

# First Report of the Central Committee,

On the Petition to the Imperial Parliament, from Christians of all denominations in Upper Canada:

Committee Room, York, Sat-  
urday, June 28th, 1828. }

[Extract from the Minutes.]  
COMMITTEE MET AT 8 P. M.

Members present.

Mr. JESSE KETCHUM, Chairman,  
DOCTOR MORRISON, Secretary,  
Rev. THOMAS VAUX,  
Rev. JAMES HARRIS,  
Mr. STEWART,  
Mr. MACKENZIE.

The following report was read by the Secretary, submitted to the Committee, and unanimously agreed to.

To the Petitioners of all denominations of Christians of Upper Canada, to the Honorable the House of Commons, and to the Assembly of Upper Canada, relative to the Honorable and Venerable Archdeacon Strachan's Charter, and the Charter of King's College, about to be established in the vicinity of York, U. Canada:

We, the Central Committee, to whom you intrusted your Petitions, beg leave to report as follows:

That we forwarded your Petitions to the Honorable the House of Commons, having 8000 signatures attached thereto, to an agent appointed by us for the purpose of laying the same before that honorable body—we also recommended it to the consideration of several of its members, and to the delegation from the Petitioners of Lower Canada, now in London, and have now the satisfaction of being enabled to state that it was received in London, on the 17th April last, and presented to parliament on the 2nd of May then following, by Joseph Hume, Esquire, M. P. as we have been advised by our Agent, Mr. Ryerson, in the following letter, addressed to Doctor Morrison, Secretary to the Committee.

London, May 5th, 1828.

DEAR SIR:

I received your letter with the petition relative to the clergy reserves, on the 17th April, and lost no time in making the necessary arrangements for having it presented to the Honorable the House of Commons. Mr. Hume undertook to bring forward the petition, and notice was given that it would be presented on the 25th, when Mr. Huskisson was to move the House for a select Com. to take into consideration the civil government of the Canadas. Mr. Huskisson's motion, on account of his illness, was postponed to the 1st May. Mr. Hume deferred your business till the same time as we wished to have the whole business discussed simultaneously and to have the petition referred to the same committee. I attended the House of Commons on the 1st May, but the discussion of some other business occupied the house so late an hour that Mr. Huskisson adjourned his motion to the 2nd, but Mr. Hume presented the petition with a few remarks reserving a further explanation till Mr. Huskisson made his motion, which he did on 2nd May. A committee was granted "To take into consideration the 31st Geo. 3rd, and to report what alterations &c. were expedient &c." Indeed they are to enquire into all things connected with the Canadas; and in answer to Mr. Stanley, Mr. Huskisson intimated that the subject of the clergy reserves should be included, though he gave no opinion on the subject. The Right Honorable Secretary, Mr. Huskisson, disclaimed the least desire or intention of doing any thing contrary to the wishes or interests of the people in Upper Canada. He expressed a wish to know their wants and circumstances, and most distinctly declared that he was honest in the proposed inquiry to consult the best interests of all parties. Both sides of the house paid the Upper Canadians many compliments for their loyalty and attachment to their country. The liberal sentiments uttered on both sides of the house would with us have been branded as republicanism. Mr. Stanley spoke very handsomely of the United States, as well as of U. Canada, and so did Sir James Mackintosh, who brought forward the Lower Canada Petition, as you will see by the accompanying newspapers.—I refer you to Mr. Stanley's speech, which is most correctly reported in the Morning Chronicle. This young gentleman, it will be recollected, was in Canada a few years ago. He is very clever, and, as you will see by his speech, of most liberal principles—he takes an active part and a lively interest in Canadian affairs and though nominally in the opposition, his opinions on these subjects have much weight with the ministry. He is one of the committee. I feel deeply the importance of the business your committee has entrusted to me, and the responsibility it involves. I called on several of the members of Parliament, and have written twice to Mr. Secretary Huskisson, and used every means to procure a fair, and consequently, to so good a cause a favorable hearing. (I will write again by the next packet 8 days hence, when perhaps I may be able to give you more distinct information. There is in the imperial

parliament a feeling most favourable to a liberal government in Upper Canada.) It will probably be some weeks before the committee get through with the Canada business. I expect to be called before it to give evidence. The civil and religious liberty of Canada is a subject dear to my soul, so you may expect that I will do all I can.

Yours most truly,  
GEO. RYERSON.

DOCTOR MORRISON, }  
York, U. C. }

We likewise subjoin extracts from the speeches of some of the members of the House of Commons, who took part in the debate on the affairs of the Canadas, 2nd May last, as reported in the London Morning Chronicle of May 3rd, which newspaper was transmitted to the secretary of the committee, by the agent of the petitioners, who states that having been present during the debate, he is satisfied of the correctness of the report in that newspaper.

We expect to receive, by the next packet from Liverpool to New York, further and more decisive information from our agent in London, concerning the results of the enquiry now making in the British parliament, into the state of religion and education in this province, and will take the earliest opportunity of publishing and circulating such authentic intelligence as we may receive, relative to these important subjects.

JESSE KETCHUM, Chairman,  
T. D. MORRISON, Secretary.

Extracts from the debate on the Civil Government of the Canadas, in the House of Commons, on the 3rd May last.

MR. STANLEY.

