

rests on no foundation more stable or secure. Hence is it incumbent upon the people and their friends as they value what they now possess, or as they deprecate future agitation, carefully to guard against the possibility of undue changes that may undermine the fundamental principles they cherish, or endanger the tranquillity of the country.

These resolutions have two primary objects in view. The one, more particularly connected with the Executive—and Lieut. Governor, is designed to effect three benefits; first, to decisively declare and fix the authority that belongs to the office of the Lieutenant Governor; secondly, to secure the power of the Colonial Executive; and, thirdly, to diminish the burdens of the Province in relation to the Lieutenant Governor. The other branch of these resolutions touches the constitution of the Legislative Council.

I desire not to invest this subject with a party character. If the views I have advanced in the resolutions shall prove to be sound, they should recommend themselves to men of all parties, and especially to those who class themselves under the name of "Liberals,"—because all men are interested in removing uncertainty and occasions for future agitation, and they who value the existing principles are concerned in giving them permanency. It may be said that we should leave this subject in the hands of the government; but I do not think so—especially in the hands of a colonial government, which placed between the influences of the people on the one hand and of a Lieutenant Governor and Colonial Secretary on the other, may be called upon to endanger its own interests in maintaining the just authority of the Colonial Executive and the rights of the people. It would not be prudent therefore to leave a question like this to be dependent on the vigilance and integrity or the self interest and supineness of any government.

It will be necessary for me to substantiate the declarations in the preambles to these resolutions; and I shall begin by showing that the British Government has surrendered to this Colony independence in the management of its local affairs. This I shall do from authoritative declarations of the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary, and from the administrative acts of the Colonial Secretary. It may be said this proof is unnecessary. Sir, it is not unnecessary. Nothing is more common—nothing more dangerous—than an assumption of important truths upon evidence ill-defined and feebly adopted, dangerous to individual interests—how much more dangerous to public rights that are not guarded by the same watchful care. No, sir, do not let us suppose that these references are not required. Let us know, if such is the fact, that as regards our own local affairs, we are now independent, and let us also know clearly and certainly upon what foundation that fact rests, that our constituency now—our children after us—may be acquainted with the origin, the security, and the extent of their privileges and liberties;—the rights which they enjoy and the reasons on which they claim their enjoyment.

First, then, let the committee notice what

in his recent speech on colonial affairs, Lord John Russell has said on this subject. "But it (referring to the Canadian indemnity Bill) was an instance how difficult it would be to draw any line on the subject, and that in attempting to draw such a line you would only raise disputes; but that you had better stand on the general practical distinction, that it was only in cases where the administration of the Colony came in question, that the authority of the Crown should be interposed; but that as to local affairs the Legislature and Executive of the Colony should be the best judges."

I next refer the committee to the debate on the Rebellion Losses Bill. To appreciate Lord Grey's remarks it must be recollected that Lord Brougham had moved that the bill should be so altered as to—"provide security against compensation for losses sustained in the rebellion being given to persons who had abetted it." Earl Grey concluded his speech with the following exceedingly significant remarks:—"It was his firm conviction, that by passing such a resolution, they would shake that confidence which all parties cherished in the system of Government now happily established there, and lead them to suppose that they were not to be allowed to deal in a manner which would be satisfactory to themselves with matters of domestic and internal concern. His conviction was, that to come to such a decision would be dangerous to the security of the Canadian Government. It was on these grounds that he trusted their Lordships would concur with him in refusing assent to the resolution of the noble and learned Lord." I content myself with these two declarations—they come the one from the Prime Minister, the other from the Colonial Secretary; and they are too explicit to require comment. But, sir, I shall turn your attention to three acts of Earl Grey which speak more emphatically than any despatches or theories. I shall show by these acts that the British Government has withdrawn altogether from the control of the affairs of this country. The three subjects I allude to, are the dismissal of Mr. Fairbanks, the repudiation of the arrears due to public officers; and the case of the excluded justices of the peace. I am not now going to complain of these acts—but to show that they give a decided proof of the correctness of the premises I have advanced. In each of these cases, Earl Grey would have acted differently from what he did act had he not surrendered the duty of his office to the Colonial Executive; and the greater sacrifice he made of honor and of duty, the more clearly is it apparent that the independence of the Provincial Government has been conceded. I shall dwell no longer on these points than is necessary to establish my conclusion. In the first case, I have mentioned—that of Mr. Fairbanks, the act which Earl Grey affirmed at the reiterated bidding of the Provincial Authorities, was *by his own showing*, 1st. "*extremely prejudicial to the public interests of the Province;*" (these are his own words); 2ndly, contrary to English precedent; 3rdly, opposed to the official act of his predecessor—an act within the scope of that predecessor's legitimate authority, and under which Mr.