reserves was carried in the Provincial Assembly by two votes only, the mover and seconder, both avowedly hostile to the two Churches of England and Scotland; and surely this meagre minority did not justify the colonial authorities in disturbing the peace of the community, and placing themselves in opposition to a British statute, their own recorded assent, and the faith of the Imperial Government.

We are, nevertheless, bound in charity to believe that all the facts were not communicated as they ought to have been to Earl Grey, who was in all probability ignorant of their existence, because it does not seem that he took any part in the passing of the 3rd & 4th Vic., chap. 78, for his name does not appear in the proceedings.

Indeed, the more we consider this subject, the greater is our amazement at the infatuation of our Colonial Government, in forcing it back, after a silence of ten years, for no other reason it would seem but to inflame the public mind. This course was the more to be lamented, because there had been a courteous exchange of social civilities between the Churches of England and Rome from the first settlement of the Province till the union of the two Canadas in 1840, during which period they pursued their different objects in harmony and peace.

But since that unwise measure, causes of irritation and estrangement have been gradually arising. The Church of England feels that she no longer possesses her just influence in the Legislature of the colony, and is thrown, on all occasions where her interests are concerned, into a hopeless minority. She finds her ancient opponents, the Dissenters, who were in former times often in a minority, or so weak as to be unable to refuse her justice, now reinforced on all occasions where she may be mortified or injured by the Roman Catholic votes from Lower Canada. She feels that she lost her University by this unhallowed combination; and when she requested separate schools, for the religious education of her own children, her prayer was rejected by the votes of Romanists, while they secured the same privilege for themselves.

Thus, in the course of a few years, our holy Church has been deprived of the power of educating her children in her own way, and is now threatened with the loss of the remainder of her patrimony; while the Romanists who have brought about all these evils have been gratified in every wish, and possess an endowment of twenty times the value of that which they are assiduously to wrest from the established Church of the Empire.

It might have been hoped that the Roman Catholics would have abstained from voting on such matters as concerned our Church, and left them in the hands of the Protestant members of Upper Canada, to whom they more especially belonged. And I regret that this course was not pursued; because it involves a delicate point of honour, worthy of respect; and because the destruction of the patrimony of the Churches of England and Scotland, and of such

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