

Tenant League of Prince Edward Island.

The Committee of the Prince Edward Island Tenant League having been directed at the last meeting of that Body to prepare a Report of its plans and proceedings, for the purpose of being laid before the House of Assembly, in its present session, very respectfully submit the following:—

TO THE HONOURABLE THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Whereas a large number of the farmers, tenants and settlers, in the Fort Augustus, Monaghan, Pisquid, Glenfinn, and Johnston's River settlements, in Townships numbers 35, 36, 37, 48, and part of 49, have formed themselves into a body or confederation, under the title of "The Tenant League of Prince Edward Island," whose sole object and determination is to obtain by every legal means which can be resorted to, *Relief for the Tenantry of this Colony* from the insufferable tyranny and usurpation attempted to be, and in many instances now, exercised over them for a long time past, by parties claiming the lordship of the soil.

That the said League at its formation, proposed, passed and published, a few resolutions, eight in number, setting forth its plans and principles, and over Three Hundred Members were forthwith enrolled on its books.

That an individual, under the fictitious term of "Tell Truth," wishing himself thereby to be thought the beloved watchman of the tenant's rights, but who, like Bunyan's boatman, is looking one way and rowing another, and who yearns for some day becoming a little proprietor himself—this so termed "Tell Truth" addressed a long publication to the "Advertiser" Newspaper of the 15th December last, asserting that our League was got up for the purpose of being made useful to some of its projectors at a coming Election—and to obstruct the introduction of Responsible Government then on the eve of being granted to this colony—also dwelling at great length on the illegality of the system, and how hopeless our course would be with the Home Government, which would never consent to interfere with the long established custom of land claimants "doing what they like with their own," &c.

That a few little critics, admirers, or hangers on, of the foregoing, commenced croaking in support of the above "unknown," and expending all the powers of their little minds to display their "Liberalism" in drowning our first League, and like Aesop's ass in pursuit of the Lion, actually took credit to themselves for their success in so doing.

That forthwith a large meeting of the inhabitants who formed said League was held at Fort Augustus, and immediately after another meeting was published to be, and was held at Mr. John Burn's, on the Monaghan Road, Lot 48, to which meeting the Representatives of the District were invited for their countenance and co-operation—of whom only Mr. Mooney attended—but *who declared he would be neutral on the League*; at both of which meetings the falsehood and absurdity of "Tell Truth"; and of the tales and statements of the aforesaid critics, was made fully obvious.

That immediately after a mandamus to Francis Kelly Esq., was forwarded from the Colonial Secretary's office, informing him that he was accused to the Government of having given his countenance and support as a magistrate of the county to a combination formed at the Monaghan Settlement for the purpose of resisting the payment of rents, and commanding that he would answer thereto without delay, who appearing at head quarters, ascertained that the accusation was a verbal statement made by our former fictitious friend the veritable "Tell Truth," who again wishing to show the ardour of his attachment to the Tenant's cause, requested the removal from the magistracy of the said magistrate offering as his witness or informant against the accused, the aforesaid Mr. Mooney; the said "Tell Truth" then figuring as an Honorable Legislative Councillor.

That the committee of the League, lest it might be thought their movement would

peril the introduction of Responsible Government, and for other purposes, decided on suspending any further operation of the League, until the arrival of His Excellency our new Governor, until Responsible Government was obtained, and until it should be ascertained if the tenantry might expect specific relief from Responsible Government.

That as that measure has now become the law of the land, and out of danger; but being doubtful that it is of itself able to procure any specific relief for the tenantry, whose load of oppression is growing heavier every day, the League is now determined to proceed in its organization, and as soon as practicable, to commence its operations, and fully expects and solicits the concurrence and assistance of the House of Assembly.

That much has been said about the illegality of resolution No. 5, by which the members of the League are pledged to refuse paying rent, and to refuse assistance to the Bailiffs. Now it is not contemplated by that resolution to withhold from payment until the organization of the League shall become general thro' the Island—when we know it cannot be deemed illegal to decline what cannot be easily enforced. Moreover, to resist the Bailiffs was never thought of in that resolution; on the contrary, they might be robed in purple, and carried through the streets, proclaiming "Thus shall be done to the — whom the League hath delight to honour;" but when the whole of the farmers, the greater and best part of the merchants and mechanics, shall have joined our League, and refuse credits, patronage, or any kind of dealings with those kind-hearted gentry, they may then find it their interest to let the honourable occupation of suing, distressing, and distraining be done by the hardy Proprietors themselves, whom the League will never allow to be obstructed therein.

