

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

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Subject.....

Date..... Publication.....

English church—would it not be better to withdraw from the contest and leave the decision to God. "Why not leave your cause in His hands? Why so frequently appeal to the people?" "There is a recklessness in your mode of writing which is really alarming." Providence, it was felt, would be much less alarming to deal with than Ryerson, and surely he might withdraw and have full confidence in the justice of such result as would providentially ensue.

The suggestion was a subtle one. Ryerson had been on almost personal terms with Providence for years; his trust in Providence was undoubtedly profound; but this was a special case; bewildering legal questions were involved and it was surely appropriate that Providence, who could scarcely be familiar with the intricacies of local politics in Upper Canada, should have competent advice from trustworthy sources.

At any rate, Ryerson continued his attack; he did more; he asked his advisers if they were sure that they, themselves, could bring justification from Providence for the position they were pressing on him. "Are you satisfied, that you are providentially called of God to attempt to make Methodism an agency in promoting a national establishment of religion in a new country, in the teeth of an overwhelming majority of the inhabitants?" he inquires of Dr. Alder, who makes no adequate response. Ryerson had taken delight in Locke and Paley and Blackstone; was there not a sort of Providence in that, too? Anyhow, Dr. Alder is left speechless. Locke, Paley, Blackstone: a very stout, sagacious trio; with these to reinforce his evangelical fervor Ryerson marches on.

But the matter is really very different. By this time all Upper Canada is fuming and petitioning and memorializing on the subject of the Clergy Reserves and the high-

handed insolence of the oligarchy. The state itself is divided on this thing; Presbyterians, Methodists, the Church of Scotland, Friends, Tinkers, sects of all manner of doctrinal peculiarity are having the episcopacy. Besides, the wall has been breached; the Church of Scotland has established a claim, which is admitted. Strachan still stands immovable in his demand for sole episcopal control, but even in the membership of the church there are those who have accepted the principle of division. Strachan, however, has never wavered; and Strachan is in the government, or is the government; at least had been for some considerable time. Thus circumstances raised the Clergy Reserves to a place of supreme importance as a constitutional issue; because, no matter what Ryerson or any other man or number of men might say, they could do nothing. No matter what the parliamentary assembly of Upper Canada might legislate on this question their legislative began and ended as a mere expression of opinion. The legislative council could throw back at the assembly bills it found distasteful. The executive council could advise the Governor to make appointments, to grant money, to establish vicarages and rectories, and the Governor could do so, and neither he nor his council be answerable to the assembly.

Thus so long as reformers, democrats, proponents of "responsible government," and similar tainted and unsettled men could be excluded or extruded out of the executive, Strachan's oligarchy could remain unperturbed by the vulgar pertinacity of agitators like Ryerson and his seditious Methodist connection. There was an element of solace, too, in the lieutenant-governor. The governors who were being selected and sent to Upper Canada by the British colonial office are perhaps best described as being quite singularly Tory in all their ideas about colonial government, and at least six of them were fully persuaded that the extermination of the "hideous monster" Democracy, was a sacred duty which it would be unforgivable to neglect. Staunton the King, solid Episcopalian, gentlemen born in that favored class whose peculiar privilege it was not to require intelligence, the statement that successive governors, one after the other, fell under the influence of Strachan's personality, can be received without surprise. Ryerson, then, might petition, memorialize, protest, culminate in newspapers, do what he liked, but Strachan, at Sir John Colborne's ear, could convince that "officer du premier ordre" of the necessity for endowing fifty-six Churches of England rectories out of the Clergy Reserves, and Sir John could authorize the endowments in spite of Ryerson, in spite of the furious protesting assembly. Neither Colborne nor Strachan was responsible to the assembly. Ryerson, who was never more than a protesting evangelical, with a nervous dread of "reform," might have been ignored, but the calm distribution of provisions, lands in utter indifference to the feelings of the assembly had the result which might have been expected even by an oligarchy. The question became part of the struggle for responsible government; these pieces of alleged piracy brought up the whole theory of the constitution for re-examination, and it was vehemently asserted that the executive government must be responsible to the assembly, and that the Governor must be responsible to his executive council.

This was an attack from another angle; a more dangerous attack; it struck at the very seat of Strachan's power. The government must be kept exclusive or all would be lost. And while he was heaping odium on the Methodists and splitting them by his masterly tactics of division, he had to con-

King, Rt. Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie (MG 26 J 7 volume 23) William Lyon Mackenzie - re: articles - Winnipeg Free Press 1924-1937

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