

DECLARATION

THE VIEWS AND OBJECTS,

OF THE

BRITISH CONSTITUTIONAL SOCIETY,

ON ITS RE-ORGANIZATION.

ADDRESSED

TO THEIR FELLOW SUBJECTS

IN UPPER CANADA.

TORONTO.

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THE Members of the BRITISH CONSTITUTIONAL SOCIETY, deem it a duty they owe their fellow Subjects throughout the Province, to declare the views and objects of the Association, and the causes which have led to its re-organization.

In doing this they are actuated by an anxious desire to be fully and fairly understood—to prevent (if that be possible,) misrepresentation, and to disseminate throughout the Country those principles of attachment to the Constitution which they are proud to cherish.

The fundamental principle and object of the Society is to PERPETUATE THE CONNEXION BETWEEN UPPER CANADA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND. This is the END—all other objects of the Society are but means for securing that end. Convinced that this Province principally owes its rapid advancement in population and wealth to that connexion, we look to its continuance with hope and confidence for a steady influx of valuable Settlers, and for an increased development of the resources of the Colony—and satisfied that the Constitution

conferred on us by the Mother Country is well adapted to secure our peace, welfare, and good government, we desire to uphold that Constitution in its integrity, and are determined to resist all innovation upon it, whether proceeding from open enemies, or from the more insidious attacks of pretended friends.

A calm and dispassionate review of the events that have occurred for some time past has led us to the conclusion, that a crisis has arrived which renders it the bounden duty of every true lover of his country to stand forth and join heart and hand with his fellow-subjects in sustaining the Constitution, and resisting the attempts at its subversion which have lately assumed a more tangible shape, and which *must be put down*, unless we are disposed to submit tamely to be revolutionized without even a shew of resistance.

The letter of Mr. Hume, addressed to a notorious political character of this community, ventured to characterize the superintending power of Great Britain over this Province, as a "baneful domination;"—and though the sentiments contained in that document were well nigh akin to treason, and were loudly and unequivocally condemned by a large majority of the inhabitants of Upper Canada, there was and is a party who echoed those sentiments then, and whose conduct since, leaves little room to doubt that they would hail with satisfaction a course of events which

should terminate in a complete independence of, and separation from the Mother Country.

Passing over intermediate events, a reference to which would occupy too much time, we recur to the opening of the last Session of the Legislature. In the Lieutenant Governor's Speech an allusion was made to the difficulties created by the French party in Lower Canada, as producing an injurious effect on the prosperity of this Province by discouraging Emigration, and retarding internal improvement. The House of Assembly took occasion in their answer to express their approbation of that party in Lower Canada, expressing "respect for their patriotic exertions," and acquitting them of being "the cause of any of the "dissentions and embarrassments existing in the "Country." This language was used with a full knowledge that the French party had passed laws throwing great impediments in the way of Emigrants—had imperiously demanded an elective Legislative Council—and had left the public service totally unprovided for, because their unreasonable demands were not complied with.

Shortly after the arrival of SIR F. B. HEAD, our present Lieutenant Governor, he communicated to the House of Assembly the Instructions he had received for the Administration of the Government of this Province—Instructions conceived in a spirit of liberality, and shewing a desire to correct all

real grievances, and to afford a remedy for every well grounded complaint; and in His Excellency's address to the House he called upon them to afford their assistance in carrying such remedial measures into effect. To this appeal not the slightest response has been given, nor has one single measure been passed by the House in accordance with the gracious spirit of these Instructions.—On the contrary, the moment a difference upon a constitutional point arose between His Excellency and his Executive Council, the House (abandoning former alleged grievances, and forgetting that they had themselves only in the previous Session declared the Executive Council to be an irresponsible body,) at once laid hold of the new doctrine, of the right of the Executive Council to have all the affairs of the Province submitted to their consideration—insisting that this was the intent of the Constitutional act, and attacking the Lieutenant Governor in language as little consistent with the dignity of a Legislative body, as with the respect due to the Representative of their Sovereign. Not only did the House endeavour to sustain the Executive Council in their attempt to assume the responsibility of administering the Government—but they also claimed to have the Council responsible to them, and subject to be removed if so desired by a majority of the Assembly—and in furtherance of the latter object passed a resolution, expressive of want of confidence in the new Council appointed by his Excellency.

Disappointed by the firmness which the Lieutenant Governor displayed, and unable to answer the Constitutional arguments by which he justified his course, the House, as a last endeavour to coerce His Excellency into their views, resorted to the unprecedented measure of stopping the Supplies. Even after this course was resolved on, they nevertheless passed Bills for the expenditure of large sums of public money, under the controul of Commissioners named by themselves from the ranks of their political friends, and providing also in many instances for the liberal payment of such Commissioners, out of the pockets of the people, in the expectation that they would be thus enabled to keep up an influence in the country, while they embarrassed the public service. The consequence of this proceeding was the reservation of all Money Bills—a stop to public improvements, and an additional discouragement to emigration.

