

TORONTO, 7th NOVEMBER, 1838.

DEAR SIR,

I have forwarded, this day, to your address, a copy of the Proclamation of His EXCELLENCY the LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, on the present state of the Province, with the general scope and tenor of which I am fully persuaded every right thinking person will be fully satisfied.

You will perceive that allusion is made to the settlement of the Clergy Reserve question; and I sincerely hope that His Excellency's expectations on that subject may be realized, in the course of the next Session of our Legislature. As it is a question which at present creates more excitement than any other, being used by bad men for mischievous purposes, and by many good ones from conscientious though mistaken views, and being anxious as far as possible to prevent the Members of our Church from joining in any object of a mischievous tendency, I am sure you will excuse me for addressing the following observations to you, with a view to their being communicated to the Congregation under your charge. I may, I think, claim from you and from them full credit for honesty of purpose; and having been one of the first to claim a support and an equality of rights and privileges for our Church; and having on all occasions, and under all circumstances, contended for her station and her interests in this Province, as one of the National Churches, it will hardly be suspected that I can be influenced by any other desire in this communication.

It is now very near fifteen years since this subject was brought before the House of Assembly by Mr. Morris and myself, and an Address to His Majesty was passed, praying that a support might be granted to the Church of Scotland, from the Reserves set apart for a Protestant Clergy; but in the event of these being deemed exclusively the property of the Church of England, then praying such support from any other source at the disposal of the Crown. At that time, as well as before and since, the Clergy and Members of the Church of England contended that these Reserves were set apart for the exclusive use and benefit of that Church; and believing their claim to be well founded, they have offered a resistance to the sub-division or application of the lands to any other uses, by which unhappily an angry feeling has been created on the part of our Church, and other denominations, against that venerable Establishment. This feeling has been further increased by the injudicious establishment of a certain number of Rectories in the Province, under the provisions of the Act constituting the Government of these Provinces, which in this particular had been suffered to remain dormant nearly half a century. I have said "the injudicious establishment," and I think it was injudicious, in-as-much as the lands in most, if not in all cases, attached to the Rectories, must form a very inadequate support for a Clergyman; and in-as-much as without receiving any material benefit to the Church, their establishment has awakened the fears of all other denominations, that the Rectors will be entitled to exercise various powers, and demand certain emoluments, which the Law entitles Rectors in England to exercise and demand. These fears have been worked upon by evil disposed persons, and I am sorry to think there are yet many who call out "wolf, wolf," when they know the alarm is utterly false, while I have no doubt there are many who conscientiously believe that there are good grounds for their apprehensions; the latter are entitled to respect—the former to detestation: unhappily both, but from wholly different motives, produce the same mischievous effects; and at a time like the present, when we are threatened by foes within and without with the subversion of all our Institutions, it is all important that the true state of the case should be well understood, and that it should be generally known that *no person is or can be subject to any ecclesiastical or temporal domination by the establishment of the Rectories.* Admitting, for the sake of argument, that the Rectors were clothed with all the powers

