

Correspondence between the Imperial and Canadian Governments relative to the Appointment of Sir A. T. Galt as High Commissioner to represent Canada in England and to reside in London.

No. 1.

THE RIGHT HON. SIR MICHAEL HICKS BEACH, BART., to THE MARQUIS OF LORNE, K.T.

MY LORD,

Downing Street, November 1, 1879.

I RECEIVED from your Ministers, during their recent visit to England, a confidential memorandum, of which I enclose a printed copy, urging the necessity of providing further means for constant and confidential communication between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of Canada, and recommending that a representative of the latter Government should be appointed to reside permanently in London, and that he should be granted a quasi-diplomatic position.

2. Her Majesty's Government are very sensible of the advantage which might result from the appointment by the Dominion Government of a gentleman who, residing in this country, would be fully empowered to explain their views on the various important questions connected with Canada, which, from time to time, demand consideration, and which might often be more satisfactorily, as well as more expeditiously, dealt with, if such means of oral communication were provided. Looking, however, to the position of Canada as an integral portion of the empire, the relations of such a person with Her Majesty's Government would not be correctly defined as being of a diplomatic character, and while Her Majesty's Government would readily accord to him a status in every way worthy of his important functions, his position would necessarily be more analogous to that of an officer in the home service, than to that of a Minister at a foreign court.

3. He would therefore primarily communicate with this Department on the various subjects which might be entrusted to him, and while Her Majesty's Government would readily avail themselves of any information he might afford, and give the fullest consideration to any representations he might make on behalf of the Canadian Government, it would, of course, rest with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to determine in each case in what precise capacity his services might best be rendered in the event of any negotiations with a foreign court, on subjects affecting the interests of the Dominion. In some instances, for example, it might be desirable for him to remain in London and advise with Her Majesty's Government there, while in other cases he might, in accordance with the precedents which have been quoted, be more usefully engaged in assisting Her Majesty's representatives abroad.

4. I have deemed it necessary to refer to these details because it is desirable that there should be no misunderstanding as to the precise position which could be accorded by Her Majesty's Governments to an officer holding an appointment which the Government of Canada propose to establish, but I do not anticipate that the views which I have expressed will be felt by your Ministers as placing any insuperable difficulty in the way of the practical realization of their wishes; and I would only add that if such an appointment should be decided upon, it would seem, for the reasons I have stated, more appropriate that the officer should be designated by the title of "Dominion" or "Canadian Commissioner" than by any title implying a diplomatic status or position.

I have, &c.

Governor General

(Signed)

M. E. HICKS BEACH.

The Right Hon. The Marquis of Lorne,

&c.

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Enclosure in No. 1.

MEMORANDUM.

The policy of the Empire having devolved upon Canada the administration of the whole of British North America, and the care and protection of British interests therein, experience is daily showing the necessity of providing the means of constant and confidential communication between Her Majesty's Government and Her local advisers in Canada, in extension of the more formal relations subsisting through the correspondence of the Secretary of State for the Colonies with the Governor General.