

PROPOSED MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS IN UPPER
CANADA, 1794

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DURING a visit to England last summer, I was enabled to inspect and read in the Imperial State Paper Offices, all the Government Despatches sent to and from Upper Canada between the years 1791 and 1800. Nearly all of them contain valuable historical information of the proceedings of the early Executive Government of Upper Canada, and are of great public interest, especially as we are now approaching the centenary of the establishment of this Province. Scarcely any of the despatches of those early days have been published, for Ontario has not yet awakened to much interest in her Historical Records, and in this want of interest she stands almost alone on this continent. The United States, and nearly all the States of the Union have made or are making collections of their historical Archives. Canada, Quebec and Nova Scotia commenced their collections many years ago, and have published several volumes of valuable historical papers, and have set an example that it would be worthy of Ontario to imitate.

Among some of the Despatches which I was enabled to copy in the State Paper Offices, the following will be found interesting as shewing the policy and efforts of the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada to establish local Municipal Corporations in this Province. Though possessed of many statesmanlike qualities, Lieutenant-Governor Simcoe, when arguing in support of his policy in this matter, showed that he was plainly influenced by that want of trust in the people which was characteristic of the governing powers of the period of his administration, and especially of the Imperial colonial administration. He tried to soothe the official powers, and make his proposal acceptable, by recommending that the first councillors should be nominated by the Crown,