Imperial Parliament.

HOUSE OF COMMONS—MAY 25.

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

Mr. Hume said that he was very sorry that at that late hour he could not proceed with the motion of which he had given notice. [Cries of "go on, go on"] It was then past 11 o'clock.—["Go on."] Hon members who cried "go on," would allow him to judge what he thought best to do. He knew the duty he had undertaken and that it would be impossible for him at that hour to state what he thought ought to be stated with respect to an important a question. (Hear.) And to leave the matter in doubt would be the worst of all courses. (Hear) He had been waiting the whole evening in order to bring the question forward, and no person was more disappointed than he was at not being able to do so. He found that the first open day would be the 20th of June. ("Hear, hear," and laughter from the opposition benches.) He would fix the motion for that day, and he hoped that he would then meet with no impediment. (Laughter.)

Mr. F. O'Connor moved the adjournment of the House, in order that there should be a motion before the house on which he could speak. He agreed with the hon. Member for Montrose that he should be allowed to speak for himself, but he hoped that for future he would not undertake to speak for his constituents. (Cheers from the opposition.) On a former occasion he had come from a great distance to speak on the motion. He had deceived him (Mr. O'Connor) a first time, but it would be his own fault if the Hon. Member for Montrose deceived him a second time. (Laughter.) The Hon. Member for Oxford was quite right in saying that the subject of the Hon. Gentleman's motion was but "a rub to a whale." It was an important subject, however; but it could have been brought on that night, and the debate adjourned. The Hon. Member for Montrose asked the working classes to fraternize with the middle classes, and he himself had come to this conclusion—but with great violence to his feelings—(Laughter)—to abate a great portion of the principles he had always strenuously advocated, and which he would always continue to advocate. He had not been well treated, for were it not for the assurance of the Hon. Member that he would bring the subject forward on the first opportunity, he [Mr. O'Connor] would bring on his motion. After the middle classes making an appeal to the working classes for union, and after having been deluded by the middle classes, he asked the Hon. member for Montrose whether he thought it likely that he for one, or that the working-classes, would confide in him? [Cheers from the Opposition.] He told the Hon. Gentleman, and those with whom he acted, that they must make a determined stand. They had juggled the people for the last month, and now they were going to postpone the question for another month, whereas he might have brought it forward that night, and the debate would be adjourned.—He was not surprised that Hon. Gentlemen opposite should think they obtained a great triumph, and that they should smile and treat with derision the position in which the Hon. Member had placed his constituents. [Laughter.] He would not be a party to such "a delusion, mockery, and sham." (Hear, hear! from the Opposition.) He would not be a party to counselling the working classes to place confidence in men who, he believed in his soul and conscience only intended to use them for their own purposes. [Loud Opposition cheers.] He believed that the country would not be satisfied at the postponement of the motion, and he agreed with the Hon. Member for Oxford that it was only "a rub to the whale." [Laughter]

Mr. Cobden—"I think there can be but one opinion in the House, and in the mind of every planest and intelligent man in the country, that my Hon. Friend the Member for Montrose is blameless for the delay which has taken place.—[Hear, Hear.] I think no reasonable man will suppose that any man, having the conduct of an important a question, ought to bring it forward at 11 o'clock at night. [Hear.] I object to an important a question being discussed at that hour, and if it was brought on at 5 o'clock, I question if a whole evening would suffice for its proper discussion. [Hear, hear.] The hon. Gentleman has undertaken to give advice, not in very cautious or complimentary language, to my Hon Friend. [Hear] If I might venture to give advice to my Hon. friend, I advise him that, in the conduct of this important question, he will not follow the advice, and still less the example, of the Hon Gentleman—[cheers]—who calls himself the leader of the working classes, and who, for nine years, has been advocating the People's Charter."

Mr. O'Connor—"Fifteen years"

