

RESOLUTIONS

AS REPORTED BY THE COMMITTEE

OF THE

REFORM ASSOCIATION OF UPPER CANADA,

THURSDAY, 27th JULY, 1867.

1. *Resolved*,—That this Convention records its high gratification that the long and earnest contest of the Reform party for the great principles of Representation by Population, and local control over local affairs, has at last been crowned with triumphant success: and it claims from the people of Upper Canada the meed of gratitude due from a just and generous people to those who, by years of self-sacrificing labour, have peacefully achieved great and invaluable constitutional changes—the accomplishment of which in other countries has rarely been attained except through the sad scenes of armed revolution.

2. *Resolved*,—That while the new Federal Constitution for the united Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, doubtless contains obvious defects—yet we unhesitatingly and joyfully recognize that the measure, as a whole, is based on equitable principles, and removes the barriers that have heretofore stood in the way of good government in this Province: And on behalf of the great Reform party of Upper Canada, this Convention heartily accepts the new Constitution about to be inaugurated—with the determination to work it loyally and patiently, and to provide such amendments as experience from year to year may prove to be expedient.

3. *Resolved*,—That during the long and earnest struggle of the Reform party for Representation by Population, and local control over local affairs—at length happily embodied in the new Constitution—these reforms were ever steadily regarded as but means to the end of securing efficient and economical government, and of bringing to an end that long reign of reckless misrule which, (in the words of the great Reform Convention of 1859,) entailed on the country a “heavy public debt, burdensome taxation, great political abuses, and universal dissatisfaction.”

4. *Resolved*,—That this Convention recalls with pleasure that the people of Canada have looked earnestly forward to the successful termination of the long struggle of the Reform party for representative reform, as a day when the tax-payers in all sections of the Province would receive their rightful and equitable influence in the State, and when by the consequent ascendancy of Reform principles and Reform statesmen in the counsels of the nation, the scandalous abuses under which the country has so long laboured would be swept away, and a new and better era inaugurated: And this Convention fully recognizes the grave responsibility now devolving upon the Reform party, by the largely increased political influence secured to it under the new Constitution, of meeting the just expectations of the country, and of carrying into effect vigorously and promptly those numerous reforms in the practical administration of public affairs for which its members have so long contended in the Legislature and through the Press.

5. *Resolved*,—That Coalitions of opposing political parties, for ordinary administrative purposes, inevitably result in the abandonment of principle by one or both parties to the compact, the lowering of public morality, lavish public expenditure and wide-spread corruption:—That the Coalition of 1864 could only be justified on the ground of imperious necessity, as the only available mode of obtaining just representation for the people of Upper Canada, and on the ground that the compact then made was for a specific measure and for a stipulated period, and was to come to an end so soon as the measure was attained:—And while this Convention is thoroughly satisfied that the Reform party has acted in the best interests of the country by sustaining the Government until the Confederation measure was secured—it deems it an imperative duty to declare that the temporary alliance between the Reform and Conservative parties should now cease, and that no Government will be satisfactory to the people of Upper Canada which is formed and maintained by a Coalition of public men holding opposite political principles.

6. *Resolved*,—That one of the fundamental principles of the Reform party, now as ever, is—the total separation of Church and State, the support of the Clergy of all denominations by the free contributions of their people, and the recognition by the Legislature and Government of all Canadians as subjects of the Queen, and not in any sectarian capacity: The Convention heartily rejoices that the new Constitution sweeps away from the Federal arena every question of a sectional and sectarian character, and records its earnest conviction that on the fidelity with which this vital safeguard is respected in the practical administration of the government, rests the future harmony and stability of the Dominion: And it joyfully recognizes that by the transference to the Legislature of Ontario of all local matters—the Protestant electors of Upper Canada will have the opportunity of showing to their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects that generous consideration which a minority ought ever to receive in all free countries at the hands of a largely-preponderating majority.

7. *Resolved*,—That it is alike the duty and the desire of the Canadian people to cultivate the most friendly relations with the neighbouring people of the United States, and especially to offer every facility for the extension of Trade and Commerce between the two countries: The Convention anticipates with pleasure that the day is not far distant when the Government of the Republic will modify their restrictive commercial policy towards the British American Colonies: and while holding it the true Canadian policy

to look diligently abroad for new and profitable markets for the products of the Dominion, wherever they can be found, and while well satisfied that such markets exist in other foreign lands, fully as lucrative as those ever heretofore enjoyed,—yet this Convention regards it as the duty of the Canadian Administration to meet frankly and cordially any overtures from the Washington Government for a new treaty of Commercial Reciprocity between Canada and the Republic, extending over a fixed term of years, based on equitable principles, and consistent with the honour of both countries.

