

*To the Tenantry and the Other Inhabitants of the Island of Prince Edward.*

The affairs of the Island have now reached a crisis. It is admitted that they are in a state of lamentable embarrassment and confusion. In consequence of the improper publication by the King's printer of a private circular addressed to the proprietors, by his Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, which he intended only for their own eyes, and of the use made of it by persons who have an interest in agitation, the dormant question of escheat has been revived; the payment of rents has been resisted; the sheriff has been assaulted in the execution of his duty; strangers entering Belfast, because suspected to be bailiffs, have been fired at by a mob; public meetings have been held, inflammatory resolutions have been passed, and addresses, got up in the same spirit, presented to the Lieutenant Governor. An Island blessed with a fertile soil, a favorable climate, excellent harbours, free fisheries, and a healthy and active population,—with every requisite, in short, to make a country prosperous and a people contented and happy,—has been placed in such a position that the rights of property are endangered, the peace of society disturbed, and an exigency created in which the authority of the Government must soon be exercised to enforce the laws, by resort to force, if the people themselves have not the prudence and good sense to return to tranquillity and to good order. With the sincere desire of promoting this object,—of convincing you, that the past agitation can end in no beneficial result, but will only embarrass the Government, and interfere with your own prosperity and future welfare, the following observations are prepared and addressed to you. They are intended to review the questions upon which the late agitation has been raised ; to hold up the even balance of justice between the proprietary body and yourselves; and to explain the recent negotiation conducted with the Government, and the prospect which is now opened to you of a fair, equitable, and permanent settlement of the unhappy controversy, which has for some past years' prevailed in Prince Edward Island.

It would be in vain at the present moment to inquire into the policy of a past Government, by which the Island was parcelled out into large tracts, some of which have since passed into the possession of British proprietors. It is clear that these titles now rest upon the King's grant, which is the best, because the highest title known to the law. If any one of these could be disturbed, if a proprietor holding under this title, confirmed as it is by the royal seal, could be deprived of his property, there is not a farmer or freeholder in the Island who would be secure in the ownership of his own land. Every freeholder holds under one of these original grants, and to uphold them is to uphold your own leases and your own title deeds; to abrogate them would not only be a gross violation of the law and of the honour of the Crown, but disturb every man in his possessions, and reduce the affairs of the Island into a state of inextricable and irremediable confusion.