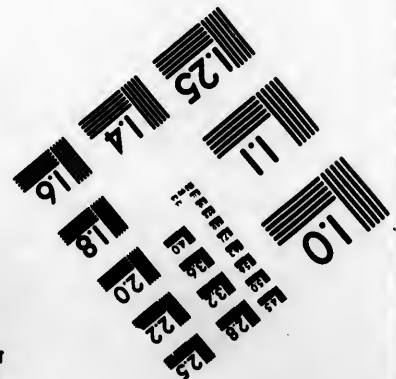
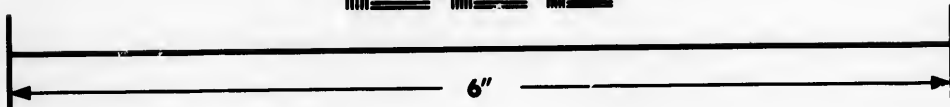
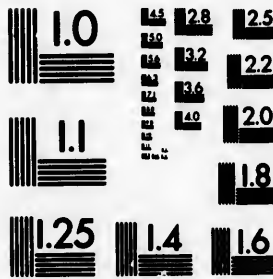


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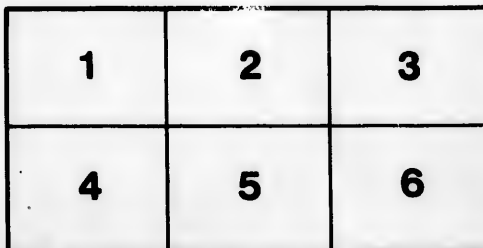
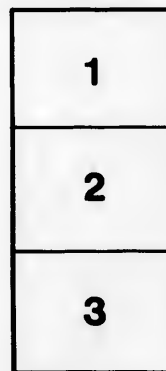
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# TO THE ELECTORS

OF THE

## FOURTH RIDING OF THE COUNTY OF YORK.

GENTLEMEN.—

PARLIAMENT has been dissolved, and you will be immediately called upon to pronounce at the hustings your constitutional verdict on the conduct of public affairs during the last three years.

At a crisis like the present it may be expected that I should take occasion of communicating with you, somewhat more at length than a mere election address would afford me the opportunity of doing. Hence the letter which I now address to you.

The Province has passed through a long and arduous struggle for the establishment of a system of government founded on the broad basis of British Constitutional principles. Your favour, and the confidence of a large portion of the people of my country, placed me in a position in which I was called upon to perform no unimportant part in the great battle of the constitution. That battle has been fought. The victory has been achieved. And it now rests with the people themselves whether they will permit the enemies of those great principles to raise the standard which they have heretofore endeavoured to prostrate, and under its shelter re-erect practically the old system under a new name, or whether, by one more great and united effort, the people will insure the fruits of past struggles to themselves in a government adapted to their wants and wishes. Such a Government is my opinion, and I believe in that of most men, we have not had during the last four years. Neither the course by which her Majesty's present Provincial Ministers obtained power, the political materials of which their Cabinet has been composed, nor the manner in which they have conducted the business of the country have, in my opinion, entitled them to public confidence. I have, therefore, as your Representative, felt bound as far as it rested with me, to withhold that confidence from them.

As respects the first. They obtained power under false pretences. They pretended the Royal Prerogative to be endangered because the late administration had claimed the constitutional right of being consulted by the Representative of the Sovereign respecting appointments to office, and that such consultation should precede any offer or promise of such appointments to any one. And they affected to be greatly alarmed lest such a practice should lead to the patronage of the Crown being made use of for party purposes. But having by the aid of these cries possessed themselves of place, they not only have avowedly insisted on the very practice which they had denounced, but have notoriously gone far beyond their predecessors in making use of patronage for the advancement of party interest. So that if they were right in their objection to the use of Government patronage for party influence, their practice has condemned them. If their practice is in any respect right, their reproach against us, has all the falsehood and inaccuracy with which we charged it, for this was the very cry which, under the sanction of the Governor-General, they raised against us—and in either case they are unworthy of public confidence.

