

SIR CHARLES METCALFE DEFENDED
Against the Attacks of this late Counsellors,
BY EGERTON RYERSON.

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Importance of the Question—proper disposition of mind for the examination of it—a Question of FACTS—position of Parties—Question stated in the words of Mr. Baldwin—distinguished from several other collateral questions and circumstances—nine propositions to be proved.

Every man in Canada is deeply interested in the decision of the question at issue, between His Excellency Sir Charles Metcalfe and his late counsellors. Every man in Canada should therefore, make himself acquainted with that question in all its bearings. He cannot do so without hearing and investigating both sides. He cannot investigate both sides fairly and correctly, without maintaining a feeling of impartiality—a desire to do right between man and man—a determination to yield to evidence, on whatever side it may preponderate. Dr. Watts has well observed—“When you are in search after truth in questions of a doubtful nature, or such as you have not yet thoroughly examined, keep up a just indifference to either side of the question, if you would be led honestly into the truth.”

The question at issue is not one of political or philosophical speculation. Like the momentous question of the truth of Christianity, discussed between believers and sceptics, it is a question of *facts*—a question which every man in Canada is competent to understand, however limited his acquirements, and however humble his condition. It is true, these facts involve principles, and principles of vital importance; but still, the facts are the antecedents, and the principles the consequents. The matter of enquiry and decision, therefore is a simple question of facts.

In this question, as it now stands, the late Counsellors are the plaintiffs: Sir Charles Metcalfe is the defendant: the Canadian public are the jury, and every reader is a jurymen. Sir Charles Metcalfe is charged with having compelled the resignation of the late Counsellors, by invading the principles of Responsible Government.—The constitution of Canada—and the public are appealed to, to sustain the prosecution, by supporting the prosecutors. If Sir Charles Metcalfe has violated the established constitution of Canada, then should he be condemned; if he has not, then he is entitled to the verdict of the country.

Sir Charles Metcalfe is no adventurer—no fortune seeker; but a fortune spender—a fortune spender in the country from which it is attempted to ostracise him—a fortune spender in public charity. No Governor of Canada has ever expressed liberal views of Responsible Government to the same extent, or manifested the same patient and inflexible determination to establish liberal counsels, and administer Government upon equal justice to all classes, without regard to sect or party—the prayer of Canada in all past time. The attempt, thereof, to destroy the public char-

acter of such a man, and banish him from the country, is the more suspicious on the part of its originators, and the more alarming to any right thinking mind. And be it remembered that no honest ruler was ever cut down by party—no monarch was ever dethroned,—no government was ever subverted, except by the assertion of sound political principles, falsely applied; ambitiously, and sometimes cruelly wielded. It was so in the days of OLIVER CROMWELL; it was so in the time of the FRENCH REVOLUTION; it is so with the TORONTO ASSOCIATION.

In the first place, then, let the question be disentangled from all the adventitious circumstances with which it has been or may be associated, in the mind of the reader.

It should, therefore, be borne in mind, that the question at issue has no connection with the measures, or policy, or motives, or characters of the late Counsellors. Their measures may have been well or ill advised; their policy may have been patriotic or selfish; their characters may be virtuous or vicious, according as the reader may desire or believe. With them we are not now concerned. The issue on which they have gone before the country has been thus stated by the honourable Mr. Baldwin:—“He (Mr. B.) and his colleagues had lately the misfortune to ascertain, that the Head of the Government entertained views widely differing from them, both as to the position, duties, and responsibilities of their office. Had the difference been merely a theoretical one, they might, and probably would have felt it their duty, to avoid any occasion of disturbing the apparent harmony existing, and have left it to a future occasion, to point out to the Head of the Government the true state of the case; but when they found that difference resulted not only in appointments to office contrary to their advice—but appointments and proposals of appointments made without giving them an opportunity of even tendering their advice,—they felt the difference of the views entertained by the Head of the Government and the Administration were not theoretical. These were not, however, the only grounds,—not the only practical results. When they found that difference of opinion had led to the reservation of a bill for the sanction of Her Majesty—a most important bill, towards which, from the time of its first introduction until it had passed both Houses of the Legislature, they knew not that such a course would be pursued. When they found such views were entertained by the Head of the Government, they felt it was not consistent with the principle which had been introduced into the administration of affairs, that such a state of things should exist.”

This is a statement of the case by Mr. Baldwin himself. The reader will observe, that Mr. B. does not ground the resignation of himself and his colleagues, upon a certain case or cases in which His Excellency refused to take their advice, or acted against it, but upon certain views he held, and the manner in which he made certain appointments, and