

I have endeavored to be as brief as a full exposition and explanation of each substantive accusation would, in my judgment, admit. The gravity of the charges, and the importance to myself personally, and the vast considerations involved in a public point of view in this petition, as affecting the independence of the Judiciary and of the Bench, and the free, impartial and pure administration of justice in all Canada, must be my excuse for the length at which my observations have extended.

It has occurred to me that it would be in the public interest that Your Excellency in Council should, at once, have my answer, with all the papers annexed (with a proper index, making easy reference to salient points and to documents in different parts of my observations) ready to be distributed to members in the Houses of Parliament, and that the same should, on the meeting of Parliament, be promptly transmitted to both Houses for their consideration, along with the petition. I make this suggestion, however, with deference, feeling confident that Your Excellency in Council will receive it in the spirit in which it is offered, and fully appreciating that to Your Excellency in Council, in a pre-eminent degree, belongs the protection of an independent and pure administration of justice in an enlightened system of jurisprudence, which is the greatest interest of man on earth, and which underlies the frame work of human society, and forms the ligament that binds and holds civilized communities and civilized nations together.

In my view, the interests of society in general in this matter so far transcend all considerations of individuals, as to imperatively demand that the petitioners should establish the allegation of facts in the petition by irrefragable testimony, or stand before the world convicted by the judgment of Parliament, as dastardly calumniators, and be condemned to that ignominy, disgrace and punishment which so vile and wanton an abuse of the right of petition deserves.

It is most respectfully submitted that it is no light thing, by a formal petition to the great Court of Parliament, thus to assail a Chief Justice of a Province and the administration of justice over which he presides; and aside from all private consideration, public interests of the greatest magnitude demand at the hands of the Government and of the Parliament of Canada, according to the constitution of the land, a prompt and speedy vindication of the truth, and a punishment of the guilty. In the manner I have ventured to suggest it is most respectfully submitted that this end may be promptly attained; for in my observations and appended documents is contained a full and complete demonstration of the willful, malicious and false insinuations and accusations in the whole petition.

All of which is, nevertheless, most respectfully submitted.

E. B. WOOD, Chief Justice.

CHAPTER I.

Observations on the first paragraph of Mr. Clarke's petition.

"The petition of the undersigned, living or having interests in the Province of Manitoba, most respectfully sheweth to your honorable House:

"That the conduct of the Hon. Edmund Burke Wood, Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench for the Province of Manitoba, residing at Winnipeg, in the said Province, is and has been for years past characterized by very serious misconduct and injustice and by acts of a nature to completely destroy all confidence in him as Judge of the Court of Queen's Bench, of suitors and all other classes of people in the said Province of Manitoba, to wit:

"That said Hon. E. B. Wood, Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench of the Province of Manitoba, did deliberately in a most illegal and unjust manner in the case of Louis Riel, *et al.*, without the knowledge or consent of the Clerks of the Crown of said Court of Queen's Bench or of defendant's counsel, alter and change the dates in certain documents and records of said Court of Queen's Bench, then in the custody of the Clerk of the Crown and Prothonotary of said Court, and did thereby procure illegal outlawry of Louis Riel and others."