

Sir, the position of the question which demands our consideration this day is one altogether peculiar, and I will venture to say, unparalleled in this or any other country. The individuals connected with myself—the party unconnected with what may be called the National University of the country, stand as the conservators of a high standard of education, and appear before you as the advocates of a thorough course of training that will discipline, in the most effectual manner, the powers of the mind and prepare the youth of our country for those pursuits and those engagements which demand their attention as men, Christians, and patriots, while the very persons to whom has been allotted this great interest, this important trust, stand before you as the advocates of a reduction, of a puerile system which has never invigorated the mind, or raised up great men in any country; which can never lay deep and broad the foundations of intellectual grandeur and power anywhere, but which is characterized by that superficiality which marks the proceedings of the educational institutions in the new and Western States of the neighbouring Republic. Sir, I feel proud of the position I occupy; that if I have gone to an extreme, I have gone to the proper extreme, that even if I may have pressed my views to an extent beyond the present standing, the present capabilities of the Province, my views have been upward, my course has been onward, my attempt has been to invigorate Canada with an intellect and a power, a science and a literature that will stand unabashed in the presence of any other country, while the very men who should have raised our educational standard to the highest point, who should have been the leaders in adopting a high and thorough course, have confessed during the discussion of this question that the former standard was too high, and that they have been levelling it down, incorporating with it speculations which have never elevated the institutions of any country, and adopting a course of proceedings which never advanced any nation to the position to which I hope in God my native country will attain. There is another peculiarity in the position of this question, and of the circumstances under which I appear before you this morning. It is that of collision; that of conflict with parties who are arrayed on the other side of this question: it is to a certain extent that of trial in regard to a richly endowed Institution, and the enquiry naturally suggests itself, to whom is due the origin of this position? The attempt has been made throughout these proceedings to throw the blame on the petitioners, and more especially on myself, and to inculcate me with the entire responsibility of the mutually hostile position that the different parties in your presence occupy during this investigation. But what are the facts of the case, and who are the originators of the state of collision which has characterized this investigation? The resolutions on which these proceedings have taken place were adopted by the Wesleyan Conference in June last. Now, whatever other changes may have taken place, I still adhere to the people of my youth, who were the early instruments of all the religious instruction I received until I attained manhood. Whether they are a polished and learned or a despised people, I still am not ashamed of them nor of the humblest of their advocates or professors. I stand before you without a blush, in immediate connection, and identified with that people. The resolutions that were adopted by the Conference, in pursuance of which the Conference appointed a large Executive Committee, consisting of nearly one hundred of the most experienced members of their body, to prepare the memorial which has been presented to Parliament, are these:

“*Resolved*, 1st. That it is the conviction of a large proportion, if not a large majority of the inhabitants of Canada, that their sons, in pursuing the higher branches of education (which cannot be acquired in day schools, and rarely without the youth going to a distance from the paternal roof and oversight) should be placed in institutions in which their religious instruction and moral oversight, as