

that a reasonable time should be allowed for consideration, before the commencement of any such inquiry as that contemplated by the Government of Canada.

(Signed)

CHARLES FISHER.
S. L. TILLEY.
JAMES BROWN.
W. H. STEVENS.
A. J. SMITH.
CHARLES WALTERS.

September 25, 1858.

No. 12.

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COPY of a DESPATCH from Lieutenant-Governor the Hon. T. MANNERS
SETTON to Sir E. B. LYRTON.

(Private and Confidential.)

Government House, Fredericton, New Brunswick,
October 2, 1858.

SIR,

IN my despatch of the 29th ultimo, No. 50, I have officially laid before you a copy of the Memorandum of my Council on the proposal (emanating from the Executive Council of Canada) that the Secretary of State should forthwith authorize the appointment, by the respective Governments of the British North American Provinces, of Commissioners to consider the subject of a Federative union of all the British North American Provinces, and to report thereon to the Secretary of State.

2. I confess, Sir, that I learnt, with some surprise, and my Council were equally unprepared for the announcement, that the Executive Council of Canada had advised the Governor-General to recommend the Secretary of State to authorize the appointment of this Commission, without previously ascertaining the views of the Government of this province (or, so far as I am aware, of the Governments of Nova Scotia or Prince Edward's Island) on the expediency of the proposed inquiry.

3. But, although I do not profess to be conversant with all the details and particulars of the present political condition of Canada, I am sufficiently well informed on the subject to be aware that the exigencies of the present time may form a sufficient justification for the step which has been taken by the Canadian Government, and also afford grounds for inducing Her Majesty's Government to take into consideration, with the hope of allaying excitement in Canada, suggestions which, under other circumstances, they might not be disposed to entertain.

4. It is possible that a Federative union of the British North American Provinces would afford to the Canadian Government the readiest mode of escape from the difficulties and embarrassments which now surround the settlement of the "seat of Government" question, and I presume that I am right in supposing that, although the ostensible object of the proposed inquiry is the union by Federative bonds with Canada of the other British North American Provinces, the Canadian Government have no less in view the severance of the bond which now joins the two Canadas in a Legislative Union, and the substitution for that bond of a more elastic tie of a Federal or a Federative character.

5. Both these questions, viz., the "the seat of Government" question, and the expediency, or non-expediency, of substituting a Federative for the Legislative union between the Canadas, are exclusively Canadian questions. But the proposal of the Canadian Government affects this province equally with Canada, and although I have purposely confined within very narrow limits the remarks contained in my official despatch, it is, I think, my duty to lay before you, confidentially, but frankly, and without reserve, the opinions which I entertain not only with regard to the policy of the proposed inquiry, and the constitution of the proposed Commission, but also with respect to the probable results of a Federal or Federative union of the British North American Provinces.