

REPORT  
OF THE  
CONVENTION  
OF THE  
COLOURED POPULATION,

HELD AT  
DRUMMONDVILLE, AUG., 1847.

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1847.



## THE COLOURED POPULATION OF CANADA.

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It had long been a matter of regret that there did not exist in Canada, any regularly organised Society, to which the individuals who escape from the slavery of the United States might look for assistance and for advice as to their future guidance. Such an Institution has become absolutely essential to the welfare of the coloured population. The friends of the long oppressed African race, residing in Canada, Great Britain, and the United States, are ever willing to assist those who escape from the land of bondage with aid to settle in their new abode, and to gain their bread by lawful industry. But in order that this may be done with confidence, it is necessary that the management and distribution should be placed under such, as would be able and faithful guardians of what was committed to them. The increasing number of the coloured population in Canada, has for several years attracted the attention of the philanthropists in Great Britain and the United States, and missions have been undertaken by various individuals to these countries, to procure assistance for them. With the money realized by one of these missions the settlement of Dawn, Sydenham, Western Canada, was formed several years ago. Large sums of money and quantities of clothing have since been received from Great Britain and the United States, but it is not known how they



have been disposed of. Whether there has been faithful management or not, the mass of the coloured population, for whose behoof these collections were made, are generally dissatisfied, as no satisfactory account of these transactions had ever been published.

The first step taken to bring these interests into a regular business-like form, was the organization of a Society some months ago, entitled "THE BRITISH AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY." Its head quarters are at Toronto, but it is intended that it shall have branches all over the Province. This Society has met with the approbation of the coloured population of Toronto, and of many other friends. But something more than this was required to raise up a central power, to which the self-emancipated slave might look for protection and assistance—the distressed meet with sympathy and support in the hour of need—the interests of the coloured population be promoted, and their persons protected by prompt appeals to the justice of British law. With a view to carry out these important objects, it was deemed advisable to hold a General Convention of the coloured population of the Province. On the 7th of June last an address was extensively circulated from Toronto, and published in several newspapers, inviting a Convention to be held in Drummondville, on the 2nd day of August and subsequent days.



# THE CONVENTION.

## SESSION I.

In consequence of the said call, the Convention met at Drummondville, on Monday, the 2nd day of August, 1847, in the African Methodist Episcopal Chapel.

The House was opened with singing, and prayer by the Rev. N. C. W. Cannon.

Rev. Mr. Cannon was unanimously appointed President, and Mr. Charles Freeman, Secretary, *pro tem*.

The call of the Convention having been read ; on motion of Mr. Smallwood, the Delegates present were requested to present their credentials, when the following gentlemen took their seats, viz. :—

### CANADA.

|                                      |                 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Rev. Thomas Smallwood, - - - - -     | Toronto.        |
| Mr. E. B. Dunlop, Agent, - - - - -   | "               |
| Mr. Charles Freeman, do., - - - - -  | "               |
| Rev. N. C. W. Cannon, do., - - - - - | Hamilton.       |
| Mr. Richard Warren, - - - - -        | "               |
| Mr. J. T. Henson, - - - - -          | Dawn.           |
| Mr. George Ramsay, - - - - -         | Harwich.        |
| Rev. Nelson Counter, - - - - -       | St. Catherines. |
| Rev. Alexander Elmsley, - - - - -    | "               |
| Mr. J. B. Lindsay, - - - - -         | "               |
| Rev. Alexander Broadwales, - - - - - | "               |
| Mr. J. Thomas, - - - - -             | "               |
| Mr. Benjamin Russell, - - - - -      | Drummondville.  |
| Mr. J. Taylor, - - - - -             | "               |



## UNITED STATES.

Mr. Wm. Ferris, - - - *Oberlin, Loraine Co., Ohio.*  
 Mr. John Watson, - - - " " "  
 Rev. John Liles, - - - *Syracuse, Onandago Co., N.Y.*  
 Mr. J. B. Lot, - - - *Sandusky, Erie Co., Ohio.*  
 Mr. Norris Needham, - *Detroit, Michigan.*  
 Mr. Pleasant Underwood, - *Baro, Buffalo, N.Y.*  
 Mr. T. W. Stringer, - - *Cincinnati, Ohio.*  
 Mr. J. B. Blanknort, - - *Lockport, Erie Co., N.Y.*

