

6-7 EDWARD VII., A. 1907

your Lordships said Order, taken the subject matter thereof into our Consideration, and beg leave to report to your Lordships.

That the Objects of examination and discussion, pointed out in your Lordships Order of reference, and upon which we are directed to report our opinion, appear to us to be of the greatest importance to the present and future Welfare of that Colony ; and therefore, though the unsettled State of it's Government, the Jealousies and apprehensions on all hands represented to exist in the minds of the new Subjects on this Account, and the obstruction and embarrassment arising therefrom to the administration of public Affairs there, were circumstances, that did all concur to evince the necessity of some speedy reform ; yet on the other hand, when we viewed the proposition of the Merchants in it's full extent, and saw the difficulties, that in the present peculiar State of this Colony would attend the making of such a reform in it's civil constitution, as would give full satisfaction to the new Subjects, without violating those principles, upon which the British Government is fundamentally established ; we did not think ourselves justified in making any report to your Lordships, or giving any opinion upon a matter, that His Majesty's former Councils had not thought fit in their great wisdom, even upon the fullest consideration, to take any resolution upon, without proceeding with the greatest circumspection, nor without the fullest information, that could be collected, as well from the correspondence of His Majesty's Servants there, as from the examination of persons here, who have been resident in, and are well acquainted with the affairs of Quebec.

The time, that has elapsed since the date of your Lordships order, has made it necessary for us to say thus much, lest your Lordships should impute to us a delay, which, if unnecessarily created, would not fail to subject us to your censure, in the case of an important part of His Majesty's Dominions suffering every inconvenience and disadvantage, that can arise out of a very imperfect, inadequate and defective Constitution, where the Inhabitants of it, consisting of above eighty thousand brave and loyal Subjects, do, by the nature and form of such Constitution, and the most unwarrantable Doctrines and Opinion founded thereon, Stand prescribed from every privilege, and denied every right, the possession of which can alone ensure their affection, and fix their attachment to the British Government.

How this comes to be the case in Quebec will be more fully seen by the following narrative of what has been established in respect to the Civil Concerns of that Colony, since it passed under His Majesty's Dominion ; and from thence your Lordships will be enabled the better to judge of the propositions we shall submit to you, as the ground for such a reform in the Constitution of this Colony, as may consist with Justice and Equity, and we hope, be the means of for ever securing the possession of it to the Crown of Great Britain.