

BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

of British Columbia adverse to the immediate union of the Colony with the Dominion of Canada.

A copy of that Resolution has been forwarded to Sir John Young.

I have, &c.  
(signed) *Granville.*

— No. 6. —

(No. 84)

No. 6.

Earl Granville,  
K.G., to Governor  
Musgrave.  
14 August 1869.

COPY of a DESPATCH from the Earl *Granville*, K.G., to Governor *Musgrave*.

Sir,

Downing-street, 14 August 1869.

In my Despatch of the 17th June, in which I communicated to you your appointment to the government of British Columbia, I informed you that I should probably have occasion to address you on the question, then in agitation, of the incorporation of that Colony with the Dominion of Canada.

You are aware that Her Majesty's Government have hitherto declined to entertain this question, mainly because it could not arise practically till the territory of the Hudson's Bay Company was annexed to the Dominion, but also, perhaps, in the expectation that the public opinion of British Columbia might have opportunity to form and declare itself.

I have now to inform you that the terms on which Rupert's Land and the North West Territory are to be united to Canada, have been agreed to by the parties concerned, and that the Queen will probably be advised before long to issue an Order in Council which will incorporate, in the Dominion of Canada, the whole of the British Possessions on the North American Continent, except the then continuous Colony of British Columbia.

The question, therefore, presents itself whether this single Colony should be excluded from the great body politic which is thus forming itself. On this question the Colony itself does not appear to be unanimous. But as far as I can judge from the Despatches which have reached me, I should conjecture that the prevailing opinion was in favour of union. I have no hesitation in stating that such is also the opinion of Her Majesty's Government.

They believe that a Legislature selected from an extended area, and representing a diversity of interests, is likely to deal more comprehensively with large questions, more impartially with small questions, and more conclusively with both, than is possible when controversies are carried on and decided upon in the comparatively narrow circle in which they arise—questions of purely local interest will be more carefully and dispassionately considered when disengaged from the larger politics of the country, and at the same time will be more sagaciously considered by persons who have had this larger political education. Finally, they anticipate that the interest of every Province of British North America will be more advanced by enabling the wealth, credit, and intelligence of the whole to be brought to bear on every part, than by encouraging each in the contracted policy of taking care of itself, possibly at the expense of its neighbour. Most especially is this true in the case of internal transit. It is evident that the establishment of a British line of communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans is far more feasible by the operations of a single Government responsible for the progress of both shores of the Continent, than by a bargain negotiated between separate—perhaps in some respects rival—Governments and Legislatures. The San Francisco of British North America would, under these circumstances, hold a greater commercial and political position than would be attainable by the capital of the isolated Colony of British Columbia. Her Majesty's Government are aware that the distance between Ottawa and Victoria presents a real difficulty in the way of immediate union. But that very difficulty will not be without its advantage if it renders easy communication indispensable, and forces onwards the operations which are to complete it. In any case it is an understood inconvenience, and a diminishing one, and it appears far better to accept it as a temporary drawback on the advantages of union, than to wait for those obstacles, often more intractable, which are sure to spring up after a neglected opportunity.

The constitutional connexion of Her Majesty's Government with the Colony of British Columbia is, as yet, closer than with any other part of North America;  
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