On motion, a Committee of three was appointed by the Chairman, consisting of Messrs. Smallwood, Dunlop, and Liles, to nominate officers for the Convention. The Committee having retired a short time, returned and reported the following persons as suitable for officers of the Convention, viz. :—

Rev. N. C. W. Cannon, - - - *President.*  
 Rev. John Liles, - - - *Vice-President.*  
 Mr. Charles Freeman, - - - *Secretary.*  
 Mr. J. W. Stringer, - - - *Assistant Secretary.*

The meeting having approved of the Report, also appointed the following Committees :—

ON BUSINESS—Messrs. Smallwood, Ramsay, Watson, Counter, and J. T. Henson.

ON RULES—Messrs. Liles, Dunlop, and Couuter.

ON FINANCE—Messrs. Warren, Counter, and Smallwood.

Convention adjourned to 9 o'clock next morning.

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 SESSION II.

TUESDAY, August 3rd—9 A.M.

House opened with praise, and prayer by the Rev. Mr. Liles.



A letter was read from Mr. D. Jenkins, Columbus, Ohio, on the importance of the duties of the Convention.

A letter was also read from Dawn, concerning the illegal election of one of the Delegates from that place.

Both letters were laid on the table for after consideration.

On motion of Mr. Dunlop, it was

*Resolved*,—That the members of this Convention declare to the world that they have met for no sectarian purpose whatever—that LIBERTY is their motto, and TRUTH their standard.

Adjourned till 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

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### SESSION III.

TUESDAY, August 3rd—3 P.M.

House opened as usual with singing and prayer.

The Business Committee reported—that they would recommend to the consideration of the Convention the latter part of the call which relates to the moral, religious, and social condition of their people, and the best means for their improvement.

Report laid on the table.

In accordance therewith, it was then

*Resolved*,—That means should be taken to ascertain, as far as possible, what is the condition of our people, in order that we may be enabled to devise means for their elevation.

Resolution laid on the table.

*Resolved*,—That the best mode for improving the moral, religious, and social condition of our people in Canada is,



by means of Common School Education, and the acquirement of useful knowledge.

*Resolved*,—That the mind of the House be taken, whether information should not be received, as to the disposal of the money and clothing sent by the friends of the coloured people in Canada for their benefit, and who had participated in it.

One case was mentioned, but it happened before the present Agents commenced their operations.

Moved by Mr. Smallwood, and

*Resolved*,—That if the monies, clothing, and other articles contributed in the United States and Great Britain had been equitably and judiciously divided, our condition would have been greatly better than it now is.

Laid on the table.

Moved by Mr. Smallwood, seconded by Mr. Cannon,—

*Resolved*,—That this Convention is satisfied that frauds have been committed upon the people of colour in Canada, in regard to monies, clothing, and other articles sent from the United States and elsewhere.—Laid on the table.

Adjourned till next day.

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#### SESSION IV.

WEDNESDAY, August 4th—9 A M.

Convention met, and opened in the usual manner.

Rev. Josiah Henson presented his credentials, and took his seat as Delegate from Dawn.

After a long discussion in regard to the order of the day, and other minor matters, the Rev. J. Henson moved the following resolution:—

“Whereas it is our duty to contend for truth and justice,



if any gentleman brings a charge against the character of a man, whether present or absent, and cannot substantiate the fact by good proof, he is chargeable with immorality, and is unworthy of public confidence."

Laid on the table for further consideration.

Mr. Ramsay then moved—"That the Convention ascertain as far as possible, whether the Dawn institution belongs to a Joint Stock Company, or whether it belongs to the People of Colour in Canada generally."—Laid over to the afternoon session.

The motion by Mr. Smallwood yesterday, respecting the supplies from abroad, was called up for adoption, and laid over till the afternoon session.

The Convention then adjourned.

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## SESSION V.

WEDNESDAY, *August 4th*—3 P.M.

The Convention met—the President in the Chair.

Mr. Smallwood's resolution was again brought up, and a long discussion took place. The motion was supported by Messrs. Smallwood, Dunlop, Warren, Watson, Counter, Liles, and Blanknort; and opposed by Mr. J. Henson. On division it was carried, viz.:—*Yeas*, Messrs. Dunlop, Liles, Smallwood, Freeman, Cannon, Warren, Ramsay, Ferris, Watson, Counter, Elmsley, Stringer, and J. T. Henson—13. *Nay*, Mr. J. Henson—1.