The following is the language of their great leader on this subject in taking leave of the House, on his elevation to the Bench. Speaking of the offer of the Adjutant-Generalship to Sir Allan McNab, Mr. Draper said, "I felt that I would not be doing my duty, if I allowed so important an office to be conferred without my advice, and I could not allow it. If it had been so conferred I must have resigned." And a reference to the journals of the last session will show that for the purpose of strengthening themselves with their party they constrained the late Governor-General, after he had authorized the offer of the Deputy-Adjutant-Generalship, and that offer had been made to the party to which through his Secretary "that circumstances beyond his control had occasioned the departure from his first intention." I have referred to this, not only to enable you to compare the real regard for the Prerogative of the Crown, and true deference towards the Representative of the Sovereign, which both the principles and practice of the late Ministry displayed with the conduct of their successors; but to call your attention to the fact, that the issue which the present Ministers and their partisans, aided by the most unscrupulous use of the name and authority of the Queen's Representative, contrived to place before the people of the country at the last General Election, was in truth a false one.

Then, secondly, what were the materials of which their ever shifting Cabinet has been composed. Let them be tested by their action on some of the great questions with which they have had to deal. For instance the question whether the Clergy Reserves should be invested in the different Ecclesiastical Corporations, and in their hands afford the means of creating an extensive tenantry to swell the influence of these bodies, or whether they should be sold at a reasonable price to the people, and thus add to the numbers and the influence of the independent Farmers of the country. This solely was not a question of minor interest but one of the most vital importance to the peace and prosperity of the Province. One in which every man in the country, either directly or indirectly was interested, and on which a Government was bound to choose its side, and upon that side to use all its power and legitimate influence.

And yet this of all others was a question upon which those Ministers claiming to be true representatives of the public opinion of the Province, and fit expositors of that

public opinion to the Representative of their Sovereign, had, as an Administration, no opinion at all. Their four Law Officers dividing two and two for and against the investment, and their Inspector-General, Provincial Secretary, Commissioner of Works and Commissioner of Crown Lands, following suit in corresponding couples two for and two against it. And that too on a division of 37 to 14, in a house that gave them, as a Ministry, its general support. What system or plan of government can you infer from this to be the one of the present Ministers, but that on great public questions the administration which should represent embodied public opinion, may, in the face of the public, avow that as a Government they have no opinion at all.

And let not those who may be inclined to beguile themselves with the hope that all danger as respects this question has wholly passed away in consequence of our successful opposition to the scheme of investment, on that occasion, forget the persevering energy of those whose object it is to procure such investment, and let them bear in mind moreover that the chosen champion of that measure is the present first Law officer of the Crown for Upper Canada, a gentleman by some considered the head of the Administration.

Then, as respects the University question. That has been the subject of no less than three abortive attempts at legislation on the part of ministers, displaying such hesitation and want of unanimity among themselves, as shows them to have no fixed, well defined views with relation to it although, by their own admission, a question of the highest importance.

In my opinion, when an adviser of the Crown, on a great public question, avows a scheme which his colleagues dare not approve, public safety, and public morals require that they should separate. But in the present ministers you have to deal with men who can publicly denounce, and oppose each others' policy and yet have the hardihood to claim for the ministry, as a body, public confidence. Of what avail is it to you, if your representative thinks rightly for himself? If he lends his aid to preserve in power, those whose judgment and acts are wrong? The conduct of the present ministers upon these great questions of the Clergy Reserves, and the University, are but some of the many in which their acts show that the principles and opinions of their colleagues were a matter of perfect indifference to each, so long as they were agreed upon their only essential point, namely, the tenure and emoluments of office.

And if on the great questions of social interest, to which I have referred, they were thus found wanting, how has it been as respects the agricultural and commercial interests of the Country? In what manner did they show themselves equal to the position which they occupy, on the occasion of the great change forced upon us by the altered policy of the present state? A change which all saw coming with sure and steady pace, except the very ministers whose duty it was to have prepared the country for the event. Let the uncertainty in which they kept the Province, by the slow and vacillating steps with which they moved in these matters—let the manner in which they left an important provision, respecting the duty on live stock imported from the United States, to be explained to the Home Government through the Military authorities, without one word for months together from the Provincial Government explanatory of the reasons for the retention of such duty. Let their neglect of the Post Office, and their present ill considered Tariff of Duties be the tests by which their sufficiency be tried. In all these the ministry have shown an insipidity and incapacity for public affairs, which has made their inactivity of office little more than a series of blunders, and exposed them session after session to the reproach of their friends, and the derision and almost pity of their opponents.