In this uncalled for proceeding, more than in any other, the revolutionary views of the party are disclosed. Let the honest, intelligent, and loyal Farmer, or other inhabitant of this Province, ask himself this plain question—Whether he at any time desires to see the Courts of Justice impeded in their progress—the prisoners confined in the gaols of the Province left untried—the Offices of the Surveyor General—the Register—the Receiver General—in short, all those Offices in which their own business, and that of their fellow-subjects is

transacted closed, and access to them completely denied?—Would they not pronounce those who would wantonly produce such a state of things, as enemies to the peace, welfare, and good government of the Province, and wholly undeserving of their confidence. Yet such would be the present condition of the people of Upper Canada, if the efforts of the men who now assume to be the only Patriots in the Province, could have full effect. And they have actually thrown upon the Lieutenant Governor, the very individual whom they have so unjustly and ungenerously calumniated, the responsibility of making some temporary provision for the public service, or of suffering the business of the people in the different public offices to be put a stop to; and such will be the case ultimately, unless the people, becoming awake to the condition of the country, and seeing that these men under the name of Reform seek *Revolution*, discard them as unworthy of, and faithless to the trust reposed in them. We have yet to see what opportunity will offer for this expression of public opinion; but in the mean time, the country languishes for the want of grants for roads and other improvements—the taxes continue to be levied on the people, but they no longer return into circulation by being expended among us: they are locked up in the vaults of the Receiver General—doing good to no one; public servants are unpaid—and the sentence of public justice on prisoners confined in the Penitentiary, may become impossible to be

executed for want of necessary funds ; and these and other numerous similar evils, are the work of men who call themselves PATRIOTS.

Another occurrence, just before the close of the Session, is also worthy of notice. At midnight—the last night preceding the Prorogation—a letter was laid on the table by the Speaker of the House of Assembly, from Mr. Papineau, the leader of the French party in Lower Canada—a party decidedly hostile to British principle—British population, and British Government—which, probably, encouraged by the tone of the Address to Sir John Colborne, above adverted to, endeavoured to establish a system of co-operation between the Radical parties of both Provinces. The whole tenor of this letter shews that the object desired by Mr. Papineau and his party is a change of the Constitution—in other words, a Revolution ; and he does not hesitate in effect to assert, that any system which may be adopted by the Imperial Parliament to regulate the affairs of Lower Canada, other than that propounded in the celebrated Ninety-two Resolutions, “ *could not but excite feelings ruinous to the interests of the Parent State* ON THIS CONTINENT.” In this letter, also, the Legislative Councils are denounced as the “ cause and main-spring of all the heart-burnings, distinctions, and sufferings IN THESE PROVINCES.” It is worthy of remark, that in this letter Mr. Papineau evidently assumes that the party, “ *to whose organ*” the letter is

directed, agree in his opinions, and are prepared to make common cause with him;—an assumption, the source of which will be at once found in the language of the above-mentioned Address, which, speaking of the Lower Province, says, “with which it is equally our duty and our interest “to cultivate a good understanding.” And let it be further remembered, that up to this moment, neither in the House nor out of the House, has one man of that party come forward and publicly disavowed his participation in those opinions; but they have tacitly at least adopted the anti-British and revolutionary doctrines of the Ninety-two Resolutions, and of Mr. Papineau.

We are fully persuaded of the truth that the great mass of our fellow-subjects in this Province are imbued with the deepest and most ardent loyalty and attachment to their King and the Constitution under which they live, and that if they were made sensible that the comparatively few and obscure men who clamour about grievances, and who claim to be the only persons who desire to preserve and maintain the rights and liberties of the people, were, in fact, actuated by no such patriotic motives; but that their object was to create discord and animosity among those who have every motive to live in peace and harmony with each other—in order to obtain influence from this division, and to get power to effect their dangerous purposes—such mock Patriots would be instantly spurned by those whom they have delu-

ded, and returned to that obscurity from which, but for accidental causes and the practice of the most unworthy means, they would never have emerged.

Under these circumstances the British Constitutional Society is re-organized. Not for any party purpose—not for any local or minor consideration, but because we think the facts above detailed prove, that there is danger at hand—danger to our peace—danger to our established rights—danger to our Constitution. We, therefore, call on all loyal men to join us. *The rallying word is the maintenance of the Union with the Mother Country—if need arise, it shall be the battle cry*—for in a cause like this, there can be no hesitation to stake fortune and life if required. But we have no fear that such an ultimate course will become necessary. It will be enough that the people of the Province rouse themselves and express their united determination not to be made the tools of a Revolutionary party in this Province or in Lower Canada—and that they embrace the first legitimate opportunity of supplying the places of those who misrepresent them now, by men having better and more solid claims to the title of Patriots. On this question we may all unite—on the general principle there is no room for difference of opinion among loyal subjects—and we, therefore, confidently hope that our appeal will be responded to by our fellow-subjects, and that every

District will have its Constitutional Society, whose motto, like ours, will be “to perpetuate the Connexion between Upper Canada and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.”

W. B. JARVIS,
PRESIDENT,
British Constitutional Society.

GEORGE GURNETT, }
JOHN KENT, } *Joint Secretaries.*

Toronto, May 10th, 1836.

