

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY,

No. 38.
The Rt. Hon. C. P.
Thomson to Lt. John
Russell.
Dec. 7, 1839.

Enclosure No. 4.

I THANK you for this address, and for your promise to co-operate with me in the measures necessary to promote the peace and prosperity of this province. Supported by you and the people of Upper Canada, I feel assured that I shall be enabled to overcome the difficulties by which we are surrounded.

Enclosure 5 in No. 38.

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IN pursuance of the intention expressed in his speech from the throne, the Governor-General desires now to bring under the consideration of the ^(Legislative Council) ~~(House of Assembly)~~ the subject of the re-union of this province with Lower Canada, recommended by Her Majesty in her gracious message to both Houses of Parliament on the 3d May last.

For several years the condition of the Canadas has occupied a large portion of the attention of Parliament. That they should be contented and prosperous; that the ties which bind them to the parent state should be strengthened; that their administration should be conducted in accordance with the wishes of the people,—is the ardent desire of every British statesman; and the experience of the last few years amply testifies that the Imperial Parliament has been sparing neither of the time it has devoted to the investigation of their affairs nor of the expenditure it has sanctioned for their protection.

The events which have marked the recent history of Lower Canada are so familiar to the Legislative Council, } at it is unnecessary for the Governor-General further to allude to them. There the constitution is suspended; but the powers of the Government are inadequate to permit of the enactment of such permanent laws as are required for the benefit of the people.

Within this province the finances are deranged; public improvements are suspended; private enterprise is checked; the tide of emigration, so essential to the prosperity of the country, and to the British connexion, has ceased to flow; while by many the general system of Government is declared to be unsatisfactory.

After the most attentive and anxious consideration of the state of these provinces, and of the difficulties under which they respectively labour, Her Majesty's advisers came to the conclusion that by their re-union alone could those difficulties be removed. During the last session of the Imperial Legislature they did indeed refrain from pressing immediate legislation, but their hesitation proceeded from no doubt as to the principle of the measure, or its necessity; it arose solely from their desire to ascertain more fully the opinions of the Legislature of Upper Canada, and to collect information from which the details might be rendered more satisfactory to the people of both provinces.

The time, then, is now arrived beyond which a settlement cannot be postponed. In Lower Canada it is indispensable to afford a safe and practicable return to a constitutional Government; and so far as the feelings of the inhabitants can be there ascertained, the measure of the re-union meets with approbation.

In Upper Canada it is no less necessary to enable the province to meet her financial embarrassments, and to proceed in the developement of her natural resources. There are evidently no means in this province of fulfilling the pecuniary obligations which have been contracted but by a great increase in the local revenues. But so long as Lower Canada remains under her present form of Government, neither province possesses any power over the only source from which that increase can be drawn. Nor even were it possible to restore a representative constitution to Lower Canada, unaccompanied by the union, would the position of this province be much improved, since past experience has shown the difficulty of procuring assent to any alteration of the Customs Laws suggested from hence.

This province has engaged in undertakings which reflect the highest honour on the enterprise and industry of her inhabitants. The public works which she has completed or commenced have been conceived in a spirit worthy of a successful result. But additional means are indispensable to avert the ruin of some and secure the completion of others. Nor will that alone suffice; Lower Canada holds the key to all these improvements. Without her co-operation, the navigation for which nature has done so much, for which this province has so deeply burdened itself, must remain incomplete, and a barrier be opposed to the developement of those great natural resources which the hand of Providence has so lavishly bestowed on this country.

With a view to remove all these difficulties; to relieve the financial embarrassments of Upper Canada; to enable her to complete her public works, and develop her agricultural capabilities; to restore constitutional government to Lower Canada; to establish a firm, impartial, and vigorous government for both, and to unite the people within them in one common feeling of attachment to British institutions and British connection, the union is desired by Her Majesty's Government; and that measure alone, if based upon just principles, appears adequate to the occasion.

Those principles, in the opinion of Her Majesty's advisers, are a just regard to the claims of either province, in adjusting the terms of the union; the maintenance of the three estates of the Provincial Legislature; the settlement of a permanent Civil List for securing the independence of the judges, and to the Executive Government that freedom of action, which is necessary for the public good, and the establishment of a Local Government adapted to the wants of the people.