

**File 95 and File 96            13 March 1830**  
**Burton's response**

his own abuse<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir

The knavery and artifices of the infamous agitator are at length fully developed. The agitator had cajoled the "good people of Rawdon", by presenting, to the presbyterians that, the object of, the petition in questions was, to procure a presbyterian Minister by stating to the Methodists that, its object was to obtain a Methodist preacher, who was to be provided for out of the waste lands of the Crown<sup>2</sup> & by calumniating me shamefully, to the few Episcopalians who signed the complaint. The inhabitants of the Township horror struck & disgusted, by the complicated depravity of the machinator, have held a public meeting, and have formally erased their Names from the original petition. The petition, as it now stands, is with regard to names, I may say, completely disorganized, six names only remain in the

face of it – those of the agitator and his servant, a miserable tool, and four individuals, who have never had a voice or a foot of land in my mission. One of the individuals resides in Quebec another at Sorel, a third in La Prairie & a fourth at Hawkesbury in Upper Canada. I have good reason to allege, some of the names have been forged, as was the case when, the first petition was preferred in the year 1826 – One Young man, named Samuel Smiley declared that, he would "suffer" his right hand to be cut off sooner than sign "any document to hurt his clergyman and his friend" notwithstanding which, his name was annexed --- upon the former occasion, to your knowledge, the names of many Roman Catholics, and even the names of dead men were attached to the petition but upon this occasion, the impropriety of attaching illicit names to the petition was restricted to Presbyterians and Methodists. From the commencement of this investigation his Lordship and you have laboured under a great mistake and acted upon it, you supposed the petition to have been an Episcopalian Petition however

it was virtually a Presbyterian or Methodist petition; the Presbyterians and Methodists having, greatly

outnumbered, the episcopalians. Upon this ground alone, I imagine, I might have refused to plead to the petition: however, I disdain to have recourse to a subterfuge, when I was conscious; I could fully vindicate to myself upon the broad and honorable ground of justice. The Petitioners not satisfied with having erased their Names from the original petition, have drawn up a string of resolutions,<sup>3</sup> declaratory of the sentiments they entertain towards me. These are indeed very flattering; & in all probability will appear shortly, in the public prints. The resolutions alluded to are signed not only by the petitioners, but by every man in the Township of Rawdon, with the exception of the agitator his lackey & two or three absentees. The original resolutions, I shall always retain for my own safety & satisfaction: but I will send you an authentic copy of them<sup>4</sup>, as I know of old, you have an inveterate dislike to "ex parte testimony". I shall also exhibit the disorganized petition to two of my Clerical

Brethren, that they may report upon in corroboration of what I have stated in respect of it. Any reasonable [sic] or unprejudiced man would be satisfied with the above, but more has been done. Affidavits have been sworn by respectable persons, proving satisfactorily that, all the charges contained in the petitions are utterly false. Affidavits have also been sworn establishing beyond doubt, the egregious deportment of the agitator in this Township: more especially that part of his bad conduct displayed, in carrying about pistols to shoot me & binding himself by an oath, solemnly in public, to "to persecute the church." Authentic copies of these affidavits shall be transmitted also. Now to recapitulate the charges contained in the petition, which were three, every possible exertion was made to bury the remains<sup>5</sup> of Brooks: but I conceive I was fortunate in being disappointed in that respect, for had I performed the usual ceremony over one who was accidentally killed & upon whom no inquest was held, I should have been doubtfully prosecuted by the agitator under the statute \_\_\_. With respect to the second charge of my refusing to perform occasional duties without having been immediately

