

The present system places our liberties, rights and privileges at the will of a single democratic body—the Legislative Assembly—without check, without control, save when Downing-Street interposes to protect and foster British interests at the expense of our own. Compared with this, are not elective institutions, associated with those checks common to the free republics of the United States, conservatism itself. The sentiment of loyalty has hitherto led us to overlook the democratic principle as displayed in British institutions, a principle derived from our Anglo-Saxon forefathers, which underlays the very foundation of the constitution itself, and its spirit pervades every part of that massive structure. That principle has been extended by the descendants of those same Anglo-Saxons; and upon it, controlled by salutary checks, they have founded a government of a confederacy of states, the rapidity of whose growth in wealth, population and power, is unsurpassed in the annals of the world, and which points as a beacon to those who will be instructed by the history of the past. I tell my friends, that as a conservative, my heart was with their heart, my feelings with their feelings, my sympathies with their sympathies; but as I gaze upon the onward course of events, I feel convinced that the sentiment of loyalty, however sacredly cherished, must gradually yield before the irresistible spirit of civil freedom; and I have been compelled to ask myself the question, Am I justified, for the mere gratification of a feeling—a feeling that must daily be growing less—in retarding a change that cannot fail to advance the interests of my children and my country? I feel persuaded that Canada never can prosper till her industrial pursuits are efficiently protected; I feel assured that protection never will be accorded while British interests control her commerce. To attain that one end, "protection," I am prepared to yield many of my preconceived opinions, and to sacrifice my feelings, my inclinations, and my prejudices, if you will.

Feeling an earnest conviction of the truth of these statements, and of the duty arising therefrom, what upright course was open to me but the one you deprecate? The man who wilfully persists in error while he knows it to be error, may dread the fnger of scorn; but he who acts up to his honest convictions, even though those convictions do involve a change of opinion, may defy the world, so long as his conscience tells him that change has been induced by no selfish or mercenary motive. I am not one of those who would willingly forsake old friends, in search of new ones. To me, my long connection with the conservative party has been a source of pride; I desire not to forsake them, but would fain carry them with me in the course which my judgment tells me can alone restore to them that influence they formerly enjoyed in the councils of their country, which their wealth, their education, their intelligence and their romantic loyalty, so justly entitle them.

Who among us cannot bear testimony to the superior energy of our opponents in all political contests? Who among us has not, election after election, deplored the apathy of their fellow conservatives? Is it not a fact that nothing short of the Indemnity Act, nothing short of the burning of the parliament houses, would have aroused them from their deadly torpor? How then can you ever expect to succeed without infusing new and life-giving principles into such an apathetic body? I speak the words of soberness, and tell my friends plainly that they are like children playing upon the edge of a precipice, whose foundation the ocean waves are rapidly undermining; they neither know nor believe the extent and the power of the annexation movement; it is guided by men of reflection and intellect; it is supported by individual contributions, with a liberality to which you will hardly yield your credence; it is carrying with it two-thirds of the inhabitants of the cities of Lower Canada, with nearly all the rural constituencies, and will soon speak in a voice not to be misunderstood. It is toly to believe in the opposition to that measure of those in Canada West, whose whole lives contradict the assertion now upon their lips; another shifting of the scene on the political stage, and those men go with Lower Canada, the ground glides from under our feet, and the stars and stripes tell the tale. Listen then to him who dislikes annexation, both from feeling and conviction; as heartily as yourselves. Go with the advocates of elective institutions, and thereby cut the very ground from under the feet of this party, and you may yet aid in preserving a territory of greater area than the whole United States, as a field for British industry and British enterprize; you may yet level with the ground the annexation movement, and erect a fair temple to social order and civil freedom upon its ruins. Neglect this advice, disregard this warning, and the precipice upon which you are standing will tumble into the ocean, burying beneath the waves everything British in name, heart, and sentiment. I speak earnestly upon these matters, for I feel deeply; the only chance of preserving British connection is by the abrogation of that power which, in the collision caused by the conflicting interests of the two countries, sacrifices those of the weaker. *To continue British, Canada must possess a prosperity as great and as rapid in its growth as that of its neighbour, and with institutions not less favourable to popular liberty.* If my views are erroneous, refute them; if you have a more promising policy, propose it; but do not, I pray you, by increasing our divisions and by giving them publicity, embroil the party of your friends at the feet of its opponents.

J. W. GAMBLE.

PINE STREET, MILLS, VAUGHAN,

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