8. *Resolved*,—That this Convention records its great satisfaction that the people of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are hereafter to be united with the people of Canada under one Government and Legislature; and it does this the more heartily, because it well remembers that the same long battle for popular rights and social and material progress was fought and won in these Provinces, as in Canada, by Reform statesmen, against the bitter opposition and hostility of the Tory party—and because it believes that the great and influential Reform parties of these Provinces, hold principles essentially in unison with those of Canadian Reformers, and that their representatives will be found in the Federal Parliament of the New Dominion the earnest and able advocates of just, efficient and economical legislation: and this Convention entertains the hope that the day is not far distant when Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and British Columbia, will form a part of the Dominion of Canada, upon terms satisfactory to the peoples of these important Colonies.

9. *Resolved*,—That this Convention heartily rejoices that, under the new Constitution, the barriers that have stood in the way of cordial sympathy between the Liberals of Lower Canada and the Reform party of Upper Canada, have been totally removed—it gratefully remembers the aid received from them in hours of trial, and it anticipates gladly that the time is not far distant when the Reformers of Upper Canada may be able to repay the obligations then incurred.

10. *Resolved*,—That the advantage to be derived by the people of Canada from the new Constitution, as well as the future progress of our country, will very much depend on the efficiency and economy with which the new Governmental machinery is administered: And this Convention regards it as a first duty of the Reform Representatives in the new Legislature to apply themselves to a thorough overhauling of the departmental system, the curtailment of the lavish annual expenditure, the enforcement of strict economy in every branch of the public service, the gradual liquidation of the public debt, and the reduction of the customs duties as rapidly as consistent with maintaining the Public faith.

11. *Resolved*,—That in the opinion of this Convention one of the first and most important duties of the Government and Legislature, under the reformed Constitution, will be the improvement of the internal navigation of the country.

12. *Resolved*,—That one of the questions most deeply affecting the stability and future progress of our country, is how we shall attract to our shores a larger share of the tide of European emigration:—And this Convention is of opinion that this highly important end will best be attained by a thorough reform of the Crown Land Departmental System—by extending to proposing settlers the utmost facilities for ascertaining what public lands are in the market, and selecting and properly securing their titles to the lots they may select—by the imposition of a special tax on wild lands held back from cultivation for speculative purposes in settled Townships—and by the speedy opening up for settlement and cultivation of the great North Western Territories:—And the Convention records its conviction that the small sum that may be extracted from the settler for his lot of wild land is of no consideration whatever in comparison with the rapid occupation of the soil by a hardy and industrious population.

13. *Resolved*,—That the development of the vast Mineral Resources of the country has been seriously retarded through the mismanagement of the Crown Land Department—Miners and Capitalists having been driven to other countries, where useless departmental restrictions and annoying uncertainties and delays do not stand in the way of progress, and large tracts of the best mineral lands having been locked up in the hands of mere speculators: This Convention is firmly of opinion that a system of survey and location, enabling actual operators to know with certainty what mineral lands are in the market, on what conditions selections may be made, and how enterprising explorers may promptly and easily secure the fruits of their labour, would speedily produce an immense development of the mineral industry of the Province: And this Convention regards it of great public importance that the arduous and valuable labours of the settlers in our mineral regions on the north shores of lakes Huron and Superior, and in all other sections of the Province, entitle them to the consideration of the Government and Legislature, in the improvement of the means of communication, and the supply of ample Postal facilities.

14. *Resolved*,—That this Convention records its belief, that the progress and social happiness of the people would be greatly promoted by the passage of a well-considered Homestead Law, by which Settlers may apply money honestly their own, to the purchase of a farm or house, and set it aside by public registration for the benefit of their families, without liability to the claims of future creditors.

15. *Resolved*,—That among numerous other questions demanding the early and earnest attention of the Government and Legislature, are, an Act for the Winding up of Insolvent Incorporated Companies—a revision of the Patent Laws—a stringent Audit Act, applicable to all Public Expenditures—the establishment of a Provincial system of instruction for the Blind and Deaf and Dumb persons—and the organization of an improved system of Public Statistical Returns, for commercial, sanitary, and general purposes.