

THE POKER.

VOL. I.

MONDAY, AUGUST 2, 1858.

No. 3.

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Genus durum sumus experiensque laborum.

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THE CRISIS.

Mr. POKER does not think it is British practice to manacle an enemy, and then to pommel him until he cries enough, yet such was the course pursued by the House of Assembly towards the Ministry in the matter of the Seat of Government. By a deliberate vote of that respectable body, after several years spent in futile attempts to fix upon a place, it was

Resolved, 1st. That the itinerating system, tinker fashion, was bad, and that it must at once cease, *ergo* a place must be chosen.

2nd. That Quebec be the place; when, lo! the Legislative Council turns Turk and says, "you have contemned us for many years on this subject, and toted us from place to place, without even saying 'by your leave,' so we will spoil the game and refuse to go to Quebec." And they did. Thus poor Quebec was swindled out of its rights.

Then 3rd. Seeing no place could be chosen, the Government proposed to refer the matter to the Queen, and the House of Assembly agreed, by a good majority, clinching the decision by a vote of £225,000 for the erection of the public buildings, in whatever spot Her Majesty might choose. To this the Legislative Council unanimously agreed, we believe, so the decision became the law of the land.

4th. The Queen chose Ottawa, and the Government, being bound by their oaths to administer the law, had no choice but to give effect to Her Majesty's will. The candid reader will please note the fact. The law, peculiar as no other law was, in respect of having invoked the personal co-operation of our beloved Sovereign as an umpire, bound the Ministry hand and foot, and so they were told by both sides of the House, for Mr. Ouimet, one of their own friends, publicly, in his place, informed them that *they*, of course, must carry out the law, but that if they did he would withdraw his confidence. This, then, was the position. *Here was a law which was binding until repealed*, not upon the Government merely, but equally so upon every member of the Legislature, and indeed upon every loyal subject.

5th. The House of Assembly are indisposed to obey, but insist that the Government, to save the credit of the country, we suppose, must do so. Mr. Dorion, however proposes a course

which might have been adopted with propriety, viz., 1st To address Her Majesty, gratefully thanking her for her royal condescension in acceding to the urgent request of her Canadian subjects, in choosing a place for the Seat of Government, but at the same time acknowledging that the country regretted she had selected Ottawa. 2nd Informing her that the Legislature had at last fixed upon a place; viz., Montreal, and asking her to drop Ottawa and substitute Montreal.

6th. But Mr. Dorion was not sincere, and only made this motion to embarrass the Ministry on the Supplies. He was told he might move his resolution at any other time, and a promise was made to the House by the Ministry that ample opportunity would be given. Mr. Dorion, however, pressed, his first resolution, and it had to be voted down. The second he purposely abandoned.

7th. On the day agreed upon to bring up the subject, Mr. Dorion refuses to do so, but gets Mr. Thibaudeau, a new convert to Opposition views, to bring up the very motion which had been before negatived, well knowing it could not be put, as the same motion cannot be acted on twice in one Session, so the Speaker ruled it out of order, as he was bound to do.

8th. Thereupon Mr. Brown tells the Lower Canadians they had been sold by the Ministry, and several of them take offence, in other words fall into the trap prepared for them by Messrs. Brown, Dorion, and Thibaudeau.

9th. But the Ministry to show they were sincere express a willingness to allow the subject to be brought up at once in a shape which would permit of its being discussed. Mr. Dunkin takes up Mr. Dorion's own forsaken resolution proposing Montreal, and praying the Queen to be graciously pleased to substitute that place for Ottawa, taking in fact, the very position Mr. Dorion himself had first taken, but afterwards for party purposes abandoned.

10th. To show the utter insincerity of their expressed desire to settle the vexed question, Mr. Brown moves, that it is inexpedient to spend money at present for the Seat of Government at Ottawa,—he could not it appears go the exact length of flinging back Her Majesty's decision contemptuously in her face; at any rate he could not do it in person.

11th. Mons. Piché, however, has no such qualms—he hardly yet proposes himself as an adviser of the Crown—so he moves, substantially, that Her Majesty's decision is unworthy of respect, and "that Ottawa," in opposition to that decision, "be not the Seat of Government." Mr. Brown forgets that *he* proposes himself as a Minister, a part of whose duty it will be to maintain the Queen's dignity, and administer her government according to law, and he backs

M. Piché's amendment to his own amendment, and in amendment also of Mr. Dunkin's Resolution, *which Resolution was first proposed by Mr. Dorion*, Mr. Brown's right hand man and helper in forming an Administration. The Government being, as before said, under the absolute obligation to uphold the law, abide by the Queen's decision, which is law, and are beaten!

12th. Query, Can such a result be called a defeat? Was any Government ever expected to pursue a policy contrary to the law of the land, a law not yet six months perfected? Was ever a Government beaten by a Legislature, because they maintained the honor of the Sovereign and the Majesty of the law? We don't think such a thing ever happened in a British Legislature before, and we therefore ask our readers again, **WAS IT BRITISH FAIR PLAY WHILE THE GOVERNMENT WERE BOUND BY THE LAW, TO VOTE THEM DOWN FOR NOT BREAKING IT?**

YORKVILLE, 22nd July, 1858.

MR. POKER,—Our patriotic Legislators are yet hard at work for the good of—themselves—I mean of the country. Bless me, how easy it is to make a mistake. This is the 22d week of their labour, and, I suppose, they will make the two round dozen before they stop. By that time they will have received \$1000 each, and \$8 over, exclusive of travelling expenses, that is \$80 more, each. Supposing these worthy gentlemen pay \$1 per diem for board, (doubtful) and \$20 for travelling expenses, they will net \$900 each by the Session! Now, Mr. POKER, is it not remarkable that so many clever men should be found willing to sacrifice half a year for the trifling sum of \$1000—full that with stationery? Happy land! that can boast of 130 philanthropic individuals willing to exchange the comforts of home, and the profits of the farm and workshop, for \$7 per day. (They are paid for Sunday which makes \$7 for each working day.) Why, I verily believe most of them could earn \$1 a day at home, and some few \$1½, yet they consent to stay here for \$7 a day! It shows what an elevation of moral excellence human nature may aspire to and attain, whence under the ennobling instructions of such teachers as Messrs. Brown, Foley, and Hogan. Happy Canada! happy people, to be privileged with pouring your hard earnings into such patriotic hands.

Yours, very profoundly, &c..

SAMUEL SNOBSON.

Mr. Brown's speech at the Demonstration, in our last, originally appeared in the *Prototype*. The credit was inadvertently omitted.