which it is imagined they possess, and were entitled to all the dues which a Rector in England enjoys within his Parish, it may be asked, upon whom these powers are to be exercised, and from whom these dues are to be demanded? A Rector in England is entitled to nothing out of the limits of his Rectory, and a Rector in Canada can certainly claim no more than a Rector in England. If then the claim of one of our Canadian Rectors must be confined to the limits of his Rectory, what possible cause for alarm can there be, when it is known that the Rectories do not in any case extend beyond the bounds of the plot or parcel of ground on which the Church and Burial Ground and Parsonage-house are situated? This, from personal examination, I know to be the case, and being so, all alarm as to the exaction of Tithes, or Ecclesiastical authority, being exercised by the Church of England must be obviously groundless. But if the limits of the Rectories instead of being so confined were more extended, embracing a Township or more, where even then is the cause for alarm? Where are the Courts to give effect to any Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction? and where the means, in the face of a Statute, sanctioned by our Sovereign, of enforcing the payment of Tithes or any other dues, to which a Rector in England may be entitled; and where, I may add, even amongst the Members of the Church of England, are the persons who would not object to the exercise of any such powers in this Province, if the Law were unquestionably such as to sanction them. Injudicious and unwise as it was to establish the Rectories, I hope from what I have said that it must be apparent we have nothing of evil to apprehend from them: and when it is known that no portion of the land reserved for a Protestant Clergy, from which unquestionably the Church of England was intended to receive support, could legally be applied or permanently set apart in any other mode, for the use of the several Clergymen of that Church, the principal objections seem to me to be removed. I am aware that amongst the Members of our Church it is urged, that the establishment of the Rectories betrays an undue preference for the Church of England, and places the Members of the Church of Scotland in the situation of Dissenters, and that when the Rectories were endowed with lands, an equivalent should have been granted to the Church of Scotland. I am ready to admit, that I think it would have been better if the endowment had been deferred until the Law had been so altered as to admit of a grant being made without the establishment of Rectories, and that the two Churches had been placed in all respects on a par, neither being entitled to any power or even imaginary superiority over the other; but I cannot admit, that because the Government thought proper to establish Rectories, in order to assure to the Clergymen of the Church of England a certain measure of support, the Ministers and Members of our Church are in any respect affected, in point of standing, or that the Church of Scotland is less an Established Church than the Church of England, in this Province. The extent of support does not necessarily create an Established Church, in the ordinary acceptation of an establishment. If so, then the Church of Rome, having its peculiar rights and property secured by Law, must be regarded as the Established Church in Lower Canada. The complaint then, that the establishment of Rectories places the Church of England in the situation of an establishment, to the exclusion of the Church of Scotland, appears as ill founded as the fears entertained of Ecclesiastical domination, and the collection of Tithes. I give no opinion as to the legality of the proceedings for the establishment of Rectories; it would not be proper for me to do so, even if I had formed one on a close inspection of all the documents, and with a full knowledge of all the facts, which in truth I have not done; but it must be obvious, that if the Executive Government were disposed to accede to the request to repeal the Patents and abolish the Rectories, they have not the power to do so, any more than they have at their own mere will and pleasure to apportion the Clergy Reserves amongst the various denominations of Christians, or to apply them to any object except that for which the Law has appropriated them. The Government of the Mother Country, admitting the equal claims of the National Churches, has left it to our own Legislature to dispose of all

questions relating to the Reserves, in such manner as may be most advantageous and acceptable to the people of the Province. Under these circumstances it does not appear very reasonable or correct to clamour, as many have done, against the Executive Government, for not carrying into effect various schemes for the adjustment of this question, which the Law gave them no authority to carry into effect.

With respect to the lands granted to the Church of England, I can hardly imagine that any intelligent Members of our Church could begrudge them, or seriously desire to see the Sister Church deprived of them. Instead of indulging in these unworthy feelings let us ask for similar endowments for our own Church, leaving it to other denominations who may desire such support to make their own applications, but allowing none to mix up their claims or their wishes with ours. I will venture to say, that such a request on our part, under the auspices of our present Lieutenant Governor, will be attended with the happiest results, and will hereafter leave us no room to complain of any undue preference shewn to the Church of England. Sir George Arthur has already shown his good will to our Church, by providing for the support of its Ministers in Vandiemen's Land; and in the midst of the difficulties by which he is surrounded, it would be both unjust and ungenerous to withhold from him our cordial support, because he has not, during his short administration, effected for us all the good that we desire.

I have been led on from step to step, till the length of my letter far exceeds what I at first intended. I do not know that it can afford you much information or explanation, but if it fails in these respects, it will at all events serve to show, that if the opinions which I have formed are entitled to any weight, I have no desire to conceal them from the Members of the Church to which I am proud to belong.

I am,

My dear Sir,

Very truly Yours,

ARCHIBALD McLEAN.

