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FINANCE AND INSURANCE REVIEW.

MONTREAL, NOVEMBER 22, 1878.

A DANGEROUS PRECEDENT.

We can draw no other inference from the recent articles in the *Montreal Gazette* and in *Le Canadien* of Quebec than that the supporters of the Dominion Government are determined to press for the removal of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Quebec; and we presume that "the cause" which, in accordance with the provisions of the British America Act, it is necessary to assign in case of the removal of a Lieutenant-Governor within five years from the date of his appointment, should be, in their opinion, that by dismissing his ministers in March last His Honor was guilty of "a violation of the Constitution." We cannot compliment either our English or French contemporary on having discussed the subject in a judicial spirit. On the contrary, their articles breathe a desire for vengeance which is deeply to be lamented, although we have reason to fear that it is very extensively felt by the adherents of the Ex-Ministers in the Province of Quebec, who have brought all the pressure possible on the Administration in support of their views. Our opinion as to the merits of the unfortunate dispute between the Lieutenant-

Governor and the Ex-Ministers has been repeatedly expressed, and has been supported by authorities of the greatest weight; but on the new question which is looming up we should be quite willing to admit, for the sake of argument, that the Lieutenant-Governor was as wrong as we believe him to have been right, and we should, even on that assumption, protest against so gross a violation of the Constitution as that which is advocated by our contemporaries. Moreover, we give our solemn warning to those who have been most prominent in urging the perpetration of this act of vengeance that they are sanctioning a precedent that might in the future be invoked to destroy the autonomy of the Province of Quebec. If there be any class of the population of the Dominion which ought to be more zealous than another in protecting that autonomy, it is the one which adopts as its motto—"nos institutions, notre langue et nos lois." The great principle of our constitutional system is that, in regard to those local affairs which are confided to its Government, each Province of the Confederation is independent, the administration of its affairs being entrusted to a Lieutenant-Governor representing the Crown to the limited extent authorized by law, and advised by a ministry, responsible to the Legislature, consisting of two branches, the Constitution being in short "the very image and transcript of that of Great Britain." The removal of the Lieutenant-Governor is strictly analogous to a change of dynasty in the Mother Country. The theory of our Constitution is that the Sovereign, the Governor-General, and the Lieutenant-Governor are each irresponsible, and that for every act performed, no matter how improper, their respective ministers must be held responsible. In the case under consideration Mr. Joly assumed the responsibility for every act of the Lieutenant-Governor, and appealed to the people, precisely as Sir Robert Peel, although at the time travelling in Italy, assumed the responsibility for the dismissal of Lord Melbourne in 1834, and appealed to the people of the United Kingdom. We maintain that outside interference, whether on the part of the Imperial Government with that of the Dominion, or of the Dominion Government with that of the Provincial, is clearly unconstitutional. It is for the purpose of our present argument wholly immaterial whether Mr. Joly has the support of a majority of 10 or 20, or the bare casting vote of the speaker. Let Mr. Joly be displaced by legitimate means, and not by the removal of the Lieutenant-Governor, and the appointment of one who,

no matter how impartial he may be, will be generally believed to have been deputed by the Dominion Government to bring about a change of Government in the Province of Quebec.

PERSONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN CROWN AND CABINET.

It is, of course, most unfortunate that personal animosities should be deemed to have any weight in the solution of a grave constitutional question. It is due to the Lieutenant-Governor to point out that he has raised no difficulty of this kind. The partisans of the Ex-Ministers declare that no Conservative could accept office under Mr. Letellier, and this not because he is a Liberal, which would be no objection, but because he is a spy, a traitor and a master intriguer. In the interest of Constitutional Government we should think it fortunate that an opportunity were afforded Mr. Letellier of having to act with ministers holding political opinions at variance with his own. As an illustration of what British Ministers have had to put up with in our own time, we shall give an extract or two from Greville's Journals showing the relations between King William IV. and the Melbourne Ministry after their return to power, subsequent to their dismissal in 1834. In March, 1837, some three months before his death we find the following passage: "The king, who is a thorough party man, will be overjoyed at any change; he never loses an opportunity of showing his antipathy to his confidential servants." In 1836: "To-day we had a Council, the first since Parliament was prorogued, when his most Gracious Majesty behaved most ungraciously to his confidential servants, whom he certainly does not delight to honor." In 1835: "The king cannot bridle his temper, and lets slip no opportunity of showing his dislike, impotent as it is, of the people who surround him. He admits none but Tories into his private society; wherever he goes Tories accompany him; at Windsor Tories only are his guests." One more extract from the diary of 15 July, 1835: "The king's present behavior only makes matters worse. When he found himself compelled to take these people back, and to surrender himself a prisoner into their hands, he should have swallowed the bitter pill and digested it, and not kept rolling it in his mouth and making wry faces. He should have made a very bad business as tolerable as he could by yielding himself with a good grace; and, had he treated them with that sort of courtesy which one gentleman may and ought to show to all those with whom he is un-