Mr. Cobden—"I believe the Hon Gentleman himself stated the other day at the convention, that, after his 15 years of leadership, he had but one man in the house on whom he could depend, in his own absence, to advocate the principles of the Charter. [Name, name.] I believe one Member was mentioned, but I do not know who he was. [Laughter.] I think that one is sufficient to warn my Hon. friend how to follow the track of the Hon. Member for Nottingham; and if any thing can open the eyes of the working classes of this country to a just sense of the value of the leadership of the Hon Member, it is the position in which their cause has been placed in this House, and in the country, by the Hon Gentleman, after the 15 years of leadership. Sir, I have had a long experience of the Hon. Gentleman and he will not scorn me of any personal hostility towards him, for certainly no man has lavished so many compliments on me as the member for Nottingham; and with my experience of his conduct out of this House, by contriving to array the working classes against every man who was disposed to assist them in carrying forward their objects, if they wished them to succeed—I say the Hon Member has done more to retard the political progress of the working classes than any public man who ever lived in this country. [Hear] I speak after a long experience of the Hon. Gentleman; and no person has a better right to speak on this subject than I. For seven years I had directed against me the relentless hostility of the Hon. Gentleman, while advocating what I believed then, and what I believe still to be, the cause of the working classes—I mean the abolition of the tax on food. [Hear.] That Hon Gentleman did all he could to array the working classes against me on that subject, and had more hospitality to encounter from him and his party than I had from the Duke of Buckingham and all his followers. [Hear.] What was the result? I never fraternized with the Hon. Gentleman or his merry-andrews—I never fraternized or succumbed to them for a moment. [Hear] I always treated him as the leader of a small, insignificant, and powerless party. I never identified him with the mass of the working classes of the country. [Hear] I treated him then, as I treat him now, not as the leader of the working classes of the country, but as the leader of an organized faction of the smallest portion of the community. [Hear] I never failed to beat him and his followers in every county in the kingdom. I speak for myself, and only for myself; but in any agitation which I enter upon for the political franchises of the working classes, as I never have, I never will, fraternize with the Hon. Gentleman or his organized followers: and, as I said to him a hundred times, I say again, that I set them at defiance now. [Hear] I exhort my Hon. Friend not to be deluded by any thing that falls from the Hon. Gentleman as to his power with the working classes of the country. As he was a week before, he is powerless now; and as he has nothing with him, it is equally unimportant and unwise to act with respect to any political question. Hear. My Hon. Friend may feel assured, notwithstanding the unwarrantable and ferocious attack of the Hon. Gentleman, that the people of this country would not withdraw that confidence which the great mass of the nation had in him." [Loud cheers.]

Mr. O'Connor—"When the Hon. Member says that he beat me at every public meeting, I can only say that I never had the pleasure of meeting him but once."

Mr. Cobden.—"I said the Hon. Gentleman or his followers"

Mr. H Berkeley postponed his motion on the subject of Vote by Ballot to the 20th of June.

Mr. O'Connor said he would withdraw his motion for an adjournment. [No, no]

Lord J. Russell—"The Hon. Gentleman only moved the adjournment for the purpose of addressing the House. I hope the House will allow the other business on the paper to be disposed of. I cannot see that there is any objection, or any thing unusual, in the Hon Member for Montrose postponing his motion till a future opportunity, as he was not able to bring it on to-night. [Hear, hear] With regard to the other question which the Hon Gentlemen raised between themselves, the hon member for Nottingham saying that the working classes had no confidence in the motion of the Hon. Member for Montrose, and the Hon. Member for the West Riding saying that no confidence ought to be placed in the Hon. Member for Nottingham [laughter] without making any observation on this question of personal confidence [laughter] I must say that my belief is that the middle and the working classes of the country neither wish for the one great reform nor the other [cheers,] that they are neither anxious for the People's Charter, nor for this great plan of reform which comes near the Charter, as proposed by the Hon Member for Montrose. [Hear] I believe they wish neither one nor the other, and that they are that their true interest is that there there should be a gradual progress of reform, and that this House should give its attention to the questions before us, and that in the peace and quiet of the country lies their true interest. [Loud Ministerial and Opposition cheers]

The motion for the adjournment was then withdrawn.

FREE TRADE.

Lord G. Bentinck moved for returns, showing the quantities and prices, duty paid, of Canadian timber sold by public sale in London on the 10th of March; also showing any reduction of duties on thrown silks and on Indian silks which may have been made in 1842, together with the importations of such silks in the years 1842, 1843 and 1846 respectively, on which such reductions may have been made; likewise, showing the quantities of raw and waste silk imported, exported, and consumed at home in the years 1844 and 1845, as compared with the two years 1846 and 1847, with similar returns in regard to thrown silks; also, showing the various articles of Foreign manufacture imported into the port of London during the four months ending the 5th inst. At this time, when the great question before the country was what mode of taxation bore most lightly on the people, it was that of the utmost importance to obtain correct information relative to the working of the alterations in the Tariff. It was his opinion that direct taxation was not that description which bore most lightly on the people, but that by Customs duties the public revenue should in great part be raised—The Noble Lord proceeded to show that foreigners alone had benefited by the reduction of the Timber Duties, and that our Colonists and the revenue had been the sufferers. By our dabbling with the silk trade we had injured the manufacturers of Spitalfields and Bethnal Green. During the four months ending the 5th May instant, he found that half a million sterling worth of manufactures and raw silk had been imported, also, representing £1,500,000 a-year, enough to give employment to 65,000 persons. A temporary spurt had made things somewhat better in Spitalfields; but this was to attribute partly to the statue of France, and partly to the command of Her Majesty that ladies should appear at the Drawing Room in dresses of home manufacture. He found, too, that the foreign articles in cotton, woollen, needlework, &c., imported, would give employment to 100,000 persons. The Noble Lord having read letters descriptive of the state of distress in which our own operatives and manufacturers are placed, and having referred to the general stoppage of mills, the bankruptcies, the ruin of merchants, brokers, planters—in short, to the deplorable condition of all our home and colonial interests—called on the Government to give the returns he asked for.

