

THE BOUCHETTE PETITION.

Mr. Joseph Bouchette, Surveyor-General of the Province of Quebec, has, in his own behalf, and that of the other children of his father, prepared a petition, for presentation to the Dominion Parliament, on the subject of his claim on the former Province of Quebec, for services performed under very special circumstances. Canada has had a few men of whom she might well be proud, but whom she has treated with neglect, if not base ingratitude. Among these we have only to mention the names of de Salaberry, Dambourges, and Bouchette.

Dambourges, who distinguished himself during the siege of Quebec by the Americans in 1775, and for whom his compatriots claim the credit of having largely contributed to the overthrow of Montgomery on the night of the 31st December of that year, was permitted to die without any recognition of his services or without any provision being made for his widow. This was bad enough but the case of de Salaberry is still more indefensible. On the 25th October, 1813, at Chateaugay, with a force not exceeding three hundred men, he resisted for four hours, and eventually repulsed the American army, exceeding six thousand men; to use the words of the British Commander-in-Chief: "Repelling with disgrace an American invading army twenty times their number, reflects unfading honour on the Canadian name." His countrymen were not, at the time, insensible of his merit, for on 20th March, 1816, the Legislature passed an address to the Prince Regent, praying him to make a grant of Crown Lands to him for "his most distinguished services," which had "disconcerted the plans of the enemy, diminished his confidence, and secured the safety of the Province." So far this was creditable to all parties, but from influences exerted at Court, the prayer of the Legislature was never complied with, and to its shame be it spoken, when the Crown Lands were transferred to the Local Government, and the application was renewed by De Salaberry's heirs to the Government and Parliament, no favourable result has as yet followed. The case of Dambourges was bad, that of De Salaberry still worse. But this much may be said in palatation of the course of the governments. The men simply did their duty, and though they had strong, and as we believe imperishable claims, on the gratitude of their country, unless the subsequent action of the Legislature had given the heirs of De Salaberry a moral claim; there exists no other. We now come to the Bouchette case, and we say, that any Canadian on reading the petition now referred to ought to hang his head, and blush from cheek to brow. There is disclosed no question of mere duty on the one side, and gratitude on the other, but it resolves itself into this, a contract entered into deliberately and voluntarily between the two parties, a contract which every honest man must consider legal and binding on both, in which the one party faithfully and efficiently fulfilled his part, and the other has hitherto most unjustifiably failed.

On turning to the evidence submitted by Mr. Bouchette in connection with his petition, we find that in 1813, a Committee of the House of Assembly was sitting on the question of preparing a "General plan of the Province," and that Mr. Bouchette was sent for, "as the fittest person to give correct information on the subject." On appearing before the Committee, he was eventually asked if "One thousand Five hundred pounds would defray the expenses" to which he an-

swered he would undertake the duty for that sum. The evidence indisputably shows, that his offer was accepted, the work entered upon, and when it was partially completed, £500 were voted to him in part payment. The work was completed, and was then, as it is now universally acknowledged, as not creditable to the Province, but a monument of the diligence, ability, exactness, and reliability of its author. Though it was proved before Committees of the House, by the evidence of the Chairman of the Committee who recommended the payment of the £300, "that it was in part payment of the Fifteen hundred pounds voted in 1814." And that it was voted on the understanding that "the balance of £1,000 should be paid when the work should be completed." Though it was proved before a Committee that sat in 1818, that the maps had been executed at a loss to Mr. Bouchette of £1,701 18s 2d. Though the House admitted the justness of the claim from some unaccountable reason instead of voting the required money, it contented itself with praying the Governor-in-chief, the Duke of Richmond, "to indemnify him for his services and losses by such grant of the Crown Lands as his grace in his wisdom may think fit."

No action it seems was taken till 1821, when the Governor sent the following message to Parliament. "The Governor-in-chief is of opinion that Mr. Bouchette's claim is just and reasonable, but does not approve of remunerating him by a grant of land as was proposed by the address of the Assembly, of the 17th April, 1819. The Governor-in-chief, therefore trusts the House of Assembly will enable him to meet that claim."

