

public interest, but we have felt that the true, supreme and paramount interest of the public is the maintenance of the public faith." (Ibid. 290.)

The action of the Government of Lord Derby was in perfect harmony with Mr. Gladstone's views on the question, as above quoted; a Treasury minute was adopted, and laid before Parliament and after the required lapse of time went into effect. This minute sets forth that Her Majesty's Government could not consent to discontinue a grant which they were assured was legally and permanently binding, and they would not be justified in asking Parliament

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of the grant to which he was legally entitled, upon the ground of the imperfect service upon which the grant was founded, and this conclusion as to the legally binding nature of the obligation is stated to have been based upon the opinion and advice of the law officers of the Crown. The Treasury minute went on further to declare that the commutation of pensions had always been so made as that the public faith was scrupulously maintained.

(See Vol. 81, Imperial papers, pp. 289-293.)

The last attempt to modify or repeal the law of 1869 as to pensions, made in Parliament, took place in 1895, when a bill was introduced—not proposing to interfere with existing pensions or with the then present annuities—but the bill made no progress; it never had a reading, nor was it even discussed.

There is one other consideration the undersigned would call to the attention of the advocates of repeal; in withdrawing the annuity which Parliament engaged should be paid the grantee while he lived, is it proposed to enter upon an inquiry to ascertain to what extent the beneficiary has altered his position, relying, as he was justified in doing, upon the inviolability of the public faith? Is it intended to find out what engagements have been made, and what liabilities assumed by the grantees, which would not have been made or assumed, but for the Act of Parliament? Who is to recoup the parties whom, through financial stress, the grantee has been compelled to transfer or encumber his annuity? Or is it proposed to penalize, or possibly ruin men, through no fault except having implicit faith and undoubted trust in the Legislature of their country?

The undersigned feels confident that the advocates of the policy of national repudiation have not thought out the question. The Parliament of Canada cannot, having regard to its own good name, afford to do the Indian act—having once reached out its all powerful arm, and snatch back its gift—a gift, let it be remembered, made in consideration of public services rendered.

It is said, but I know not by what authority, that the amendment in contemplation to the annuities act will not go beyond requiring the indi-