Mr. Gladstone said the present distress in Spitalfields was not attributable to Free Trade, for similar distress had prevailed there in the palmest days of Protection. They should not forget that they had to legislate, not for Spitalfields, but for the whole kingdom, and the general condition of the silk trade by no means warranted the statements of the Noble Lord. The Right Hon. Gentleman contended that the consumption of foreign goods had increased, that the importation of raw materials had increased, that the total consumption of goods by the British people had largely increased, and that, while the rate of duty had been reduced, there had been a small increase in the revenue.

Mr. Newdegate controverted the data and averages relied on by the last speaker in support of the success of the Free Trade theories, and coincided in the views taken by the Noble mover.

Sir G. Clerk said the better the subject was understood the more certain he felt that Parliament would still sanction the principles upon which the commercial policy of the Right Hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) was founded.

Mr. Labouchere said, the Noble Lord had proved nothing, unless he could show that foreigners made us a present of all the goods we imported, for otherwise it was clear that they must be paid for by the manufacturers of this country.

Mr. M. Gibson deprecated the practice of raising discussions upon unopposed motions, and commented on the circumstance that the Noble Lord (G. Bentinck) had caused the postponement of the motion for Parliamentary Reform.

Lord G. Bentinck said he had no knowledge that his motion was not to be opposed until a short time before the Hon Member [Mr. Gibson] rose, and had, therefore, good ground for retorting upon that Hon. Gentleman the charge of wasting the time of the House.

The Motion was then agreed to.

ROMAN CATHOLIC JURORS (IRELAND)

Mr. Keogh, in moving for the returns of which he had given notice, begged to premise that he was actuated by no sympathy for the gentlemen who had lately been put on their trial for sedition in Ireland. He thought an insult had been offered to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and they thought so themselves, by their exclusion from the jury panels. The list of jurors for the city of Dublin consisted of upwards of 600. Of these 48 were selected to form the panel, and this number was reduced by the Crown striking off 12 and the traverser striking off 12. The Crown had, at the late trial of Mr. Meagher, struck out 11 out of 12 Roman Catholics who were left on the revised jury list. Amongst the gentlemen who were so struck off as Roman Catholics, were some of the most respectable inhabitants of Dublin. He might be told that the thing was done by Mr. Kemmis, the Crown Solicitor for Ireland. But he would not believe that this was the case. Not only was the jury panel so dealt with in the case of Mr. Meagher, but also in that of Mr. W. S. O'Brien. There could be no confidence in the administration of the law in Ireland whilst such practices were allowed.

Mr. C. Anstey seconded the motion.

Lord John Russell said he had not expected that the present Government would have been exposed to a charge of partiality on the ground of excluding Catholics from juries. He entertained then, as he had formerly, the opinion that the exclusion of Roman Catholics from juries as such, was an extremely wrong and unjustifiable proceeding.—He would remind the House that Roman Catholics had, under the present Goverment, received as much favor in public appointments as Protestants, as might be evinced by the fact of the Attorney General and the Under Secretary for Ireland being both members of that persuasion. [Hear.] The moment he heard that prosecutions for sedition had been determined on, he had written to his noble friend at the head of the Irish Government, expressing his hope that no interference should take place with regard to the jury. For his part, he would much rather see men acquitted than any such conduct would take place. [Cheers] He could only repeat that whatever example might be set by others of disregarding their obligations, or making their duty subservient to their politics, the Government should be the last persons to follow such an example. [Hear] Their object should be merely to get respectable persons on the jury, and then to leave the administration of justice in their hands, without respect to religion or party. [Cheers]

Sir G. Grey defended the Attorney General, and stated that at the Special Commission, that law officer had not challenged a single juror on the score of politics or religion.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, MAY 25.

THE JEWISH DISABILITIES BILL.

The Marquis of Lansdowne then proceeded to move the second reading of the Jewish Disabilities Bill, observing that it was but a small voice which wished to make itself heard at their Lordship's door, but that the question for them to decide was whether or not that voice was the voice of justice. He maintained that they were not required by any Divine precept or command to refuse to the Jews a full participation in all the civil rights and privileges, and that it was an indefensible anomaly to exclude them from Parliament after having made them admissible to numerous offices of trust and responsibility in the State, and to legislative as well as administrative posts in some of the Colonies. The Noble Marquis concluded by expressing a hope that their Lordships should concur in the second reading of the Bill.

The Earl of Ellenborough moved, as an amendment, that the bill be read a second time that day six months. Never had a measure been submitted to their Lordships, the smallness of whose object was so disproportionate to the enormous magnitude of the sacrifice which it called upon them to make. The question was a religious as well as a political one. The constitution of Parliament was essentially and exclusively Christian, and he trusted that their Lordships would by their division that night vindicate that constitution. He took his stand on the broad ground of the Christian character of the constitution, which this Bill would seriously infringe. It was urged that they should not punish the Jews of the present generation for the crimes of their ancestors 1,800 years ago. It was not for the crimes of their ancestors that he would exclude them; but because adhering to the same religion, possessing the same laws, and being imbued with the same feelings as their ancestors, the present generation of Jews would, if it were in their power, enact the same part as their ancestors did before them. The present crisis required that our Statesmen should take large views of things, and not legislate for private purposes or private expediency; and that, they should not, above all, deprive themselves, in such a crisis, of all right to heavenly aid, by sanctioning such a desecration of faith as was involved in this Bill.

