

From the Toronto Globe.

GREAT GENERAL MEETING OF THE REFORM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA.

The first General Meeting of the Association took place last evening, (25th ultimo,) and the proceedings will not fail to produce a powerful effect throughout the country. The feeling which prevailed throughout the evening was of the most enthusiastic description. The speeches were delivered with much vigour, and of them it is enough to say, that they were listened to by a large audience with marked attention and approbation from half-past six to half-past eleven o'clock. We would only say to our brother Reformers throughout the country,—here we have commenced the campaign; the ball has received its first forward impulse in the City,—let it be taken up in every county, in every village, and in every hamlet of the country,—and let us show that we are not a divided people, that an overwhelming majority are determined to receive, and will take no less, than their full share of the privileges of the British Constitution.

The Association has leased the suite of Rooms attached to the North American Hotel, including the large public room, and here the Association commenced their public proceedings. The meeting was called for at six o'clock; by that hour a large number of persons had assembled; at half-past six o'clock the room was densely crowded, and during the evening many went away unable to gain admittance.

Hon. JAMES E. SMALL rose and moved that the Hon. ROBERT BALDWIN do take the Chair. The motion was received with loud acclamations, and the honourable gentlemen took his seat.

Mr. BALDWIN then rose, and amidst loud and long continued cheering, he said that he felt particularly gratified at the honour which had been conferred upon him, in calling upon him to preside at the first General Meeting of the Reform Association of Canada, because it afforded the most unquestionable evidence that in their opinion he had proved himself the firm and uncompromising friend of that great and vital principle of British Constitutional Liberty which it was the great object of the Association to support (cheers); and because it showed that while exerting themselves to insure to their country the practical application of that great principle to the administration of all our local affairs, they repudiated the ungenerous course of casting by, as a menstruous rag, the man who had stood firm to that principle through evil report and good report in the darkest hour of our country's history (cheers); when the doing so was denounced from the highest quarters as incipient treason, as well as when emerging from the cloud of calumny, in which interest and ignorance and despotism had for a time succeeded in developing it, this great and truly British principle shone forth in all the splendour of its native truth and excellence, under the express sanction of one of the brightest ornaments of the proud aristocracy of the Mother Country, and the specially appointed High Commissioner and Representative of the Sovereign himself. (Loud Cheering.)

There was another ground on which he felt pleased at the honour conferred upon him. It afforded him the opportunity of giving expression in the most unequivocal manner, to his entire approval of the Association (hear, hear); and no exertion, on his part, he could assure them, should wanting to forward its object, and make

the organization they had recommended as effectual as possible; and he most earnestly recommended to all to value the principles of the British Constitution, and to whom the preservation of the connection with the mother country was dear, to lend their aid by joining in such organization. (Loud cheers.) For, depend upon it, the day will come when one of the proudest boasts of our posterity will be, that they can trace their descent to one who had his name inscribed on this great Roll of the contenders for Colonial rights. (Great cheering.)

Our objects (said Mr. Baldwin) are open and avowed. We seek no concealment, for we have nothing to conceal. We demand the practical application of the principles of the Constitution of our beloved Mother Country to the administration of all our local affairs. (Hear, hear.) Not one hair's breadth further do we go, or desire to go; but not with one hair's breadth short of that will we be ever satisfied. (Cheers.) The nature and extent of the demand has never been better expressed than by the great statesman to whom he had already alluded. Lord Durham had, in his Report to her Majesty, nobly vindicated the Reformers of the Province from the foul imputations which had been attempted to be cast upon them, and he (Mr. B.) would trespass on the meeting for a few moments, while he read a few extracts from that great Text Book of British Colonial Rights:—

"The views," says his Lordship, "of the great body of the Reformers appear to have been limited, according to their favourite expressions to the Colonial Constitution 'an exact transcript' of that of Great Britain, and they only desire that the Crown should in Upper Canada, as at home, entrust THE ADMINISTRATION OF AFFAIRS to men possessing the confidence of the Assembly."

And after pointing out the nature of the evils, to the existence of which he attributes the unsatisfactory condition of the Province he proceeds:—

"It is not by weakening but strengthening the influence of the people on its Government, by confining within much narrower bounds those hitherto allotted to it, and not by extending the interference of the Imperial authorities in the details of Colonial affairs, that I believe that harmony is to be restored when dissension has so long prevailed, and a regularity and vigour hitherto unknown, introduced into the administration of these Provinces. It needs no change in the principles of Government—no invention of a new constitutional theory—to supply the remedy which would, in my opinion, completely remove the existing political disorders. It needs but to follow out consistently the principles of the British constitution, and introduce into the Government of these great Colonies those wise provisions, by which alone the working of the representative system can in any country be rendered harmonious and efficient. We are not now to consider the policy of establishing Representative Government in the North American Colonies. That has been irrevocably done, and the experiment of depriving the people of their present constitutional power is not to be then thought of. To conduct their Government harmoniously, in accordance with its established principles, is now the business of its rulers, and I know not how it is possible to secure that harmony in any other way than by administering the Government, on those principles which have been found perfectly efficacious in Great Britain. I would not impair a single PREROGATIVE OF THE CROWN; on the contrary, I believe that the interests of the people of these Colonies require the protection of

prerogatives which have not hitherto been exercised. But the Crown must, on the other hand SUBMIT TO THE NECESSARY CONSEQUENCES OF REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS. And if it has to carry on the Government in unison with a representative body, it must consent to carry it on by means of those in whom that representative body has confidence." (Loud cheers.)

