

## WITH THE ORIGINAL GRANTEES.

Frequent debates have taken place in Parliament on the pensions question, but a single reference will suffice to establish the principle which the undersigned maintains should govern us in Canada.

In 1889, during the Derby administration, Mr. Bradlaugh and others sought to modify the Pensions Commutation Act of 1869. It was contended that the twenty-seven years' purchase was too high a rate to pay for extinguishing these annuities, and that an enquiry should, in every case, take place to ascertain whether the original grants had been made for valuable public services actually rendered, or had been given by Kings to favorites or to their illegitimate offspring, or otherwise, wholly irrespective of any public service rendered, and it was also insisted that payment should, in every case, cease with the life of the then present beneficiary.

The Government opposed the motion, and in the House of Commons Mr. Gladstone, although himself in opposition to the Derby Government, made a declaration of the principles upon which, he said, Parliament had uniformly acted in respect to the subject of pensions. The undersigned has thought it well to quote his words at length, as the correctness of his statement was not then, nor has it since, been questioned.

As to the power of Parliament, Mr. Gladstone said: "I am not prepared to accept the proposition without limitation that what Parliament has once enacted Parliament may repeal. Parliament, for any pecuniary purpose, is the fully authorized representative of the nation, and the nation must be committed by the deliberate act of its authorized representative, whether the act was wise and just or unwise and unjust."

(See debates 1889, May 16, page 291).

He also says: "Many things are done by Parliament which are unjust to the country, but I am not prepared to say that Parliament is morally entitled—constitutionally it may be—to go back on that declaration and repeal it."

(Ibid) "The idea I have of public faith is that when Parliament of its own deliberate act, aware of what it is about, has made an arrangement which is of the nature of a contract with private parties, whether that arrangement is good or bad for the country, it is the duty of Parliament to adhere to it."

(Ibid) "The principle involved is of the utmost importance, and the inviolability of the public faith is one of the most sacred of all questions."

(Ibid pp. 289-290.)

"The House of Commons cannot make too great sacrifices for the purpose of maintaining that inviolability, and, in my experience, has never hesitated to do so." (Ibid.)

"If the House of Commons has been extravagant and gone beyond the bounds of reason, it has undoubtedly done so in a sense adverse to the