The Duke of Cambridge supported the amendment, contending that so long as this continued to be an essentially Christian Government, the Jews could not consistently be admitted into Parliament.

Viscount Canning supported the Bill.

The Archbishop of Canterbury opposed the Bill, observing that as the Jews were faithful to their creed, they would take part in their business, should they get in Parliament, to obstruct, as far as they could, the progress of Christianity. The Bill was regarded with uneasiness and suspicion by a large portion of the Christian community of the country.

The Earl of Winchilsea also opposed the Bill, cautioning the Bishops that if they voted for such a measure, they might depend upon it, that within a year, they would not be sitting in that House.

The Duke of Argyle followed, supporting the Bill in a brief and argumentative speech.

The Bishop of St. David's, in support of the Bill, protested against its being supposed the measure had proceeded from an indifference to religion on the part of those who had proposed, and of those who were prepared to sanction it. Many objections urged against the Bill, founded on the peculiar social position and religious tenets of the Jews, were mainly attributed to the long ages of persecution to which they had been subjected, which had partly alienated them from their fellow-subjects, and embittered their minds against the religion of their persecutors. The adoption of the measure would not be inconsistent with Christianity, and, considering the circumstances under which it had been presented to them, their Lordships should not reject it but on the most solid grounds of expediency. He determined that the admission of the Jews would either unchristianize the Legislature, peril the Christian faith, or violate any existing principle of the constitution.

The Bishop of Oxford followed in opposition to the Bill, admitting that if the Jews had a right to sit in Parliament, he would be prepared to do them justice independently of ulterior consequences. But he was prepared to show that in rejecting the Bill they would be withholding no right from the Jews. The holding of office was not the right of any particular class, but a trust held by some to be administered for the benefit of all. In a Christian nation they could not permit that trust to be held by those who professed the Jewish faith. The nationality of the Jews precluded them from holding such a trust in this country. The Jews residing amongst us were a nation within a nation, and the danger of permitting aliens to hold office was obvious, whilst their right to hold office could not for a moment be sustained.

The Earl of St. Germans supported the Bill, contending that it was not a measure for conferring upon Jews seats in either House of Parliament, but for conferring upon the constituencies of the empire the right of electing them, if they chose, to Parliament.

Lord Stanley thought that whilst the smallest possible reasons existed for the adoption of the Bill, the very gravest considerations urged upon their Lordships the propriety of rejecting it. He drew a broad distinction between enjoying the protection of the law, to deprive a man of which, on account of his religious belief, was undoubtedly persecution, and the power of joining in enacting the law, which was not a right but a privilege, the absence of which, in any individual, was no persecution, punishment, or penalty; and the possession of which the Legislature had the right of fencing round with such conditions as were thought most conducive to the general benefit, and no individual advantage. He attached no importance to the argument founded upon the fact that the constituency of London had elected a Jew; for he denied the right of any constituency to fly in the face of the law, and elect a person disqualified by the law, and then insist, on the ground of having elected him, on his being made admissable to Parliament. If there was anything in the argument, it would equally apply had the City of London, instead of a Jew, elected a pauper, a minor, or a female.—The question for them to decide was, whether or not they would maintain the Christian character of Parliament, in deciding which he trusted their Lordships would, by a large majority, reject the Bill.

Lord Brougham, after congratulating the House upon the tone, temper and charity, which had generally characterised the Debate, expressed his regret at the glaring exception which the speech of the Bishop of Oxford had furnished to the general moderation which had marked the discussion.—Nine-tenths of the arguments preferred against the Bill were founded upon the supposition that the law of the land excluded Jews from sitting in Parliament. For such a supposition, there was not the slightest foundation. It was not by the law that the Jew was excluded, but by the form of the oath, by which he was called upon to abjure some things, and testify his belief in others. Even did the law exclude him, they could not, in times like these, adopt a safer or more politic course than throwing the constitution open to all.

The Marquis of Lansdowne briefly replied, after which the House divided, and the members were—

For the second reading—128; Against it—163; Majority against—35.

The Bill was therefore thrown out.

The following members of the Episcopal Bench voted in favor of the Jewish Bill:—Archbishop of York, Bishop of St. Davids, Worcester, Manchester and Hereford. The Bishop of Durham voted off in favor of the measure. Against the Bill were voted the Archbishops of Canterbury and Armagh; the Bishops of Bagot, Bath and Wells, Carlisle, Chichester, Exeter, Gloucester and Bristol, Lichfield, Lincoln, Llandaff, London, Oxford, Ripon, Rochester, Salisbury, and Winchester.

POSTAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.