That the League contemplates now going towards the claimants of the Townships in this Island; on the contrary it proposes to secure to them what they are justly and fairly entitled to in its fullest extent, by a fair valuation, which, according to the average selling prices of wilderness or forest lands, now ranging at from £5 to £50 by the 100 acres, would be much lower than what the League already proposes.

That according to the said sales of forest lands, no proprietor's interest therein can be considered higher than between 5s. and 6s. by the acre, whereas the said lands, when reclaimed by the tenant, viz. cutting down the forest, piling, burning, and clearing off the wood, stumping, grubbing, and clearing off the stumps, and preparing for cultivation, every acre so cleared, it is well known, costs about £5, and sometimes above £6,—and a proprietor claiming an enhanced value for land so cleared, is dishonest; and such there are among our proprietors—who, having perhaps only the shadow of a title, wait quietly till considerable improvements are made, and then by the friendly assistance of their favourite functionaries, John Doe and Richard Roe, easily effect the poor tenant's removal.

That the law between landlord and tenant, as administered here, is well known to have no provision for the protection of the tenant—but every clause, section, and article thereof, according as they succeed each other in the British statute book, are a succession of enactments, each comprising some new device to render the power of the Landlord, his Agent or Bailiff, more effectual, and the chance of the tenant to escape from their grasp more difficult—that this state of things could be otherwise, might scarcely be expected since the M. P.'s qualification at home, besides other things, must be sworn to be worth in property six or seven hundred pounds per annum, which few unless landlords could conscientiously swear to, consequently the members of the Imperial Legislature have been always landlords, and their laws tell well of their justice towards the tenants, but which before long we hope will be in a different position. But that the claimants of this little Island should assume the powers and rights here which are guaranteed by the Landlord-made Laws aforesaid only to landlords in the United Kingdom, surpasses comprehen-

sion, and in which they may find themselves much mistaken, if the people only will so to be.

That as the only claim of the Grantees to any lands in this Island was founded solely on their broken pledge to King George the Third, of settling 20 or 30,000 German Protestants here before the end of the last century, which at that very time they well knew could not, should not, or would not, ever be fulfilled—their titles, and the titles of those claiming under them, we well know,—but that it would be far more wise, more creditable, and more for the benefit of the proprietors to accept of a fair compromise for their claim to the fee simple of the land, or the interest thereof for the rent, than to be holding on in their usurpation, grasping at shadows, when they might ultimately lose all.

That professing the most ardent attachment and loyalty to our Sovereign Lady the Queen, to His Excellency our worthy Lieut. Governor, and to the constituted authorities under him, we submit at the same time that we are not in the slightest fear of the Proprietors or their constituted authorities, if they get any, and attempt to deprive the tenants of the fruits of their honest toil. But as no rescue, obstruction of Bailiffs, or any illegal interference with such gentry, is contemplated or will be suffered or countenanced by our League—and as no "Sedition Act," or any of those Acts so convenient for preventing the people in the old country from asserting their rights, prevails here, or can ever be introduced here, the members of our League can be free and clear from being netted by its enemies.

That our League has, and will have among its members, those who can ascertain to a hair's breadth, the meaning which bounds the rights between the people and the proprietors, and who will, if need be, lead those members to its very verge—that in a short time our League will comprise all in the Island worth having, and those who oppose it can well be wanted.

That it is said armies will be applied for and ordered here to enforce the claims of the *injured landlords*, whom Providence it is said, in its mercy, first appointed for the well being of the benighted inhabitants of this colony. However, we know that no armies will ever be brought here, unless the Proprietors raise them, and pay them themselves, which all their rent would fall short in doing.

That we have laid the Resolutions and Rules of the League before the Council of the Irish Tenant League in Dublin, through C. G. Duffy, Esq., and the Rev. D. Bell, whom 1500 of the Monaghans here hail as almost their immediate townsmen, and whom our League will ever venerate for their noble advocacy of the Tenant's rights,—that that Council and Body approve of our movement, and will assist and co-operate with us by their advice and influence, we feel fully assured, and we feel pride and pleasure in embodying herein their sentiments towards our League, with our Resolutions, before referred to, as published in the *Dublin Nation*.