He was desirous not to provoke any hostile feeling; but at the same time he must say, that the case would be imperfectly treated before the committee, if the inquiry was not conducted into the state of the Canadas generally, and if the committee did not advert to the Ecclesiastical Question, which should now at once and for ever be settled. He was ready to contend, if he were then sitting on the Committee, that if any exclusive privileges were given to the Church of England, not only would the measure be repugnant to every principle of sound legislation, but contrary to the spirit and intention of the Act of 1791, under which the reserves were made for the Protestant Clergy.—He trusted the whole subject would be fully and completely discussed in the committee; for, if he understood the scope of the inquiry, it was to go into all the Questions affected by the Act of 1791. He would not enter further into it at the present moment, except to express his hope, that the House would carefully guard Canada against the evils which religious dissensions already had produced in this country [hear!] & in Ireland [cheers], where they had examples to teach them what to shun [cheers]. They had seen the evil consequences at home. God forbid they should not profit by their own experience, and more especially in legislating for a people bordering on a country where religious intolerance and religious exclusions were unknown [cheers]—a country to which Parliament looked in passing the Act of 1791, as all the great men who argued the question then expressly declared. It was important, he thought, that his Majesty's Canadian subjects should not have occasion to look across the narrow boundary that separates them from the United States, and see any thing there to envy [cheers].

SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH.

In Upper Canada, the people were much disappointed by the immense grants of land which had been made to the Church of England, and the reserves kept for it are for a Church which is not of the religion of the majority of the people. Such endowments may be held sacred when they have been long made, and where the law has long known them; but I do not see the propriety of now making such endowments for a Church that is not of the religion of the people; nor do I understand the regulations which have been made for the New College of Upper Canada. I see with astonishment that in this country, where the majority of the people do not belong to the Church of England, the Professors must all subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles; so that if Dr. Adam Smith were alive, he could not fill the Professor's Chair of Political Economy; and if Dr. Black were alive, he would be excluded from the Chair of Chemistry. In short, these regulations would have excluded almost all the great teachers of the last age, had they been then in existence. I do not know what will be the consequence; but a great part of the settlers in Canada came from the United States of America—from that land of liberty in which the intrusion of law into the domain of religious liberty is never suffered.—It is a bad augury, I think, for the administration of the colony, that opinions, prevalent at the distance of some thousands of miles, should be the foundation of the charter of the new college; and it is still worse, that if those opini-

ons be only the opinions of a faction, we cannot interpose to correct the injustice.

MR. HUME.

The House could not look at the transactions of the last twelve months, without seeing that Government was disposed to offend and disgust the colonies. There had not been an instance for a century, of such a Petition being presented to that House as that he had laid before it yesterday. Let not the Right Honourable Gentleman deceive himself. The fault was not in the Canadas, but in him. Last year, when a Petition was presented relative to the state of Upper Canada, it was met by a proper feeling on the part of Government. The conduct of the Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Stanley), who was then Under Secretary for the colonies, deserved praise. As soon as it was laid before Lord Goderich, he stated his resolution to redress the grievances of the Petitioners. What was the result? The greatest possible satisfaction and joy in the colony; and that he offered as a proof that the colonists would always be easily satisfied by attention to their grievances. It was scarcely credible—but it appeared that while the discussions were going on last Session, in which the general opinion of the House was expressed against the introduction of religious dissensions into the colonies, and the Right Honourable Gentleman himself had stated that it was desirable to prevent any one sect from acquiring an ascendancy, the ink was scarcely dry on that charter which had since created animosity and alarm throughout the Colony. When the bill was before the house last Session to regulate the appropriation of the clergy reserves, it was discussed several times, and the opinion of the House was decidedly expressed against any appropriation of those lands to the use of any one sect of christians. They were intended, it was understood, for the common benefit of all Protestants. Yet the charter for the establishment of the University was dated the 17th of March, and the House would hardly believe, that anxious as Government had professed to be to allay the ferment respecting the clergy reserves, and after all the measures taken by the Assembly, and the discussions for several years, this charter required all the Professors and Officers of the University to subscribe the 39 Articles of the church of England.—This was the spirit in which the regulations were drawn up for a public seminary, at which the youth of Upper Canada were to be educated. He had reason to believe that his Majesty's Government had been much imposed upon by Dr. Strachan, whose statements had been completely exposed by the Petition he had presented yesterday, signed by 8000 christians of all denominations. That Rev. Gentleman had aroused all classes by his aspersions upon them. He had thrown out the most vague accusations and suspicions respecting their fidelity and loyalty, and had especially addressed his calumnies to the Royal ear. Among other misrepresentations, Dr. Strachan stated, that of all the Clergymen in Upper Canada, not belonging to the Church of England, there were only five who were not from the United States, where, he said, they acquired opinions at variance with their duty as subjects of his Majesty. He asserted also, that they were under the influence of the American Conference, and that the Colonial Government had no control over them. This was a gross misrepresentation; yet by means of it Dr. Strachan had endeavoured to persuade his Majesty's Government to increase the Clergy of Upper Canada, and make a change which would ultimately cost the country upwards of 300,000l. a year. What would the House say, when he told them that the members of the Church of England formed only a tenth part of the population, and when they heard how grossly Dr. Strachan had slandered the other Clergymen of Upper Canada? By the investigation which had been instituted in consequence of these misrepresentations, it appeared that there were altogether 235 Clergymen in Upper Canada, of whom there were only 31 Ministers of the church of England. Yet, on the recommendation of this Reverend Gentleman, his Majesty's Ministers had resolved to establish 300 Ministers of the church of England at the public expence, and endow a University for the education of all classes, where the Professors were all required to belong to the sect which comprised only a tenth part of the population. So far from the clergy having been educated in the United States, of 133 ministers of the Methodists & Baptists, only 11 had not been born and educated in the King's dominions. How utterly false the statements of the Rev. Gentleman were, as to the friendly feeling of the Canadians towards the church of England, was proved by the Resolution of the Assembly, against the exclusive appropriation of the clergy reserves to any one body of Protestant clergy. The Assembly consisted of only 30 members, of whom 27 voted in its favor. In conclusion, the Hon. Gentleman advised Government no longer to treat the colonies as conquered provinces, but rather as integral parts of the country whose welfare they were bound to promote.