

Sovereign, or her Representative, is about as wise as it is asking a lady's hand, to the proof of his affection in a five step."

Excellency is apprehensive of "at the shrine of the Government," and "Party Government," and "Government, and exasperated even by those who have the pressure of Executive Institutions are to be Country, without Party feeling, the nobleman at the head these necessary evils with a Party that convulsed measure, and gave Bristol without mob. But if we all parties" a little closer, the formation of the 20 seats in Council, and system 12—that in no one have had justice. Look to a year: every office of Party—five Magistrates, four of them on the relations demanded of us in example of agitation in which we would not agitate to be "posponed till" were a sposed of of sessions, and not a Others would, than,

But we were to be those whom we knew were our concurrence on mat- madowed forth—to give "e" which was utter non- of the Governor's right" on all sides, holding no is Executive Council!

On such terms, we should eration of every man in either meant something, at nothing, they should anything, it was the valuable principle that es. But, it is said, wa

We did deny them; —if we affirmed them to misrepresent us. What to the Colonial Sec- rd, as evidence of our answer being studious- of gentlemen in- edge ourselves that we e forks, nor spit on the language of the invi- of his acceptance. We

is our answer?—we it sent to the Co- all possible reasons— e been no longer possi- ditionality of explained, that he was d to require a simple rstand it when the let- that the learned gen- to a general negocia- terms. The best proof debarred from giving

the reasons of our refusal, is, that a letter was drafted, copied, and handed to that gentleman. It is said it was not shown to Lord Falkland—why? The Committee will guess the reasons when they hear the letter. Mr. Howe then produced and read the following letter:

Halifax, 27th Feb., 1844

SIR—

We have maturely weighed the proposition made to us in the letter from the Lieut. Governor, put into our hands yesterday, and our deliberate judgment is that we ought not, under present circumstances, to join the existing Council, upon the terms proposed; and that, if we did, instead of permanence and tranquillity being the result, we should but expose ourselves to a loss of confidence and influence in the House and in the Country, without bringing any real strength to the Government. It is not necessary for us to state at large the grounds upon which this opinion has been formed, as we are reluctant to seem to trench, in the slightest degree, upon the independent exercise of the Prerogative. We have not only no desire "to sacrifice the general good at the shrine of party conflict," but may add, that it would give us great pleasure to be able, with consistency and honor, to give his Excellency the Lieutenant Governor our best assistance in the conduct of the Administration, provided such change were made as would obviate the appearance of a party triumph, wounding to our feelings, and distasteful to those whose feelings and interests we represent.

With regard to the general principles of Government, applicable to these Colonies, it is only necessary for us to state, that we have always adhered to those flowing naturally from the important Despatches communicated to the public—sanctioned by the Governors General of Canada—always frankly avowed by Lord Falkland since 1840, and, in 1842, embodied, with his consent, in the written statement communicated by yourself to the Assembly. "Numerical representation," at the Council, has never been insisted upon by us; but we hold, that if a Coalition is to be formed, both parties to it ought to be satisfied, and that any Administration, to be useful and efficient, should possess so much of public confidence, and cordial and generous support, as will lead to the harmonious conduct of public affairs.

We trust we need not enlarge on these topics, as we have frequently discussed them with you, and are not aware that there exists between us any serious difference of opinion.

We have the honor to be, Sir,

Your Obedient Servants,

JAMES B. URNACE,

JAMES McNAB,

JOSEPH HOWE.

If that letter had gone to the Colonial Secretary, we could not have been accused throughout the year of wishing to "wrest the Prerogative," "the independent exercise" of which we fully recognized—we could not have been charged with forcing "party government," when we had declared ourselves only desirous to "obviate the appearance of party triumph." That letter would have furnished our justification to all the world, and the House and the Country will require to know why it has slept for a year in the Solicitor General's pocket. (Mr. Howe also, at Mr. Dodd's request, referred to and read a note from that gentleman, dated 28th February, giving, as a reason for not presenting the letter to the Governor, that he considered the negotiation closed.) There were two passages in the original draft of the letter, said Mr. H. which were struck out of the copy handed to the learned Solicitor General, because we did not care, in such a negotiation, for some days after, though I could not sacrifice public to multiply words, or accumulate debatable matter. As principle, I would have burnt my house over my children's head to have saved or to have served Lord Falkland, letter from Lord Falkland, more concisely than I can ex-

press them, with the permission of the Committee I shall read them:

"Agitation of the Country, upon any topic not involving the character or measures of the Government, we deprecate. Two of us have never been parties to any such movements, and the third was reluctantly compelled (with his Excellency's permission) to follow, upon the question of Education, a vicious example, set for four or five months, by a prominent member of the present Executive Council.

"That a Colonial Governor stands, in all respects, in the same relation to the Assembly, that the Sovereign does to the House of Commons, we believe is not held to be sound doctrine by any party in our Assembly—that he "can do no wrong," in the comprehensive sense applied to the Sovereign, we have never heard advanced. Acts of Parliament, Despatches, and Instructions, must bind all Governors, independent of Provincial Legislation, and the responsibility to his Sovereign, which a Governor can devolve on no man, includes the possibility of wrong doing, of which he from whom his authority is derived, only can judge. The doctrine, as stated in the recent debates, we understood to be this—that the members of Council are bound to defend the Governor's acts, and, in Parliament, and elsewhere, ought to be charged with whatever is wrong in the conduct of the Administration, in order that the Representative of Majesty may be at all times placed in the most exalted and gracious aspect before the people over whom he presides."

Here, then, is our view of the doctrine of Executive responsibility—it coincides with the opinions of all the leading Canadian Statesmen, on all sides of politics; and, at the time I was written, we had in our possession a pamphlet, prepared by an officer of Sir Charles McCall's Government, in which it was stated with clearness and precision—a pamphlet said to have been sent to England with his entire approbation. I put it to the Committee, then, if, under all the circumstances, we did not act with firmness and discretion—holding stoutly to our own rational opinions, based upon sound principle and the best authority, and declining to swallow those of our opponents, which, from the exposition given of them, no human being could understand.

I come now to a circumstance, which I should never have mentioned, but for the very extraordinary course which Lord Falkland has been advised to pursue. I entered his Government in 1840, under difficulties which few public men would have encountered, with no other object than to assist in working out new principles, which I believed lay at the foundation of good Government, here, and the permanence of British Dominion on the American Continent. I served him two years without any office of emolument, or any pecuniary advantage. An office fell vacant—he offered, and I accepted it. He subsequently committed errors which I could not defend. I resigned my office, and retired from the Government. All this gave rise to no feelings of resentment on my part—it was the natural operation of the system to which my public life is pledged. Whatever may be thought or said by my enemies it is not in my nature to have confidence and kindly intercourse with any man, without feeling an interest in his welfare. From what I knew of Lord Falkland's peculiar temperament—from what I knew of those who surrounded him—from what I saw in the papers, and in the letter of the 24th of February, I was quite satisfied that, unless some vigorous step were taken to prevent it, he would be brought into violent collision with the Liberal Party—and that, from that moment, the character and efficiency of his Administration would be at an end. Down to the close of the negotiation with Mr. Dodd, and for some days after, though I could not sacrifice public to multiply words, or accumulate debatable matter. As principle, I would have burnt my house over my children's head to have saved or to have served Lord Falkland, The nature of my feelings was well known to my political