

— No. 20. —

Sir,

74, Jermyn-street, 9 August 1837.

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Rev. A. Mathieson
to J. Stephen, Esq.
9 August 1837.

I HAVE to acknowledge the honour of your letter of the 7th inst., informing me that Lord Glenelg has already entered into a full discussion with Mr. Morris upon the claims and interests of the Church of Scotland in Upper Canada, stating the inconvenience which must be incurred by opening again discussions which have been recently brought to a close; and as a preliminary to any correspondence on the subject, suggesting the propriety of my informing myself of what has already passed between the Colonial Department and Mr. Morris.

I beg respectfully to state, that previous to Mr. Morris's departure for Canada, he communicated to me verbally a general outline of what had been done in the affairs of his mission.

In soliciting an audience of my Lord Glenelg, it was not my intention to renew a subject on which Her Majesty's Ministers for the Colonies had already bestowed such patient consideration, further than perhaps reiterating the propriety of the parent Government settling the long-agitated question of the Clergy Reserves, on some equitable principle of division, that would give general satisfaction to the colonists, instead of leaving the matter open to the discussion of the Provincial Parliaments, without any distinct definitions of the provisions of the original Act as a guide to their deliberations. The dangerous consequences of referring the question to the Colonial Legislature in its present shape, must be sufficiently apparent in the intemperate disputes in the House of Assembly, Upper Canada, on the 9th February last, and the subsequent excitement of the people throughout the whole Province.

On this subject also I might have considered it my duty to have given my testimony in corroboration of that of Mr. Morris, that in so far as my knowledge extends of the state of public opinion in the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, the scheme of division suggested by Mr. Morris would be generally acceptable to the bulk of the colonists; viz. that two-thirds of the Clergy Reserves, or of the proceeds thereof, be divided between the Established Churches of England and Scotland, according to the number of members of the respective Churches in these colonies, and that the remaining one-third be surrendered to the Crown, to be disposed of amongst those denominations who may be thought entitled to the support of the state, after having given a declaration of their religious tenets, and a guarantee that they will maintain and publish the same. On any other principle I do not see how any part of a provision made by the state for ecclesiastical purposes can constitutionally be appropriated to any denomination, other than those whose standards have been "judged agreeable to the Word of God," and "ratified by law."

Although it might be deemed imprudent to touch on any subject so delicate as one that has already obtained the sanction of the Provincial Legislature, I would have considered it my duty to have remonstrated against advising the sanction of the Crown to be given to the King's College University Bill, until such a scheme of operation be determined upon by the College Council, as many of the legislators (as I am well informed) who acceded to the passing of the Bill were led to believe would be adopted. It may be unbecoming to make any remark on the act of the Lieutenant-governor which filled up the vacancies in the College Council exclusively from members of the Church of England, although some members of the co-ordinate Church of Scotland might have been found equally well qualified to hold a place at that Board a measure, to say the least of it, little calculated to soothe feelings that have been of late so much irritated. But the outline of the plan for carrying into operation that institution which was submitted by the venerable Archdeacon Strahan for the approbation of the College Council, is so objectionable in its details, as ought to make Her Majesty's advisers pause before they would recommend the final sanction of a Bill that will be far from meeting the wishes of the colonists, until some more liberal scheme of operation be proposed and adopted. The plan submitted by the archdeacon treats with such contumelious silence at once the recommendations of the parent Government, and the often expressed wishes of the colonists, that if it be adopted, I will not hesitate to affirm that it will be the cause of renewed strifes and dissensions, most inimical to the peace and prosperity of the country. The provincial newspapers have already given ominous warning of this result, and nothing but blind infatuation will impel the prosecution of a plan that will be ultimately ruinous to the cause it is