

## DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

QUEBEC, 29th March, 1855.

## CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN THE COLONY.

Mr. Cameron moved the address of which he had given notice the preceding evening. He supported his motion with arguments nearly a repetition of those he had employed when the matter was brought forward at first, but with some fuller illustration, and a more particular account of the history of the question of the Queen's supremacy in the Colonies, and of the attempts made at different times, first by the old colony of Massachusetts Bay, and later by the Australian colonies, to obtain the right to manage their own affairs.

Mr. Loranger sustained the resolution, saying that he was in favor of entire religious freedom—of each church being allowed to govern itself, and that the liberty he, as a Catholic claimed, he wanted to bestow upon others. If he understood the question properly, there were certain acts on the British statute book which declared that the supremacy of the Church of England belonged to the Queen, and that even out of the realm of England, the members of the Church could not meet in Synod. It appeared further, that there had been several petitions from Colonial bodies of Churchmen, praying that these statutes should be repealed. What was asked for, as he understood it, was not to give any privileges; but that those statutes which prevented this assembling together in synod should be repealed. In other words, the object of the address was to place the Church of England on the same footing as all other churches in the colony.

Mr. Laberge asked if the demand from the members of the Church of England was unanimous.

Mr. Cameron said yes.

Messrs. Felton and Gamble supported the address.

Mr. Drummond said he saw no objection to the address being granted. Its tendency was merely to place the Church of England on the same footing as all other churches.

Mr. Brown said that if the intention of those who had promoted this resolution had gone no further than the speech of the mover, he should have been of the same opinion as the Attorney General East. But the fact was that there had been introduced into the House of Commons a bill whose provisions went much farther than the propositions contained in this address. It in fact established as some thing taken for granted that the Church of England extended by its ecclesiastical jurisdiction to this Province. Now, that was a proposition which the liberal party in England and in Canada had always desired, and it was for that reason that the liberals in the House of Commons had procured the rejection of the measure he alluded to, here the hon. member read some extracts from the debate in London, on the bill in question, in proof of what he had said, and went on to say that he heartily approved of the plan to make the Bishop elective in this Province; but this could be done without any positive enactments, and it appeared from the advices that the British Government was to be prayed to make canons and laws to govern the Church in the colony. The same thing was done by the bill introduced in England, and upon the whole so far from intending to separate the Church from the State that bill seemed to him to confirm the connection.

Mr. Cameron said the bill was one thing, the address another; the address was the only thing he (Mr. C.) was responsible for, and the only thing before the House.

Mr. Brown—But this address would naturally be looked on as supporting the bill. He had no objection whatever to the address if it were worded in a different manner.

Mr. Cameron proposed some change of words which we did not catch, and asked if that would do?

Mr. Brown—No.

Mr. Hincks—What will do? What does he want?

Mr. Brown—What he wanted was a declaration that there should be no connection between any church here and in England. He then contended that he said it was true that the address prayed Her Majesty to cause to be introduced into the Parliament a measure "to remove all obstructions that may exist or may be supposed to exist . . . to prevent the meeting of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the United Churches of England and Ireland, in their several Dioceses in this Province in Synod;" but then notice the words that followed, "to frame rules and canons for their own guidance and government." It was plain that the Imperial Parliament was to frame rules and canons.

Mr. Langton ridiculed Mr. Brown's interpretation of the clause about canons. If there were any thing

in what he stated, the Houses of Parliament in England were prayed to frame canons, not for the government of the Church in Canada, but for the guidance of the Imperial Government, since it was for "their own" government that they were asked to frame them. It was clear that the address had no such meaning, that it merely asked for the removal of the obstructions which prevented the members of the Church in Canada to frame canons for their own guidance. For his own part, he believed the members of the Church of England knew what they wanted much better than he member for Lambton; but could not even that hon. member understand that churchmen might desire still to keep up their connection with the Church in which they were born and brought up, though they might wish to manage their own affairs without reference to the Archbishop of Canterbury? The member for Lambton should have been the first to assist this movement. The Church of England, it was true, did not set up a new Church for themselves. But did the Church to which the member for Lambton belonged, when they left the Church of Scotland, desire to break off from their ancient name? No; year after year they asked Parliament to relieve them from the grievances of which they complained, and when at last they were compelled to break off from their own communion, they still called themselves the Free Church of Scotland. It was a noble sight to see these men, after using all their efforts to obtain justice, throwing up their living and marching out of their homes to trust to the liberality of their people. So it was a noble sight when the Puritans left their homes and connections in England for conscience sake, to serve God in the wilderness of the new world. But there was nothing noble in the spectacle of these same Puritans, becoming soon after the most persecuting of all churches. He hoped the Free Church of Scotland was not about to act like the Puritans; but he greatly feared, from some indications, which he observed, that religious liberty with them meant to do just as they liked themselves, and to force other people to conform to their views.

