

No. 12.
 Lord John Russell
 to the Right Hon C.
 Poulett Thomson.
 September 7, 1839.

the difficulties which encompass the subject will be effectually overcome. Amongst the benefits to be anticipated from the union of the provinces, it is not the least important that the united legislature would be able to act upon subjects of this nature with a great comparative freedom from the undue bias of local interests, and with a large view to the permanent improvement of the provinces.

Such being the principal subjects of common interest to the two provinces, to which your attention will be immediately called, I have next to notice those which will relate exclusively to the province of Lower Canada.

The Act which has been passed in the last session of Parliament, in amendment of the Act of the first year of Her Majesty's reign, providing for the temporary administration of the government of Lower Canada, will relieve you and the Special Council from many of the impediments by which your immediate predecessor has been encountered in the attempt to promote the internal interests of the province. Sir John Colborne's despatches, and especially that of the 15th of March, 1839, have pointed out very clearly many objects of great public utility, which he was unable to advance, in consequence of the restrictions under which the legislative powers confided to him and to the Special Council were exercised. To these your attention will of course be given. Much as the suspension of constitutional government in Lower Canada is to be regretted, it will not be without a very considerable compensation, if, during the interval, arrangements should be maturely and wisely made for securing to the people at large the benefit of those social institutions from which, in former times, the thoughts of the local legislature were diverted, by the controversies which then agitated the provincial society.

The establishment of Municipal Institutions for the management of all local affairs, will be among the most important of the subjects to which your attention will be called. On this subject I would refer you to the report of the Earl of Durham, and the Appendix marked C., by which it is accompanied. Although the commissioners whom his Lordship appointed to investigate the question were unable, from the shortness of the time, to submit to him any conclusive recommendations respecting it, the information which they collected will prove of much advantage to you. On the importance of such institutions I need not enlarge. Your acquaintance with the system of municipal government in this country, will point out to you that there is no mode in which local affairs can be so properly administered, and that they form, at the same time, the most appropriate and effectual means of training the great body of the people to the higher branches of legislation.

The promotion of education among all classes of the people will also engage your earnest attention. On this subject I can add nothing to the information afforded by the reports of the Earl of Gosford, and his colleagues, and of the Earl of Durham. It will afford Her Majesty's Government the most sincere satisfaction to co-operate with you in any measures which you may adopt for the furtherance of this important object.

In any view which can now be taken of the affairs of British North America, it is obvious that those of Upper Canada must occupy a very prominent place. I am persuaded that the zeal for the public good, and the superiority to considerations of a nature merely personal, by which the present Lieutenant-Governor has been distinguished during his long career of public service, will obviate the risk of any dissatisfaction being entertained by him, if you should find it necessary, for a time, to assume in person the administration of the government of Upper Canada, and during that period, to supersede him in the discharge of his functions. In the prosecution, therefore, of your endeavour to obtain as much agreement as possible in the plan to be hereafter submitted to the Imperial Parliament, you will not hesitate to repair to Toronto. When there, you would of course avail yourself of the experience which Sir George Arthur has acquired, and of the assistance which he will have both the ability and the disposition to afford you.

The first topic which will engage your attention in Upper Canada is the present financial state of the province. This has been most elaborately explained in the Lieutenant-Governor's recent despatches. Embarrassing as the immediate state of the question is, it is yet gratifying to learn from those communications, that the difficulties in which the provincial treasury is involved, originate in causes which do not affect the wealth or the ultimate resources of the province. Having undertaken great internal improvements, especially those of the Welland and Rideau canals, with inadequate resources, the works have been very imperfectly completed, and the returns are absorbed in a succession of repairs, which would not have been