In considering the postal question now under discussion between this country and the United States, it is obvious that, setting aside whatever may have gone before, attention should be limited to the proposals now made by our own Government, and rejected by that of America.

These proposals were stated in the Liverpool Mercury of the 22nd Feb. and the question obviously is, whether there is anything unfair in our offer that the English and American Governments should receive equal remuneration for their respective shares of the duty performed.

To narrow the question, the packet rate may be set aside, as indeed the whole discussion turns upon the equity of inland rates.

One claim to higher remuneration is rested by America upon the fact that her Post Office yields no revenue, while that of England yields a large revenue.

The answer is, first, that according to all reports, the American Post Office being used as a great political engine, is not, and cannot be, conducted economically. What would be the effect on our own Post Office revenue, if with every change of Government, the practice were to appoint a new set of officials?

Again, it is a principle laid down in the regulations of the American Government, that it shall produce no revenue to the Government,—all savings being uniformly appropriated to the extension of the system, including, it is believed, the construction of new roads.

Lastly, America must be regarded as deriving a quasi revenue from her Post Office, inasmuch as it is made the vehicle for conveying a large amount of free correspondence whereas, in England, all letters, even those from the Government offices, from the Ministers of State, and the Queen herself, are subject to postage.

A second ground of claim is the badness of the American roads. As the goodness of our own roads is derived only from the enormous expenditure on their construction, repair, and improvement, it is quite clear that any economy or other advantage thence arising is most justly ours; and that the same may be had by the Americans on corresponding terms.

The real question, therefore, is limited to this.—Whether, in the combined transmission of letters, there is any such superiority in the amount of service performed by the American Government over that performed by our own, as justifies a demand for higher remuneration.

In the transmission of letters, the mere conveyance from place to place is manifestly very far from constituting the whole expense; indeed, when divided amongst all the letters conveyed, it is often but a small item in the account; delivery from house to house always constitutes a serious part of the charge, sometimes nearly the whole of it. Now this latter duty of delivery the American office does not undertake. In America, everybody must directly or indirectly procure his own letters from the post office, in the large towns distribution is undertaken by individuals as a matter of trade, an additional charge being of course made by them for the service.—In less populous places every one provides for himself.

Taking this fact into consideration, it appears very questionable whether, notwithstanding the greater distances in America, the greater service is not performed in England.

With regard to our interference with the inland postage of America, the charge seems scarcely to require notice. It is clear that we attempt no interference whatever, excepting as regards letters in which both countries are equally interested. To make a stipulation on this point would be virtually to leave it in the power of either party to advance the total charge *ad libitum*, and to take to itself whatever proportion of the whole postage it might think fit.

The convenience of a uniform charge, which enables the sender of a letter to pay the whole postage, and which, indeed, may be regarded as essential to pre-payment, is to manifest to demand remark.—*Eur. Times.*

COLONIZATION.

From the Montreal Pilot.

We publish below a document which will be read with great interest, and will doubtless afford the highest satisfaction, as showing the liberal views and intentions of the Administration on this very important subject. Not very long since the officers of the Association of Canadian Settlements in the townships, presented a Memorial to His Excellency the Governor General, setting forth the plans and objects of the Association, and praying the Government to assist in promoting the object they have in view. The following is the reply of the Provincial Secretary.

TO THE RIGHT REV. THE CATHOLIC LORD BISHOP OF MONTREAL.

SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
10th June, 1848.

MY LORD,—I am honored by the commands of the Governor General to convey to you His Excellency's reply to the Memorial of the President and Officers of the Association of Canadian Settlements in the Townships.

His Excellency trusts that the vast importance of the subject—the various information which its consideration required—the necessity for gravely weighing the principles announced in the Memorial—the great length at which the committee have discussed their plans—and the desire of His Excellency that the reply to the memorial should be plain, precise, and satisfactory—will sufficiently account for the delay which has taken place in communicating to the Association His Excellency's intentions on the subject of the interesting document submitted on behalf of the Society.

His Excellency is of opinion that the prosperity and future greatness of Canada will depend in a great measure on the use which shall be made of lands now vacant and unproductive; and His Excellency thinks that the best use which can be made of these lands will be the filling them with a population of industrious, moral, and contented settlers.

Entertaining this opinion strongly, it cannot but be a source of regret to His Excellency to find that not only the ancient seignorial tenure, which—as introduced at the earliest settlement of the country, with provisions intended justly and liberally to protect the constitutents, and to secure their rights and property—appeared so well fitted to produce the easy acquirement of land by the agricultural population, has been so altered in its practical working, as no longer to have that effect, and in fact so as to become a fruitful source of complaint; but also that the commutation of that tenure, so far as it has proceeded, as well as the land granting system formerly established by the Imperial Government have each tended to produce monopoly of large tracts of lands in the hands of those who do not occupy or cultivate it; so that this section of the Province presents the extraordinary and anomalous spectacle of an overcrowded and emigrating agricultural population, in a country possessing wild, uncultivated, and at the same time fertile land, sufficient for the wants of the native inhabitants and of new comers of many years.