File 96

payed or second - it will appear, by my accounts as well as by the affidavits that, I have upon very many occasions, remitted my fees either in whole or in part. In regard to the third and last charge that I was execrated in the Township of Rawdon, the resolutions which have been recently passed in this place, will speak for themselves; & amply rebut the malicious calumny - I have heard it asserted by a Clerical brother, that his Lordship considers popularity, as one of the principle qualifications of a Clergyman. The resolutions just now passed in all quarters of my mission, at L'Assomption & Lachesney [sic] as well as in Rawdon, must unquestionably prove, that I am not altogether defective in this particular. The question alluded to in your last, as coming from the Board have long since "forgotten them" it is fit his Lordship should do the same. They have originated from an anonymous letter, written to the board & to an anonymous charge, no man of experience or understanding would condescend to give any reply\_ You stated

to Mr Driscoll that, you never presided at any investigation upon my conduct this being the case, how could you have departed from my house in the year 1827 with any unfavourable impression upon your mind, in your official capacity: With regard to reports which you say have been widely diffused much more extensively than I am aware of, I assert roundly at once, I despise them & the propagators of them.<sup>6</sup> Was the respectability of the Episcopalian church, to be ascertained & admeasured, by the flying rumors of satirical Canada, it would be difficult, very difficult indeed, to lay ones hand, on a brother Clergyman's hand, and say as our Saviour said to Nathaniel "behold indeed an Israelite without" "guile". In future his Lordship cannot listen to any complaint, emanating from so foul a source - A person who has declared, in the presence of the Archdeacon & another respectable clergyman that he

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\* By a baseness peculiar to Canada, some extraordinary things I have said and done, whilst under the influence of a brain fever, caused by an accident which occurred at sea, have been attributed to me, in my sober moments.

would shoot the first individual that insulted him - That has carried about pistols to destroy the minister - That has publicly sworn, he would persecute the church - That has set an egregious example to the parishioners - That has attached the names of Romanists Presbyterians & Methodists; and even the names of the defunct, to complaints preferred against the episcopalian Clergyman - that is deemed, a turbulent agitator & a litigious character, by any respectable man, & especially by a venerable Bishop, as a competent witness; no one, upon whose most plausible representations, any reliance can be placed. In the whole of this correspondence, I have spoken feely, at which you cannot be much surprized, of the first mover of this unprincipled & unfounded complaint - but I'm sure, I may place so much reliance upon his Lordship & you that, you will not, in any wise or under any circumstances, commit me or mine, with a man, whose anger, knows no limitation\_ You say it is time for this affair to terminate

and I fully coincide in opinion with you in this particular. My wife, my family & myself, have been kept in a state of constant fermentation by this business for the last twelve month: and although from the commencement I had declared myself innocent of the imputations in the most solemn manner, on the word of a Christian, honor of a gentleman, it is quite apparent, we have not escaped altogether with impunity - to conclude, I do not wish, as a Christian minister, although upon many occasions I have been handled very roughly, perhaps [sic] more so than any other clerical man in the Diocese, to remain on bad terms with my Bishop or the Archdeacon - It is, ever was, and always will be, my anxious desire, to be (in) charity with all men. If you both feel, you have been precipitate in prejudging my case; & in consequence have unnecessarily & severely wounded my feelings, & the feelings of my whole family: this consideration will serve, as some little atonement, to

Your Obedient very humble Ser'vt

Burtonville  
Rawdon 13<sup>th</sup> March  
1830

*JE Burton*

to Archdeacon Mountain

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**ENDNOTES:**

- <sup>1</sup> These words have been added at the top of the letter in another hand.
- <sup>2</sup> Burton refers here and in File 111 to the policy of setting aside one-seventh of all public lands e.g. "waste lands of the Crown" as Crown Reserves to defray the cost of administration and a further one-seventh as Clergy Reserves to provide ministers (Church of England only) with rent. The policy was unpopular and in due course led to contention as these Reserves often prevented settlers from buying property adjacent to their grants. The non Anglican denominations resented their exclusion.
- <sup>3</sup> See File 62
- <sup>4</sup> File 60B
- <sup>5</sup> See File 61. Nonetheless, Burton did not record the burial in his register.
- <sup>6</sup> Burton added a note indicated by an asterisk at the bottom of this page. New pages are indicated by line breaks.