

COPIES or EXTRACTS of CORRESPONDENCE relative to the AFFAIRS of
LOWER CANADA.

— No. 1. —

(No. 185.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Lord *Glenelg* to the Earl of *Gosford*,
dated Downing-street, 11 March 1837.

My Lord,

ALTHOUGH I am unable at the present moment to enter, as fully as the occasion might seem to require, into an explanation of the reasons for the course which his Majesty's Government have felt it their duty to adopt in relation to the affairs of Lower Canada, nor into a statement of the duties which will consequently devolve on your Lordship, I feel it incumbent on me to avail myself of the first opportunity which has offered since the affairs of Lower Canada have been brought before The House of Commons, of informing you of the proceedings of Parliament with reference to this subject.

On the 6th instant, Lord John Russell proposed to The House of Commons, in a Committee of the whole House, the series of Resolutions, of which I enclose a copy for your Lordship's information. As an amendment to the fourth Resolution, it was moved to substitute a Declaration, that it is expedient that the Legislative Council of Lower Canada be made elective. The debate was continued by adjournment to the 8th instant, when, upon a division, the amendment was rejected by a majority of 318 to 56. After several divisions on questions of adjournment, The House ultimately divided on the main question, when the original Resolution, respecting the Legislative Council, was carried by a majority of 144 to 16.

I transmit to you the lists of the several divisions which took place on this occasion. The further proceedings were then deferred until the evidence taken before the Parliamentary Committee of 1834, to which reference had been made in the debate, should have been printed. The pressure of public business may, perhaps, render it impossible to resume the question until after the Easter holidays; but it is the intention of his Majesty's Government to incur no delay which is not absolutely indispensable, in obtaining the decision of The House of Commons on the remaining Resolutions. The debate, indeed, on the fourth Resolution was by no means confined to the single though important question to which it specifically relates, and the expression of the opinion of so large a majority of The House of Commons in the recent divisions, though formally decisive only of that single Resolution, may fairly be assumed as expressing the sense of The House on the general nature of the demands which have been preferred by the House of Assembly of Lower Canada. The result will, I trust, have a salutary effect in the Province, in showing that, after having evinced the fullest disposition to concede every just and reasonable demand, his Majesty's Government are secure in the support of Parliament, in resisting pretensions dangerous to the interest of the community, and at variance with the constitution itself, and with the relations between a dependency of the British Empire and the Parent State. It will further appear from the debate which took place on the recent occasion, that although prepared to meet with firmness the emergency which has unhappily arisen, his Majesty's Government will not advance beyond the precise limits of the necessity which requires and justifies their interference with the privileges of the Canadian Legislature, although it might be maintained by some, that stronger measures were demanded by the exigency of Canadian affairs.

Your Lordship will perceive from the Resolutions, that it is proposed that provision should be made for the payment of the salaries of the public officers in Lower Canada only to the 10th of April next. It forms no part of the policy of his Majesty's Government to supersede the functions, or to interfere with the constitutional privileges, of the House of Assembly of the Province to a greater extent than, under the pressing urgency of existing circumstances, has appeared to them unavoidable. It is their earnest hope that no future appeal to Parliament may be rendered necessary, by a continued abstinence on the part of the Assembly

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