The motion adopted was as follows:—

*Resolved*,—That this Convention declares their belief that frauds have been practised upon the People of Colour in Canada, in regard to monies, clothing, and other articles given by friends in the United States and elsewhere for our benefit.

The Convention then adjourned to Thursday.



## SESSION VI.

THURSDAY, 5th August—9 A.M.

The Convention met at 9 o'clock A.M., and was opened as usual by prayer and praise.

Mr. Henson's resolution was taken up, as already given, viz.:—"Whereas it is our duty to contend for truth and justice—if any gentleman brings a charge against the character of a man, whether present or absent, and cannot substantiate the fact by good proof, he shall be charged with immorality, and is not worthy of public confidence."

The following amendment was then offered by Mr. Smallwood, and adopted by the meeting:—

"Whereas it is our duty to contend for truth and justice, and if any gentleman brings a charge against the character of any man, whether present or absent, whose public acts are not shrouded in mystery, thereby creating suspicion against his character, which he cannot substantiate by good proof, he shall be charged with immorality, and be held unworthy of public confidence."

The following questions were then put to Mr. J. Henson by the meeting, viz.:—

*Question*—For whom do you act as Agent?

*Answer*—I am Agent for the British American Institute in Dawn, Canada West.

*Q.*—What is its object?

*A.*—It is an Institution situated on Sydenham River—a river navigable for boats of 300 tons—land fertile—and it is for any young men, to be educated at their own expense.

*Q.*—To whom are you amenable?

*A.*—To the Executive Committee.

*Q.*—To whom are the Executive Committee amenable?

*A.*—To the Trustees.

*Q.*—To whom are the Trustees amenable?



*A.*—To the donors. I have collected fifteen hundred dollars since the 1st March last, in hard cash.

Mr. Ramsay's motion was then brought forward:—

*Resolved*,—That the Convention ascertain as far as possible whether the Dawn Institution is a Joint Stock Company, or an institution for the People of Colour in Canada generally.—Consideration deferred.

Convention adjourned.

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## SESSION VII.

THURSDAY, August 5th—3 P.M.

Mr. Ramsay's motion was taken up:—

*Resolved*,—That the Dawn Institution belongs to the People of Colour in Canada generally.

Vote taken, and stood as follows:—*Yeas*, Messrs. Cannon, Smallwood, Ramsay, Freeman, Dunlop, Warren, J. Henson, J. S. Henson, Elmsley, Ferris, Watson, Liles, Stringer, Counter, Taylor, Russell—16. *Nay*—none.

It was then

*Resolved*,—That whereas the British American Institute in the Township of Dawn, Canada West, is not conducted to the satisfaction of the People of Colour in this Province, a Committee of five members of this Convention be appointed to audit the books and papers of said Institution—the said Committee to make an exact report of the result of their investigation to the next meeting of the People's Convention, to be held at Drummondville, in August, 1848.

It was farther

*Resolved*,—That the said Committee act as a Joint Committee in the management of the Institution at Dawn, and that they shall be responsible to the Convention.



The following Committee was then named by the Chair—two from the United States, and three from Canada West:—Rev. John Liles, Messrs. T. W. Stringer, E. B. Dunlop, J. B. Lindsay, and J. T. Henson.

The following proposition, previously brought forward, was then agreed to:—

*Resolved*,—That if the monies, clothing, and other articles sent from the United States and elsewhere, had been equitably and judiciously distributed among the people of colour in Canada, our condition would have been greatly superior to what it now is.

*Resolved*,—That the Convention is satisfied that the Agents into whose hands these donations by the friends of humanity have fallen, have utterly failed to carry out the intentions of the benevolent donors.

*Resolved*,—That the Convention recognises the British American Anti-Slavery Society in the City of Toronto, and its auxiliaries, as the only regularly organised association of the kind in Canada, and recommend it to the support of the friends of the coloured race.

