

Majesty to resist to the utmost of your power any attempt which may be made, to bring about the separation of Canada, from the British dominions, and to mark in the strongest manner Her Majesty's displeasure with all those who may directly or indirectly encourage such a design. If any attempt of this kind should take such a form that those who are guilty of it may, according to such advice as you may receive from your law advisers, be made responsible for their conduct in a Court of Justice, you will not fail to take the necessary measures for bringing them to account.

I am, my Lord,

Your most obedient, Servt.,

GREY.

The Right Hon. EARL OF ELGIN.

The Association have carefully reconsidered their two addresses, and they do not find in them the language of menace or sedition; but a calm dispassionate statement of social evils under which Canada suffers, and a remedy, by constitutional means, suggested for consideration. It is to the People of Canada that these statements have been made, and it is for you to decide whether the remedy proposed, is one that is advantageous or worthy of being referred to the British Nation for their assent. It is impossible for this Association to regard the expression of Earl Grey's opinions as conveying the decision as the British Nation. Even should the British Parliament support his Lordship, we conceive that their action will be premature until the question has been constitutionally brought before them, as approved by a majority of the representatives of the Canadian People. The Association deny the right of the Colonial Secretary to offer, by anticipation, the decision of the British Government, on a question that is not constitutionally before them: and they further desire to point out the danger that may hereafter arise, if the principle be once admitted that the Queen's name and authority can be introduced to suppress the lawful discussion of any political question in the Colony. The British people have a proper and constitutional opportunity of expressing their assent or dissent to any colonial measures, and it is a subject of painful surprise to this Association, that Earl Grey should have encroached on the rights of her Majesty's Canadian subjects, in venturing to decide that any question was unfit to be brought by them before their representatives. The Association are necessarily ignorant of the terms in which the Governor General brought their address under the notice of the Colonial Secretary, and how far those terms justify his Lordship in giving a character to their proceedings which they have distinctly denied from the outset. The Association now reiterate that they seek the attainment of their object only with the free and willing consent of Great Britain, that they never will urge the subject by other than calm appeals to the reason and intelligence of their fellow subjects,—first in Canada, afterwards in England,—and that they have no sympathy with any who hold other sentiments than these.

While re-asserting the position the Association have assumed, they feel that the language of

the Colonial Secretary requires from them the discharge of a farther and a higher duty, in denying all right, on his part to punish men for the assertion of opinion.

The free discussion of all subjects is a right inherent in every man under a free form of government, and the power to advocate, by constitutional means and moderate counsels, changes of any description, is the great safeguard against violence and rebellion. The moment an attempt is made to coerce the free expression of public opinion, the most sacred right of the people is attacked, and the ground-work laid for any and every stretch of despotic power. The association ask their fellow citizens whether, in all they have suggested or done, they have not most carefully avoided advocating aught that could in the slightest degree infringe the laws or warrant the interference of Executive Authority. And feeling that their course has been temperate and legal, they deny the right of Earl Grey to use towards them the language of his despatch, or to interfere in their discussion of any subject affecting the interests of Canada. The Association, therefore, entreat their fellow subjects, not to allow any feeling of hostility to the policy of those who now address them, to blind them to the consequences of admitting the position assumed by Lord Grey; but to look only at the great principle involved.

Let the People of Canada, to whom this Association addressed themselves, decide, whether the course of Earl Grey is in accordance with the constitution granted to them, and whether his approval ought to affect the legal discussion of any subject intended to be brought before the Legislature of this Country.

Let them say whether Responsible Government is only a name, or is intended to assure that freedom of opinion, dear to every British subject. To you, then, the people of Canada, we appeal; and we ask whether we shall be compelled to brood in silence over the evils the country labors under, or whether we have the right temperately to discuss those evils and their cure, free from the threat of punishment, and independent alike of the interference and control of any others than those who are constitutionally responsible to you. In conclusion, the Association would remark, that the subject of discussion has been obscured by the mode adopted for checking the expression of public opinion, and this Association in the broad assertion of an undeniable right, maintain that they will not be diverted from the legal and constitutional course which they have adopted, in full reliance that whenever the question is brought before Great Britain, by our responsible ministers, their application will be treated with that respect and consideration which its magnitude and importance demand. In the deliberate adoption of this course, the association conceive that they are defending one of the greatest bulwarks of this country's liberties, and they claim the support of all true friends of Canada, whatever be their views of the policy the association seek to promote.

JOHN BEDPATH, *President*.
R. MACKAY, }
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