The original grants of land in seignories or fiefs in Canada, made by the Kings of France, were evidently conceded with the view of facilitating the acquirement of land by the agricultural inhabitants; but the seigneurs are, even where the tenure remains, enabled by some devise, to elude the ancient protective law in favor of censitaires. Those seigneurs who have commuted are apparently made absolute owners of territory in which the censitaires were perhaps more interested than themselves; and grantees, or purchasers of land from the Government in the townships,—though grants and sales, as would appear from regulations remaining of record, have always been with the view of promoting settlement,—have, to a great extent, also evaded that intention. All these parties have a direct interest in raising the price of land, and in making the industry of each settler and cultivator work for the benefit of the holders of the unsettled territory, by the enhancement of price as settlement advances; and thus the object of the greatest public importance—namely, the easy and rapid diffusion of the population over the country—is sacrificed to the interests of speculation in the wants of that population, whose ability to become purchasers not keeping pace with the expectation of land-holders, over-crowding of the inhabitants in the conceded and settled lands, and emigration of the young men, appear to have followed.

Comparatively, but a small portion of the provincial territory near to the settlements remains in the hands of the Government; but yet there is sufficient for an important movement, in which the inhabitants in this section of the Province are deeply interested. His Excellency commands me to say that Her Majesty the Queen has deeply at heart the welfare of her Canadian subjects of French origin: and nothing could be more gratifying to His Excellency than to be able to inform our Sovereign that any measures of his Government tended to give them facilities of becoming proprietors in their native land; for, while Canada offers a home to emigrants from the United Kingdom, and while it is manifestly the interest of this country that population should be increased and extended by every practicable means over its territory, none, in the opinion of His Excellency, can have a better right to the benefits of that extension that the descendants of the ancient colonists, whose patient and persevering industry in peace and whose gallantry in war have done so much for the improvement and defence of this portion of Her Majesty's dominions.

The evils which I have above alluded to, as springing out of a mistaken disposition of the colonial lands, appear to the Governor General mainly to have arisen from delegation of powers, which the Government, in justice to the people, should have preserved in its own hands; for in this manner individuals or companies have been interposed between the Government and the intended settlers, the professed object of such interposition being the promotion of settlement, but the moving interest of the parties being to make settlement an object secondary to the realization of money by means of the position in which the Government was induced to place them.

In the Western part of this Province the same evil, of large proprietorship of wild land, existed, but not to the same extent as in this Province; but it is rapidly disappearing, partly by the price of land having been sufficiently enhanced to induce the owners to sell, and partly by means of municipal taxation, which, while it makes the wild territory as well as the cultivated land contribute to public ameliorations, causes the long possession of large tracts of uncultivated territory to become practically burdensome to the owner.

As to how far it may be consistent with public sentiment in this portion of the Province, or to what extent it may be desirable to make owners of wild land and seigniors contribute to expenditure in ameliorations, so as to make it their interest to part with property, and place it in hands where it will become peopled and productive, it is not for His Excellency in this communication to indicate an opinion. I am confined to the subject of the disposal of the land remaining in the hands of the Government, in the management of which His Excellency conceives it to be his duty to watch with unceasing care over the interests of the class of cultivators who may be induced to occupy it; and not by any delegation of authority to part with the duties and responsibilities which the Government possess.

In the Memorial to which, by His Excellency's command, I have the honor at present to reply, it is suggested that the Government should speedily grant the unconceded lands which belonged to the late order of the Jesuits, at fixed rates of moderate rents, freeing those lands, by legislative enactment, from the burden of *lods et ventes* in case of mutation.

On this subject His Excellency commands me to observe, that he looks upon the lands which belonged to the late order of the Jesuits as devoted to a special purpose in Lower Canada. To recommend to Parliament the removal of the burden *lods et ventes* would be practically to recommend destruction of the fund which those lands were intended to create; the release of the lands remaining to be conceded from the imposition of *lods et ventes*, could scarcely be accomplished, without giving foundation to an irresistible claim to a like concession on the part of the censitaires of the lands already conceded; and His Excellency can scarcely believe that the association over which your Lordship presides, could have had an abandonment of the devotion to a special purpose of the fund in view to such an extent as the language of the Memorial would indicate. But if His Excellency is to understand the Memorial to recommend the speedy concession of lands in the seignories, which belonged to the late order of the Jesuites, according to the ancient laws of Lower Canada, at fixed rents—that is to say, at rents which which are not to be increased, because of the industry of the present censitaires on the settled lands, they being the parties who, for the distribution of their families, are chiefly interested in the new concessions;—if by moderate rents His Excellency is to understand, rents placed at the lowest possible rate, consistently with the preservation of the special fund for the raising of which the lands are in the hands of Government as a sacred trust;—and if by the proposed relief from the burden of *lods et ventes* His Excellency is permitted to understand, that the easiest and least burdensome terms should be given for commutation of the rights of the Crown to the duties, consisted still with the maintenance of the special fund;—with this understanding I am commanded to say that His Excellency fully and cordially concurs in the views of the Association. The lands unceeded in the seignories belonging to the Jesuits' estates, situated in the county of Champlain, have been already ordered to be surveyed; and the agents of the Government are directed to make concessions as speedily as practicable. In those concessions the principle of actual settlement and occupation by the grantees is intended to be carried out rigidly; and all monopoly, which would enable any individuals to make a profit by engrossing large quantities of land, is to be avoided; and I am commanded to assure your Lordship that any ameliorations in the system, which may appear in its practical working to be desirable, will be readily adopted by the Government, so that so far as the duty of the Executive in regard to the Jesuit's estates fund will permit, the seigniaries in the hands of the Government will be made subservient to the public good, and to the avoidance of the evils which are so feelingly expressed in the Memorial of the Association.