I have already necessarily had to speak of many matters which equally claim attention in considering how far the manner in which the business of the country has been conducted by ministers entitle them to public confidence. It is not, therefore, necessary that I should recur to those points; but I will touch upon some few others. There is the Common School Law—has their Legislation on that subject given satisfaction? What have they done to remedy the acknowledged injustice of the present Assessment Law? What to reform the Court of Chancery? What to improve the Court of Appeals? All matters of the greatest importance, and most of them calling loudly for prompt legislative interference. It is true they passed a District Court Bill, and after in one Session making the office of Judge of that Court independent of the Crown, they, the next, supported and passed a Bill to make those Judges dependent. Then there was the attempt to deprive the women of the country of their Dower. This measure was introduced by the Solicitor General, who by some is considered the real head of the Administration. The point of leadership, like almost every other of importance, being considered by these gentlemen an open question, if it be not one of antagonism between the two learned Law Officers for Upper Canada. Be that as it may, however, the measure was supported by four Cabinet Ministers, on a division of 14 to 39. They have passed, to be sure, some acts for the amendment of the law, such as the Fines and Recoveries Act; the Prescription Act, and some others, when whatever place they may fill on the Statute Book of the Province, consist of mere reprints of late Acts of the Imperial Parliament upon these subjects. But where is there any great original

measure of their own? As to their Legislation for Lower Canada, it has been vacillating in the extreme. First building up and then pulling down, as in the case of the Municipalities, like children playing at card houses; and upon the whole, producing nothing but universal dissatisfaction in that section of the Province.

Again, how have they used the power which their small majority gave them in conducting the business of the House? Look at the proceedings to suppress equity into the Montreal, Leeds, and other elections. Look at their conduct respecting the vacancy in the seat for Rimouski, their refusal of papers, and their protection of the Commissioner of Crown Lands from the condemnation which the Administration of his department merited.

They have not only greatly increased the patronage of the Crown but it is perfectly notorious that there never was a period in which that patronage was more unscrupulously made use of, not merely with the usual leaning toward party interests, but for the purchase of that support, by which alone their political existence was, week after week, prolonged.

I do not however by any means pretend to have gone over all the points upon which the present Provincial Ministry are open to condemnation. I might have dwelt upon their illegal dealing with the public property by the issue of Land Scrip to an enormous amount in direct defiance of one Act of Parliament, and upon their neglect in not having the census taken as directed by another, and upon many others, but neither space nor time permits—enough, however, has I hope been said, to show, not only that I was bound to withhold confidence from them as one of the Representatives of the people of Canada, but that there are ample grounds for that natural conclusion which even those who have yielded them a party support admit them to have merited.

I doubt not, that now that they are compelled to meet the electors at the polls, there will be abundance of promises both from them and their supporters as to what they mean to do hereafter. But let the country recollect the promises which were made at the last election. Let them remember all that was promised respecting the opening of the University and other liberal measures and compare those magnificent promises with the Ministerial performances, and then judge how far, after past experience, promises from such a quarter can be depended upon.

But let it sometimes asked what have the Liberals done for the country? Let the questioner look back into the history of the last thirty years. Is it not to their exertions that the people are indebted for the recognition of their rights as British subjects to a practical influence upon the administration of their government?—For their Municipal Councils, and through them for the control and management of their local taxes?—For a Common School system, by which £50,000 of the public revenues is applied annually to this important means of social improvement?—For the independence of their Judges?—For an election law, admitted even by our opponents to be a vast improvement on the old system?—For the Marriage Act—and in fact for all the other real ameliorations in our Laws and Institutions, from the repeal of the odious Gourlay Act, down to the present time. All which measures in their turn met with a vigorous, and for a long time successful opposition from the party now in power. He therefore who will look into the past history of the country with the candour of a faithful searcher after truth, will have no occasion to repeat the question—What have the Liberals done for the country?

Then as regards the future. My past course, and the remarks which the topics already referred to have called forth, might perhaps for the most part suffice. But before concluding I will remark, that as regards the great fundamentals of the Constitution, I believe them to be so settled; and that henceforth we shall have no more Representatives of the Sovereign making the doctrines of the Charleses and the Jameses, the standard by which to govern British subjects in the nineteenth century, but that henceforth their viceregal governments will be distinguished by adherence to the constitutional principles acknowledged by all parties in England. Principles which, relieving her Majesty's Representative from the invidious position of the head of a party, will render him, as he should be, the common Father of the whole people; not as was well said by the present Governor General in his speech at Hamilton, a mere pageant, but a living spirit and the connecting link which binds, and will I trust, continue to bind this great Colony to the parent state in affectionate and prosperous union.

