

NUMBER VI.

The fifth proposition which I am about to prove is, "That Sir Charles Metcalfe's statements of his views of Responsible Government involve all that is contained in the Resolutions of the House of Assembly, September 3, 1841, and that the criticisms of Messrs. Baldwin, Hincks, Brown, and others, on certain of his Excellency's Replies, are unfair and unjust."

There is not an example in the history of England, since the commencement of the system of Responsible Government in 1688, of any British monarch ever having been called upon to explain his views of that system; of his reverence for it; of his adherence to it.—I have never yet met with an instance in which the monarch attempted to state his views on that system. I have not even found in any History of England, a definition of that system, any more than I have met with a definition of life or matter, or man himself. I have met with descriptions of each from their properties, powers, and operations; but have never learned the essential nature of them.—So I have read descriptions of Responsible Government, but no definition of its essence. I find British Responsible Government where I find the British Constitution and the Common Law of England, not in any report, any act of Parliament, any plans of agreement adopted at a particular time between the Sovereign and the people; but in the pages of British history, and in the practice of the British Government. The definition of any part of a mixed form of Government must necessarily be vague and general. The different parts of such a form of Government, mix with each other and cannot be distinguished or defined with mathematical nicety any more than you can distinguish or define the limits of the different colours in a rainbow. Responsible Government is the practice of that mixed form of government after a certain mode; a practice which incorporates itself with every part of that government, and therefore less capable of an accurate definition than the constituent parts of the government of which it is the operating vitality. Mr. Blake, Professor of Law, did, therefore, make one sensible remark in his famous Toronto Association speech, when he uttered the following words:—"But, Sir, it is said that the question of Responsible Government is undefined; and knowing, as we do, that it is to operate on the ever varying combination of human affairs, we admit that it is incapable of definition—we seek not to define it. But we wholly deny that this principle, because incapable of accurate definition, is therefore of little practical importance or interest to the people of this Province. (Hear, hear, and cheers.)" Yet this very Association, though its orators and organs has denounced Sir Charles Metcalfe, and sought to excite hostility against him throughout the length and breadth of the land, as an enemy of Responsible Government, because he has not accurately defined that which they themselves here admit, by the lips of Professor Blake, to be "incapable of accurate definition." Had Sir C. Metcalfe,

therefore, never attempted to define what he meant by Responsible Government, he would have followed the example of every monarch which has filled the throne of England from William and Mary to Queen Victoria, and would have acted in accordance with the sentiments of Mr. Blake, when he says, "we seek not to define it." But His Excellency has been assailed for months in this Province—and recently by Mr. Roebuck in the House of Commons in England—because he has not given an "accurate definition of the question of Responsible Government." Such is another example of the consistency of party!

Whatever Sir C. Metcalfe has said in explaining his views of Responsible Government, he has gone beyond the example of any British Sovereign—beyond what his constitutional duty required him to do, in order to gratify the wishes and feelings of the people of Canada. The present subject of inquiry is, are his Excellency's expressed views in harmony with the Resolutions of September, 1841? I affirm that they are, for the following reasons:

1. They are declared to be by the great statesmen in England, all of whom recognize these resolutions as the practical basis of Canadian government—all of whom declare the views of Sir Charles Metcalfe to be in harmony with those resolutions, and with the practice of British Responsible Government; that his Excellency, in the quarrel commenced by the late Councillors, has done what a British Sovereign should and would have done in similar circumstances; that the proposal or demand made to Sir C. Metcalfe was such as no minister ever had made to his Sovereign.—Now, one of the Resolutions of September, 1844, declares, "That the head of the Executive Government of the Province, being within the limits of his Government, the Representative of the Sovereign is RESPONSIBLE TO THE IMPERIAL AUTHORITY ALONE." The authority to which Sir C. Metcalfe is "alone responsible" has declared that both his views and practice are constitutional according to the resolutions of 1841. The high court of appeals, then, by which alone the views and practice of his Excellency can be constitutionally judged, has decided that he is constitutionally right. To continue to resist him, therefore, upon the ground of those condemned allegations, is a practical denial of the authority of that court: in other words, is a virtual declaration of independence. Let the reader ponder this all-important fact, and the proceedings of the Toronto Association and its organs.

2. The views expressed by his Excellency on the system of Responsible Government, are regarded by the House of Assembly of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia—including the Reformers of both Provinces—as consistent with the Resolutions of 1841, and as perfectly satisfactory. Mr. Howe—the father of Responsible Government in British North America—moved for the adoption and placing on the journals of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, the resolutions of 1841, and Sir

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