Though all this is of record, to the disgrace of the Canadian name, nothing has yet been done to liquidate this just debt.

During the last session of the Local Legislature, the subject was brought under its notice by the member for Gaspe, who moved its reference to a Committee, on which we are told, the Premier, Mr. Chaveau, while admitting the justness of the claim, and in eulogistic terms, recognizing the value of the services, recommended that the matter should be preferred to the House of Commons, for inasmuch as Upper Canada had shared in the assets to the credit of Lower Canada, at the time of the Union in 1841, that the Province of Ontario, should pay its portion of this debt, through the intervention of the Federal Government. Acting on this hint, Mr. Bouchette has presented, or is about to present it to the House of Commons, and we most heartily wish him success, for a clearer case of right, we are of opinion, cannot exist. We will not venture to express an opinion as to who are the parties now liable, but as it is not a question of gratitude or even equity, we cannot divest ourselves of the impression that somebody is liable at law, and if our institutions do not afford a remedy to prevent justice from miscarrying so long, as she evidently has done in this case, there must be something rotten in the state of Denmark, which ought to be remedied. Mr. Joseph Bouchette, the present prominent, has been for half a century a faithful and efficient public servant, exhibiting in his office much of the ability, and as great exactitude as his father. He is distinguished for his courteous attention to all who seek information in his Department. His brother Mr. Robert Bouchette, ranks equally high as Commissioner of Customs, and as they have, in their own persons, done good service to the State, for which they have not been too highly remunerated, we repeat, that we trust that their

just claims may now meet that favourable consideration which has been too long withheld, but which is nevertheless in accordance with the principles of justice which are eternal. — *Quebec Chronicle.*

WHAT THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT HAS ACCOMPLISHED.

(From the Ottawa Times.)

We copy below the substance of a circular which the Secretary of the Treasury at Washington has just issued which has an important bearing upon the trade of the lakes. Hitherto the charges upon our vessels trading to American ports were very great, while until last year there were comparatively no charges upon American vessels trading to our ports; they had to pay \$2,50 for vessels over a certain tonnage on entering, and the same on clearing, while the American vessels were exempt under the privileges which a coasting license gave them. The effect of this policy was to place the whole ferriage system of the water line from Cornwall to Lake Superior in the hands of Americans. Last year our Government, in carrying out their National Policy, resolved to place the same tax on American vessels that they placed upon ours, and hence the result:

(From the Detroit Free Press)

The Secretary of the Treasury has issued a circular concerning the customs fees on the northern, northeastern and northwestern frontiers, which modifies the rate of fees to be charged in several important cases. Hereafter, on the lake frontiers, fees for clearance and entries of all vessels will only be fifty cents in each case. All enrolled and licensed vessels departing from, or arriving at, a port in one collection district, to or from a port in another district, although touching at intermediate foreign ports, are exempt from the payment of direct entrance fees, and from the payment of tonnage tax; in all such cases an entry and clearance must be made.

Ferry boats running on routes duly bonded and used exclusively for conveying sealed cars under provision of sections five and six, of the Act of July 20th 1865, and regulations of the department, and ferry boats conveying passengers and their personal baggage only, are not required to enter or clear or to pay entrance or clearance fees; but the personal baggage so carried is subject to the provisions of section forty-six of the Act of March 2nd, 1799, and the Act supplementary thereto.

No fees other than those mentioned herein will be received in cases in which the vessels concerned navigate the waters of the northern, northwestern and northeastern frontiers, otherwise than by sea.

While we write, we learn that our policy is operating in another direction, and that the United States Senate will pass the Coal and Salt Bill, and thus relieve those articles from duty. We think no better proof can be adduced of the soundness of the policy which our Government adopted in dealing with our neighbours.

Senator Robertson, of South Carolina, recently said in a speech, that of his own personal knowledge at least one-fifth of the clerks in the Treasury Department never made a pretence of performing any duty, and also mentioned the case of a Post-office clerk who for one year has drawn his salary without entering the door of the department.