As respects the important question of the state of the Representation, I am of opinion that the present number of Representatives is too small for so extensive a Province. And while I do not believe that exact equality, by which each member would always be the Representative of a precisely equal number of the population, to be attainable, even if practically expedient. I am of opinion that a much nearer approach to such equality is necessary, before the

Parliament can be truly said to represent the public opinion of Canada.

As respects Education, I am for leaving it, more particularly in its elementary branch, as much under the direction and control of Paroisses as is consistent with a useful uniformity, and the practical working of the system. And while I would be far from rejecting what was good in the institutions of other countries, let the form of their governments be what it may, I am not prepared to admit that the influence of a central Executive should be predominant in every school room in the country, or that the State should usurp the place of the parent of the child, in the sense understood either by some of the free nations of antiquity, or by some of the despotic governments of modern Europe. I should, however, endeavour to place Education, in all its branches, within the reach of the whole community—and to this end I would not only preserve the appropriation already made, but I would seek every opportunity of increasing and enlarging the means by which the knowledge, the intelligence and mental improvement so essential to the welfare of a free people, might be advanced and extended. Then as respects that portion of this important question, which is involved in the constitution of the University of King's College; while I am adverse to the destruction of that valuable institution by the partition of its endowment. I am for placing it upon a liberal footing, by which it will be relieved of that atmosphere of exclusiveness, which now attaches to it, and rendered instrumental in diffusing the blessings of a high standard of education throughout the Province. I am, therefore, not in favour of the Bill of the present Ministry, which I am satisfied is nothing but a delusion and a snare, and which when the state of the endowment comes to be fully examined, will be found to leave nothing for the Grammar Schools which I am persuaded have been referred to in it, merely for the purpose of trying by that means, to catch some breath of popular favour. But if the endowment is to be diverted from its original purpose, I am then for such an application of it, as will render it really available to the people, by appropriating not merely an illusory and sacred surplus, but the whole endowment to the Grammar and Common Schools.

As regards the Agricultural and Commercial interests of the country, I am in favor of that freedom of trade and navigation which will prevent the great mass of our population from paying tribute to particular sections of it.

As regards the Judiciary, I am desirous of seeing the Court of Chancery put upon a footing better adapted to the condition and wants of the country, and the Court of Appeals so arranged as to make the passing through it something more than a mere form, preparatory to the expensive process of an appeal to England. This, at least as regards appeals at Common Law, is now the only purpose that it serves.

These measures with all practical economy in the public expenditure, and such an application of the resources of the Province, as may best advance its general prosperity, with out partiality to one section over another,—a Post Office system,—an improved administration of the Crown Lands Department,—the relieving the Lumber Trade from that vexatious interference which has been the subject of so much complaint in the Lumbering sections of the Province; such attention to the important subject of Emigration, as may, as far as possible, save us from a recurrence of the calamities of the last season, and provide for the settlement of our wild lands, with a healthy and prosperous population—I look upon as of the highest importance to the interests of the Province. These, with others that might be mentioned, open a large field for the active energies of a strong and vigorous administration, such an administration I am desirous to see in office, and to support to the utmost of my power.

As to myself, I have no desire for place, and my past life shows that I would neither accept nor retain it at the sacrifice of my principles. But a Canadian, by both birth and adoption, with all that is most near and dear to me bound up with the fortunes of the Province, and without a shilling's worth of property in any other country in the world, I do feel a deep interest in its prosperity, and in the happiness of its people. The extent to which I may have it in my power to be useful in forwarding these great objects will, of course, greatly depend upon the coming contest. That contest, I have every confidence will result in the success of the great cause in which we have been so long engaged. But let every man remember, that he has his own individual part to perform in the struggle, and that that part will not be performed by a mere recording of his vote, but that his country has a right to every exertion he may have it in his power to make, to ensure success.

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient humble servant,

ROBERT BALDWIN.

Toronto, 8th December, 1847.