*Resolved*,—That Agents shall be appointed in convenient places in the Province, who shall have power to appoint sub-Agents for the distribution in the interior, of such goods as may be entrusted to them—these sub-Agents to be responsible to the chief Agents, who shall be responsible to an Executive Committee, and the Executive Committee to the British American Anti-Slavery Society.

*Resolved*,—That it shall be the duty of the Executive Committee to see that all the goods and chattels given for the benefit of fugitive slaves be put into the hands of their



Agents, that they may be faithfully distributed among the proper objects of charity ; and the said Agents shall report the same to an Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society, of which each Agent must be a member. Each Auxiliary Society shall report all their transactions at least once a year to the Parent Society, which shall publish annually a full account of all the receipts and disbursements of the Society, in money or any kind of articles, with an account of what then remains on hand.

*Resolved*,—That the British American Anti-Slavery Society be called together, in order that the words “ Prudential Committee,” be withdrawn from the Constitution, and “ Executive Committee” be substituted, and the said Committee shall have power to appoint Agents.

*Resolved*,—That all coloured people in Canada be recommended to become freeholders as soon as they have an opportunity of doing so, as a legitimate means of increasing their influence in the community.

*Resolved*,—That this Convention recommend to all their brethren throughout the Province to tolerate nothing but truth in their intercourse with the world—to be quiet and peaceable subjects—and to avoid all cause of censure or reproach from those around them.

*Resolved*,—That the Executive Committee shall cause an oath of fidelity to be taken by the officers of the Society, if they shall deem it necessary.

The Convention then adjourned.



## SESSION VIII.

FRIDAY, August 6th—9 A.M.

Convention met, and was opened as usual.

Moved by Rev. Mr. Cannon, seconded by Mr. Stringer,—

*Resolved*,—That the Executive Committee be instructed to take every means of ascertaining the names of the Agents who have been employed in collecting money, &c., for the coloured people of Canada, to ascertain the amount, and report the same, that full information may be published in the Minutes and to the Convention of 1848.

*Resolved*,—That the Convention feels deeply grateful for the benevolence of their many kind friends. They desire to cast their care upon God, who has hitherto cared for and protected them.

On motion of Mr. J. T. Henson, it was

*Resolved*,—That the coloured people of Canada are not in the degraded state in which they have been represented by some of the pretended Agents who have gone out.

On the report of the Business Committee being brought up, the following motions were passed:—

*Resolved*,—That we first examine what the condition of our people really is, and then we shall be enabled to devise means for their elevation.

*Resolved*,—That among the best means for improving the moral, religious, and social condition of our people are—Common and Industrial School education, and instruction in the truths of the Word of God.



*Resolved*,—That the Convention recommend the British American Anti-Slavery Society to use their utmost exertions to establish an Anti-Slavery Paper in the City of Toronto.

*Resolved*,—That the Delegates who shall attend the Convention of 1848, be requested to bring accurate accounts, as far as possible, of the Schools and other property belonging to their constituents.

*Resolved*,—That the letter from Dawn be handed over to the Auditing Committee.

Two additional members were then voted to form part of the Auditing Committee—one from the United States and one from this Province—viz. : Messrs. W. P. Newman, and G. Ramsay.

Mr. J. Henson then rose and proceeded to satisfy the Convention in regard to his agency for the British American Institute. He handed his book to the Secretary, with an account of his intromissions since the 1st March last. This was read over to the Convention, and it showed clearly that Mr. Henson had faithfully discharged his duty to the institution.

It was then

*Resolved*,—That the Convention is satisfied with the conduct of Mr. Henson, so far as they have heard from him.

Convention then adjourned.



## SESSION IX.

FRIDAY, August 6th—3 P.M.

Met at 3 o'clock p.m., and opened as usual.

*Resolved*,—That the Auditing Committee be instructed to memorialize the Governor General and the Provincial Parliament, praying them not to incorporate the Dawn Institution in its present state.

*Resolved*,—That these Minutes be printed, and that each copy shall not exceed 4½d.—that 1000 copies be printed, or 1500, if necessary, and that the proceeds shall go to defray the expenses of the next Convention.

*Resolved*,—That the Convention meet again on the 15th day of August, 1848, at Drummondville, Canada West, under her Majesty's protection.

Adjourned.

N. C. W. CANNON, *President*,

CHARLES FREEMAN, *Secretary*,

T. W. STRINGER, *Asst. Sec'y*.