

any serious "difference of opinion" with the Legislature and Government of Canada, but to act with them, if possible, in friendly concert, upon a subject of such great and enduring importance to the Canadian people, especially of the Upper Province.

7. Her Majesty's Government desire to call the attention of the Commons of Canada to the circumstances under which the Imperial Act was passed.

8. After a long period of agitation, and frequent attempts at legislation on the part of the Upper Canadian Assembly, an Act was passed by the Parliament of that Province, for placing the disposal of the Clergy Reserves in the hands of the Imperial Parliament. This Act was not confirmed, for reasons stated in Lord John Russell's despatch to Lord Sydenham of the 7th February 1839. Another Act, providing for the sale and disposal of the Clergy Reserves, was subsequently passed by the Provincial Legislature. This Act would have received the Royal assent, but for a legal objection which was found to be insuperable.

9. In consequence of the legal difficulty to the confirmation by the Crown of the Provincial Act, the Act 3 & 4 Vict. c. 78, similar in principle though differing in detail from the Act sent from Canada, was passed by the Imperial Parliament.

10. Her Majesty's Government cannot fail to remember, that not only was the Imperial Act similar in principle to the Provincial Act, but that the former was passed and regarded at the same time, both in Canada and in this country, as a final settlement of a long agitated and most difficult question; and the settlement of which had moreover been pressed upon the Imperial Government by successive Governors of the Canadian Provinces, and by the general wish of the Canadian people.

11. Her Majesty's Government would further remind the House of Assembly that the generally admitted necessity of permanently settling this long debated question, had reference, not only to the manifest evils of prolonged agitation, but also to the circumstances under which the reunion of the two Provinces of Canada was then about to take place.

12. It was held, and in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government it was wisely held, to be of paramount importance that a permanent settlement of the Clergy Reserve question should precede the act of reunion.

13. In considering, therefore, how far it is right or expedient to reopen this question, it is impossible for Her Majesty's advisers to overlook the fact, that since it has been decided, the two Provinces, with a population for the most part distinct both in race and religion, have been united under one representative Government.

14. Her Majesty's advisers have pleasure in expressing their high sense of the loyalty and good feeling of the French Canadian population of the Eastern Province. They have the satisfaction of believing that friendly feeling between the French and British population is steadily and constantly increasing; and they would deprecate, in the most earnest manner, any course of action on the part of the Provincial Parliament, which might have the least tendency to interrupt those amicable relations which now so happily subsist between the two races.

15. The French population of the Lower Province enjoy the blessing of an exemplary, a well educated, and a numerous priesthood, with ample endowments for the support of the priests, and for the maintenance of exclusive educational institutions.

16. From the period of the conquest of Canada till the present day, these endowments have been scrupulously respected.

17. Her Majesty's Government have no disposition to question the right or to impugn the motives of such of the representatives of the French population of the Eastern province in the Canadian Parliament, as may deem it their duty to vote, either for the repeal of the Clergy Reserve Act, or for the secularization of the Clergy Reserves. But they feel a deep interest in the peace and welfare