It is proposed, secondly, in the memorial, that a colonization should take place in that part of the Province usually called townships. The principal part of the vacant lands in that part of the country, His Excellency regrets to find have long passed from the hands of the Government; but it has long been the desire of His Excellency that the part remaining to the Crown should be used for the purpose of actual and active colonization. It was no doubt with the view that Government some years since, procured the surrender by the British American Land Company of six hundred thousand acres of land in the counties of Shefford and Megantic, in which neighborhood there are now upwards of a million of acres at the disposal of the Government. It is exceedingly gratifying to His Excellency that the views of the association very nearly coincide with the plans of settlement of that neighborhood which His Excellency has been advised to adopt, and he commands me to detail these plans to you, and to inform Your Lordship that they are proceeding to their accomplishment with all possible activity.

This valuable tract of land is communicated with from Montreal from the St Lawrence, opposite Three Rivers, and from Quebec by roads nearly completed to the boundaries of the territory in question; and therefore it can with little expense be made accessible for settlers from all these directions.

The statute regulating the disposal of public lands, places it in the power of the Governor General in Council to grant to actual settlers, allotments not exceeding in quantity fifty acres each, upon or in the vicinity of leading public roads.

This power has enabled the Government in Western Canada to commence and carry on a colonization system in a portion of the unsettled territory of the Crown, which, so far as it has gone, has been attended with the utmost happy results; and it has been desired to extend the same plan, which accords almost in all respects with the one proposed by the association, to the territory above spoken of, where it was once in fact attempted; but for want of the co-operation of leading and influential men like Your Lordship and the founders of the association over which you preside, or for some other cause not necessary now to be inquired into, it failed, except to a small extent.

The first operation under this plan will be the completion of the communications with the external lines of the tract—the next the laying out of some leading roads through it.

The Lambton road, which communicates from the Eastern limit of the tract at the end of Lake St. Francis with the lines of road on the banks of the Chaudiere River, leading towards Quebec, it is to be laid out so as to open the communication between the end of Lake St. Francis and the Otter Brook Road, a distance of nineteen miles. The intention of the Government is not, with the small means at its disposal, to make this new road a good one, but to assist the settlers, by making it barely passable, which can be done by cutting down the trees for the width of one chain or sixty-six English feet, and by burning the trees cut down and clearing the land to be occupied by the road. In this operation, settlers may be employed, though, as a source of employment, except to a few, and but for a short time, it cannot be depended upon. By thus clearing the road, and placing bridges of cheap construction over the streams and causeways where the ground happens to be marshy, a cheap communication can be made, upon which settlers will be placed; a double line of fifty acre lots, or lots containing sixty arpents will be surveyed on each side of the road, and these will immediately opened for settlement.

It is not proposed to make any distinction between settlers who are able to pay for land and those that are not, so far as grants of fifty acres are concerned. That quantity of land every male inhabitant admitted to settle on the tract of the age of twenty-one years, will will be entitled to.

But as it is by no means desirable that the whole of the greater part of the settlers should be of the description who cannot pay for land, it is proposed that any of the settlers who may elect to do so, shall have the opportunity of purchasing for a price to be paid down, the neighboring lots vacant to the extent of 150 acres. The price will be fixed for actual settlers at the rate of four shillings per acre, and will be payable in cash or land scrip.

As would be obviously imprudent for any man to settle on this land who has not the means of providing himself with the necessaries of life until the means of subsistance can be derived from the soil, the agent will be instructed to inquire into the means possessed by each individual offering himself as a settler. For the purposes of this information the certificates of the society and its officers will be of great value, as the members of the society will probably know with what prospect a settler can commence his operations, and will explain to the colonists the expediency of undertaking a settlement upon wild land without means of some extent already provided.

The agent will be constructed to reserve sites for churches, schools, villages, and mills. The former will be granted, and the villages and mills laid out and disposed of so as to secure their being used for the purpose required and so as to guard against monopoly. Another road, running through the centre of the tract, and communicating from Lake Megantic to the Gosford Road, a distance of forty two miles, will also be immediately laid out with a double tier of 50 acre lots on each side.

Side lines, or roads to communicate from the rear lots to the main road, will be surveyed; but the making of these roads must be left to the industry and energy of the settlers themselves.

