

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 18

then take. His Majesty's Ministers rather imagine that no Disputes will arise at this Meeting but that the Americans will leave them in the possession of their Hunting Grounds until a more favorable opportunity shall hereafter offer for effecting the purposes which it is supposed that Congress have ultimately in view, and if that should be the Case no difficulties will immediately occur ; but if contrary to their expectation the Indians should not accede to any Proposals that may be made to them by the American Deputies, or cannot be prevailed upon peaceably to accept of the Asylum already directed to be offered to them, within the Province of Quebec, Our Situation will in some degree become embarrassing. To afford them open and avowed Assistance, should Hostilities commence, must at all Events in the present State of this Country be avoided; But His Majesty's Ministers at the same time do not think it either consistent with justice or good Policy entirely to abandon them, and leave them to the mercy of the Americans, as from motives of resentment it is not unlikely that they might hereafter be led to interrupt the Peace and Prosperity of the Province of Quebec. It is utterly impracticable for His Majesty's Ministers to prescribe any direct line for your Conduct should matters be driven to the extremity, and much will depend upon your judgment and discretion in the management of a Business so delicate and interesting, in which you must be governed by a variety of Circumstances which cannot at this moment be foreseen.

The inclosed Copy of a Letter to Joseph Brant, in answer to his representation, will explain to you the extent of the Engagements entered into on this Side of the Water, with which he will proceed in the course of a few days to meet his Brethren, and from his professions of Attachment to this Country, His Majesty's Ministers are led to expect that he will from time to time furnish you with the earliest notice of any thing material that may occur which you will communicate to me in the most expeditious way, for His Majesty's Information, that Instructions may be transmitted to you for your guidance upon such measures as it may be judged adviseable to adopt.

His Majesty's Ministers are well aware of the Efforts that have been made by a certain description of People to raise Discontents in the Province of Quebec, and to bring forward Petitions to the Throne against the present constitution of the Colony, But notwithstanding these proceedings, no measures whatever are intended to be taken for a change of the System of Government, until Sir Guy Carleton shall have consulted the Opinion of the Province thereupon, and clearly ascertained that such a Change will be attended with material advantage to its general Interests and Happiness.—His Majesty feels the strongest disposition to give His Canadian Subjects every proof of His Confidence, and will forthwith take under His Royal Consideration the Measure you recommend of increasing their Numbers in the Legislative Council,¹ which indeed had been in contemplation previous to the receipt of your Letter upon that head.

¹ See Hope to Sydney, p. 793.