JAMES KELLY,
PATRICK HENESSY,
MICHAEL HUGHES,
PATRICK McCLEERY,
JAMES WHITE,
JAMES McDONALD,
JAMES TREANOR.

(From the *Dublin Nation*.)

"In Prince Edward's Island, as well as in Ireland, there are high rents, bad tenures, and Irish tenants. It is a British province, and the lordship of its lands was long ago given away for fraud and corruption, as our broad acres were to the favourites of the STUART, and the soldiers of CROMWELL. They had tilled their lands patiently, barren and bleak though the soil was; and paid their rents, as was the case at home—and a sorry contrast did they feel their lot to be with the free squatters of the States, or even with the rented *cesitine* of Canada. But at last the great tidings of the Conference travelled like the holy turf from Irish homestead, to homestead, through the Islands; and with tears, and pride, and blessing, it was told how we were standing together, North and South, Priest and Presbyterian, Orangeman and Papist, for life and land in the Old Country! And

when they had heard the solemn and glorious news, they swore that they, too, would muzzle oligarchs who stunted their children's bread—lest in after days such a power should grow strong in Edward's, as had driven themselves forth from Ireland. More power to your will, brave countrymen! These are resolutions fit for freemen to speak. Aye, resolutions indeed! No mere formula texts to peg rhetoric on, but all of them an ultimatum.

We reprint them entire—it will be seen that they make little reference to Acts of Parliament, but go right down to the root of the matter at once, and take it in their own hands. Would to God that we could do the same, but the lesson is well worth a study. Here follow the resolutions:—

"A very large meeting of the inhabitants of Lots 35, 36, 37, and 48, on the South side of the Hillsborough, was held at Fort Augustus School House, on Monday, the 2nd instant, for the purpose of forming a Tenant League. Mr. James McDonald (Portage) was appointed chairman, when the following resolutions were proposed and unanimously agreed to:—

Proposed by Mr. Robert Webster, seconded by Mr. James Kelly:

1st. That by reason of the calamitous visitations of Providence on the island, as well as elsewhere, for several years now passed, in the failure of the most valuable portion of our crops, and the consequent necessity of having to obtain seed, food, and other articles of subsistence on credit, during said years, besides the accumulation in many instances of several years rent, now sought to be recovered, threatens distress and ultimate ruin to the greater part of the tenantry of this Island, unless some means of protection is brought about without delay.

Proposed by Mr. Bryan Hughes, seconded by Mr. Michael Reardon:

2nd. That the annual rent of from five to ten pounds, in most cases British or sterling currency, by the 100 acres, is sought for and demanded by the terms of the existing leases—many of said farms being more than one half swampy or unproductive—and in several instances, the whole proceeds raised from said farms, the past season, would do little more than pay for the seed and labour expended thereon, which no law on earth should or ought to attempt depriving the industrious and hard working tenant of.

Proposed by Mr. Patrick McKenna, seconded by Mr. John Mitchell:

3rd. That it is well known, and not very long since partly acknowledged in the House of Commons, that grants under which the rents are claimed in this Island, were originally wrongfully obtained, through court favour and intrigue, and little or no other deserts on the part of the grantees, as also the successful maneuvering by which the said claims were kept good ever since, that under all the foregoing circumstances, and after allowing justice in its fullest extent to be secured to the said grantees, the occupiers of the soil who have formed fertile fields out of the wild forest, have an undoubted right, and it is their bounden duty to endeavour by every lawful means to obtain a reduction of at least one half of the present rents, besides full exemption from all valueless bogs or swamps.

Proposed by Mr. Patrick Clarkin, seconded by Mr. J. Traynor:

4th. That the only means of obtaining justice and protection between the landlord and farmers as aforesaid, are by means of a Tenant League or Confederation of the farmers of the whole Island, who are hereby called upon to hold local meetings in the several polling precincts into which the Island is now divided at which meetings the farmers assembled can propose any alteration, amendment or addition, which may be thought necessary to those herein, and that a delegate be appointed at said meetings to attend at a general meeting in each of the counties, which should take place as soon as arrangements therefor are made out, where a general plan of operation for the League may be agreed upon and adopted.

Proposed by Mr. James O'Brien, seconded by Mr. James Callaghan:

5th. That in the event of any of the grantees or landlords as aforesaid, agreeing to accept of a fair and reasonable