The Colonists who have families containing several males above the age of twenty-one years, will, if they desire it, have their lots adjoining each other.

The agent will be instructed to place each settler upon his lot, and to enter his name in a book, from which returns are to be made to the Crown Land Office. The settler will receive a location ticket authorizing him to occupy the lot for which he is set down; but under the most strict conditions of occupation, and with the certainty that if the lot be abandoned at any time before the locate is entitled to a patent, the land will be granted or sold to another settler forthwith.

Each locatee will be entitled to his patent on the certificate of the Government Agent that he has cleared and made fit for cultivation sixteen acres of land.

The time allowed for this clearance will be four years from the first occupation by the settler.

Persons who purchase land will be obliged, within four years, to clear and make fit for cultivation one-tenth of the whole quantity purchased, and will not receive patents until that is done.

If families containing several settlers entitled to land, choose to reside on one lot, instead of upon the several lots, this will be accounted as occupation of the several lots; but the clearing required must be upon each lot as granted.

The Government having by this means prepared the way for the commencement of settlement on the tract, and being prepared to extend the working of the plan as fast as required, accepts of, and invites, the co-operation of the Association. It is not in the power of the Government, neither would it be proper for it to make any distinction in favor of settlers recommended by the Association, or in favor of any class amongst Her Majesty's subjects; but the superior opportunities which the class of inhabitants proposed to be benefitted by the Society, who are Her Majesty's subjects of French origin, will enable them practically to make the settlements every thing they may desire;; and with their projects for the good of the settlers, there is no necessity for the Government to interfere, if it had the power.

It is of the greatest consequence that the means of religious and moral instruction should be provided for the Colonists; but beyond those provided by law, the Government has none at its disposal. The advice, encouragement—the benevolent exertions of your Lordship and your excellent associates—will do more in promoting the happiness and moral condition of the future inhabitants of the settlement, than any interference of Government can accomplish; and I am commanded to express the gratification of His Excellency in finding the disinterested and noble sentiments set forth on this subject in your memorial.

It would be in vain for the Government to offer opportunities for settlement of its vacant territory, unless these are accepted by the people in large numbers. It is, in fact, by concentration and union of effort that anything of importance on this subject can be accomplished.

By comparing the proposed course of the Government respecting the seignioral lands which belonged to the late order of Jesuits, and that regarding the lands of the Crown not hitherto appropriated, your Lordship will understand that in cases where the Government are trustees of special funds, they are not prepared to sacrifice these funds to the general policy of the country—a course which would amount to an indirect confiscation; and the same principle will apply to lands appropriated to Clergy Reserves, or reservations for the Indians, school lands, or other special landed appropriations.

But in these cases the Government are not prepared to admit the justice or policy of taking advantage of large possessions for the purpose of administering the property specially appropriated, with the view of large enhancement of price. They are ready to admit, and, so far as they have power to act upon the principle, that to make the industry and enterprize of the prior purchasers and cultivators a means of great enhancement of the price of the remaining territory, thereby offering to these first purchasers and settlers the discouraging prospect of increasing difficulties in the way of their procuring a neighborhood, and thereby dooming them to prolonged isolation and helplessness, is a degree of over administration of a special fund of uncertain expediency, when private trustees are concerned, and altogether impolitic and unjust when the Government are the administrators.

Administered on any other principle, special appropriations of large quantities of land become a real grievance to the vicinity of these locations; but when the lands are disposed of with due regard to the interests of the whole community, the special fund may be preserved without any important evil result, or any just grounds of complaint.

As regards the lands of the Crown, the Government are disposed not to regard them as any very considerable source of income for the ordinary purposes of revenue. The distribution of the population in comfort and independence,—increase in the numbers of the people of the Province,—and the consequent rapid increase in the public strength and resources, are objects of more value than the price which can be derived from sale of the territory of the Crown. These lands will therefore be disposed of principally with the view of settlement; and it is for the purpose of aiding the means of promoting that object, and for the purpose of discouraging fraudulent evasions of regulations in favor of actual settlement and occupation, that a price is intended to be exacted. The vast quantity of rights to land issued in favor of persons not intending to settle, but with whom it was necessary to preserve the faith of Government, and which have been converted into land scrip, have hitherto prevented the requirement of money from the sale of Crown Lands; but when this scrip shall be absorbed by being used in purchases of Crown Lands, a revenue will probably arise, which, in the hands of the Legislature, may be made available in aid of settlement, education, and for other interesting and important purposes.

When settlement is intended to be commenced on any large tracts of Government land, the first occupants will labor under considerable disadvantages; their supplies will have to be brought from a distance, and communications have to be opened. To do the first rough work, of laying out and opening main roads, so as to prepare them for the operations of nature and for the gradual improvement by the inhabitants, is proposed to be undertaken by Government. The first population of a tract of land will be directed to their lines of road. To demand a price for the lands to be occupied by those first settlers would be to increase their difficulties, and to take money from them which can by no means be better employed than by themselves; but when lands