

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 18

REPORT OF LORDS COMMISSIONERS FOR TRADE AND PLANTATIONS RELATIVE TO THE STATE OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.¹

QUEBEC

1769.

July 10th

To the Right Honorable the Lords of the Committee of His Majesty's Most Honorable Privy Council for Plantation Affairs.

My Lords,

Your Lordships having been pleased by your Order of the 28th of September 1768, to refer unto us two Letters to the Earl of Hillsborough, one of His Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, from sundry Merchants of London trading to, and deeply interested in the Province of Quebec, humbly recommending, that a full Legislature may be speedily granted for that Province ; and that a number of His Majesty's Roman Catholic Subjects there may be admitted into the Council and House of Representatives² ; and your Lordships having also further thought fit to refer unto us a Report made by His Majesty's Advocate, Attorney and Solicitor General, upon the heads of a Plan for establishing Ecclesiastical Affairs in that Province³, and to direct us to consider the said Papers, together with the present State of the said Province, in respect to the Administration of Justice, religious Establishments, and Revenue ; and to report to your Lordships our Opinion, whether it may be advisable for His Majesty to direct an Assembly to be convened, and, if so, under what regulations and limitations such Assembly should be constituted, and what may be proper to recommend to their Consideration for the Welfare and interest of the Province in the several points above mentioned ; We have, in pursuance of

¹ Canadian Archives Q. 18 B., p. 7.

When this report was drawn up in 1769 a policy of great secrecy with reference to the future government of Quebec had just been adopted, with the result that between this time and the passing of the Quebec Act in 1774, few of the reports dealing with the policy of that measure are to be found among the State Papers. This report was prepared for the information of the Lords of Council and a copy of it was sent in "a secret and confidential" despatch from Hillsborough to Carleton, Dec. 1st, 1769, to secure his opinion of the proposals. The general character and purpose of the Report is thus expressed:—"This Paper will not only fully inform you what Regulations and Reform are proposed in respect to the future Government of this important Colony, but will also point out to you the Arguments and Reasoning by which it is endeavoured to support the several Propositions." Its secrecy is indicated thus:—"This Report is sent to you in the greatest Confidence, and therefore you should be careful not only that no part of it is communicated to any other person, but that in conversing upon the subject of any Difficulties or Doubts that may arise, you do avoid the Appearance of their being other than the Result of your own Reflections; and I am particularly to desire that you will bring back the Copy of the Report with you, without suffering it to fall into any other hands whatever." Q 6, pp. 129-30.

² These letters have not been found, but they probably reflect a movement at the time in the Province of Quebec, as indicated in a letter from Carleton to Shelburne, Jan. 20th, 1768, (see p. 295), as also in his letter of Aug. 4th, 1768. In the latter he states that a few persons, who had been endeavouring to get up a petition for an Assembly, having failed, had apparently dropped the project.

³ This paper is contained in a Report of the Board of Trade to the Privy Council, dated May 30th, 1765, and is entitled, "Heads of a Plan for the Establishment of Ecclesiastical Affairs in the Province of Quebec." This is referred to in the representation of the Board of Trade of Sept. 2nd, 1765, see p. 247. It is given in full in the recently received but uncalendared volume Q 18 A, p. 88. The report of the Advocate, Attorney and Solicitor General on the paper has not been found.