Mr. Hincks supported the motion of the hon. member for Toronto, the more gladly because it has fallen to his lot to be opposed to the Church of England, on many occasions, though in truth his opposition only went to the point of restraining that Church from exercising a dominancy over other Churches. There was no use blinding the real question before the House—the member for Lambton had laid it down clearly enough, and it was just this, whether the member for Lambton, not being a member of the Church of England, should prevent the Church of England from having the organization which its members desired. In England there were undoubtedly a large number of members of the Church of England who were opposed to the contemplated change, and owing to the anomalous position of parties, many members of the liberal party were of the number, because they desired still to keep the Church under an influence emanating from the House of Commons. It was pretended that these persons desired an expression of opinion from the Colonies themselves; but he believed this was rather a pretext than anything else. The member for Lambton, as a voluntary, professed to be opposed to the connection of the Church here with the ecclesiastical authorities in England, but for his part, he held that the volunteers had nothing to do with the matter.—The Presbyterian Free Church had a certain connection with their Church in Scotland, the old Presbyterian Church had so also; so had the Methodists—he did not know to what extent; that was for themselves to decide,—and so it was with the Church of England. Their religious connection they had the right to determine for themselves. But the House had certainly the right, when called upon by a large number of the Colonists, to address the Home Government for the repeal of Statutes which interfered with their free action as a religious body. If the member for Lambton did not want these statutes repealed, he ought to be consistent to move for their repeal in England, as was done in the case of the Clergy Reserves, and then re-enact them by Provincial authority.

Mr. Chaveau would vote for the address as one rendered necessary for the purposes of religious freedom. There seemed to be two ideas of religious freedom in this country; one was that each Church should have the right to organize itself, and manage its own affairs in whatever manner it pleased; the other that the legislature should ignore religion altogether. He could not agree to that latter view of a case: he thought it was the duty of the State to protect all churches in their rights, for religion was not a mere abstraction, between God and man; but involved relations between one man and another.

Mr. Mackenzie continued to speak bitterly against the narrow bigoted views of the Bishop of Toronto, who had gone home to traduce the members of other denominations in Canada, and of the honorable and learned member for Toronto, who was his agent in that House.—The object of that resolution was not simply to get disabilities removed, but to give the Queen of England the power to vote the election of a bishop by the people here. (A member—she appoints them altogether now.) The power might be very well in the hands of the present Queen, who was a pattern for all monarchs in the discharge of her duties, but would it not be absurd to vest such power in the hands of such another monarch as George IV. The member for Brant had said nothing but what was perfectly tolerant and just towards the Church of England. He could not but suspect a motion of this kind emanating from the hon. and learned member for Toronto, whose whole life had been marked by intolerance of the religious opinions of all out of his Church, and by endeavours to build it up as the dominant one in the country. He next referred to the difficulty of the Catholic Church at Buffalo, where the Bishop had absorbed all the power, and had excommunicated those who dared to assert their rights after a decision against them by Cardinal Bedini. He had ever been the humble but firm, and, he believed, consistent friend of equal rights to all, and of the fullest measure of civil and religious liberty, and as such he voted against that resolution. There was more in it than at first met the eye. It was an attempt to bolster up the Church with the aid and countenance of the State in England. He wished the great learning, ability, and eloquence which no man could deny to the honorable member for Toronto had been exerted in a better cause than this.

Dr. Clark asserted as a Churchman that nine-tenths of the Church of England in the Province—notwithstanding what had been said by the hon. member for Northumberland—were in favor of this measure and ardently desired it. That hon. member had said that they were not there to legislate on such subject. What! a large number of his constituents were deprived of their religious freedom and privileges, and it was not his duty to use his legislative powers to get those disabilities removed? He considered it to be clearly the duty of that House to secure for members of the Church of England as for all other denominations full power to exercise their religious duties as freely as any one else in Canada, and demand the concession of equal rights to them from the Imperial Parliament.

Mr. Galt thought this measure was to be regarded in two aspects—first with regard to the demand itself, and secondly with regard to the mode of asking it. He believed the Church of England had been placed in a false position by the agitation regarding the Clergy Reserves, which had excited a prejudice against her in the minds of many. He thought it was the duty of the House after depriving that Church of any undue advantages respecting endowments, that when it came before Parliament for the first time and asked for a liberal measure such as he considered this to be, to grant it. He believed that such a measure as should recommend itself to the mind of every liberal man, who professed to be willing to accord equal rights to all men, and instead of being opposed as a Church and State proposition should be hailed with satisfaction as a movement by the Church of England to cast off State shackles, and place itself on an independent footing. A great many of the points raised against it, by the member for Haldimand and others were mere idle bogbears.—He would not attempt to notice or answer all of them, but to take one for an example of the value of all of them. The veto given the Crown as to the Bishops elected by the synods; why what was sought was not to extend the power of the Crown, but to take away the power it now had of appointing bishops and sending them out here without giving the clergy and laity in this country any voice in the matter. Yet this was made a ground of opposition on the part of liberal members. This must surely be recognized as a step in the right direction, though it might not go so far as the hon. member for Haldimand desired.—As regarded the mode of proceeding, he held that if there were difficulties in the way of the members of any Church in the Province, obstacles placed in the way of their free action, they were bound to lend their efforts to get them removed. He was decidedly in favor of the motion. He could not entertain the fears that some hon. gentlemen expressed of a lurking intention on the part of the mover and supporters of this resolution and the applicants for Imperial Legislation to procure such enactments as would secure to the Church of England any dominancy in this Province, for he was satisfied that any legislation in England would be made subject to their revision here. If any act of the nature apprehended was passed in England it would be the signal for a dissolution of the connection between this Province and the mother country, and they were aware of the fact here. To refuse the assistance of the House in a matter of this kind to a large body of Christians whose proceedings in synod showed they desired the fathers that now bound them to be removed, would be to treat them most unfairly.

Hon. Mr. Carter said the Imperial Statutes were undoubtedly the law of the land and nothing was more