And after showing that an elective Executive, which the Reformers of Canada never asked for, would not only be inconsistent with monarchical government, but would really, under the nominal authority of the crown, deprive the commons of one of the great advantages of an hereditary Monarchy—he proceeds:

"Every purpose of popular control might be combined with every advantage of vesting the immediate choice of advisers in the Crown, were the Colonial Governor to be INSTRUCTED to secure the co-operation of the House of Assembly in his policy, by entrusting its administration to such men as could command a majority, and if he were given to understand that he need count on no aid from home, in any difference with the Assembly that should not DIRECTLY INVOLVE THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MOTHER COUNTRY AND THE COLONY. This change might be effected by a SINGLE DESPATCH CONTAINING SUCH INSTRUCTIONS; or if any legal enactment were requisite, it would only be one that would render it necessary that THE official acts of the Governor should be countersigned by some public functionary. This would induce RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVERY ACT of the Government, and, as a natural consequence, it would necessitate the substitution of a system of ADMINISTRATION BY MEANS OF COMPETENT HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS, for the present RUDE MACHINERY OF AN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL."

Again—

"Nor can I conceive that it would be found impossible or difficult to conduct a COLONIAL GOVERNMENT WITH PRECISELY THAT LIMITATION OF THE RESPECTIVE POWERS, which has been so long and so easily maintained in Great Britain," and which he had previously referred to in these terms.

"Since the revolution of 1688, the stability of the English Constitution has been secured by the wise principles of our Government which has vested the direction of the national policy and THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE PATRONAGE in the leaders of the Parliamentary majority."

Then, after referring to the idle attempt of some to deny the applicability of this principle to the position of a Colony he proceeds:

"I admit that the system which I propose would, in fact place THE INTERNAL GOVERNMENT of the Colony in the hands of the COLONISTS THEMSELVES, and that we should thus leave to them the execution of the laws, of which we have long entrusted the making, solely to them."

"I know not in what respect it can be desirable that we should interfere with their internal legislation in matters which do not affect THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE MOTHER COUNTRY." (Hear, hear.)

And after pointing out the VERY FEW points with respect to which the Mother Country, in his opinion, requires a control over the colony, among which he enumerates the regulation of foreign relations, and of trade with the Mother Country, the British Colonies, and foreign nations,—and the certainty that on such points a perfect subordination on the part of the Colony is sufficiently secured by the advantages which it finds in the continuation of its connection with the Empire, he proceeds:

"It (that is the subordination of the Colony to the Mother country), certainly is not strengthened, but greatly weakened by a vexatious interference on the part of the Home Government with the enactment of laws for regulating the INTERNAL CONCERNS OF THE COLONY, or in the selection of persons intrusted with their execution. The Colonists may not always know what laws are best for them, or which of their countrymen are the fittest for conducting their affairs, but at least, they have a greater interest in coming to a right judgment on these points, and will take greater pains to do so, than those whose welfare is very remotely and slightly affected by the good or bad legislation of those portions of the Empire. If the Colonists make bad laws and select improper persons to conduct their affairs, THEY will GENERALLY be the ONLY, ALWAYS the GREATEST, sufferers; and like the people of other countries, they must bear the ills which they bring on themselves until they choose to apply the remedy. But it surely cannot be the duty, or the interest of Great Britain to keep a most expensive military possession of these Colonies, in order that a GOVERNOR or SECRETARY OF STATE may be able to confer COLONIAL APPOINTMENTS on one rather than another set of persons in the Colonies. For this is really the only question at issue." (Hear, hear, and cheers.)

And again, with reference to the absurdity of supposing the people of the Colonies to be opposed to the principle which, it would be recollected, was one of the fallacies imposed, or attempted to be imposed on the home Gov't by Sir F. Hood he adds:

"Nor can I conceive that any people, or any considerable portion of a people will view with dissatisfaction a charge which would amount simply to this: that the Crown would henceforth consult the wishes of the people in the choice of its servants."

The reading of these well known extracts had taken longer than he wished, but he felt it important that they should be kept prominently before the public, because they embrace the great principle which was subsequently enunciated in Parliamentary form, under the express sanction of Lord Sydenham, in the famous Resolutions of 3rd September, 1841, which declare that,

"The Representative of the Sovereign in the Province, is responsible to the Imperial authority alone, but that nevertheless, THE MANAGEMENT OF OUR LOCAL AFFAIRS CAN ONLY be conducted by and with the ASSISTANCE, COUNSEL, AND INFORMATION of subordinate officers in the Province." And that such subordinate officers, "constituting a PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION under him, ought to be men possessed of the confidence of the Representatives of the people,—thus affording a guarantee that the well understood wishes and interests of the people, will on all OCCASIONS, be faithfully REPRESENTED AND ADVOCATED." (Hear, hear.) And because they led to the overthrow of that wretched system of government so strongly denounced by Lord Durham, which Lord Sydenham declared he would not have raised an arm to uphold, and which led to those lamentable events which we have all so much reason to deplore. But which it was now attempted to re-establish, by misapplying to it the name of the very system which had superseded it. (Hear, hear.)

He would ask any man to read these extracts carefully, and say whether he found any trace of those new fangled classifications of public matters into those of "adequate importance," and those of "inadequate importance," which some person or other (for it was really hard to say in the present state of the Government who did advise his Excellency,) had ad-