

I was aware of the necessity of promptitude in my decision on the most important of the questions committed to me at a very early period after my acceptance of the mission which Your Majesty was pleased to confide to me. Before leaving England, I assured Your Majesty's Ministers, that the plan which I should suggest for the future Government of the Canadas, should be in readiness by the commencement of the ensuing Session; and, though I had made provision that, under any circumstances, the measures which I might suggest should be explained and supported in Parliament by some person who would have had a share in the preparation of them, I added, that it was not improbable that I might deem it my paramount duty towards the Provinces entrusted to me to attend in my place in the House of Lords, for the purpose of explaining my own views, and supporting my own recommendations. My resignation of the office of Governor General has, therefore, in nowise precipitated my suggestion of the plan which appears to me best calculated to settle the future form and policy of Government in the Canadas. It has prevented, certainly, my completing some inquiries which I had instituted, with a view of effecting practical reforms of essential, but still of subordinate importance. But with the chief of my duties as High Commissioner—that of suggesting the future Constitution of these Colonies—that event has interfered in no way, except in so far as the circumstances which attended it occasioned an undue intrusion of extraneous business on the time which was left for completion of my labours.

In truth, the administrative and legislative business which daily demanded my attention could, with difficulty, be discharged by the most unremitting labour on my own part, and on that of all those who accompanied me from England, or were employed by me in Canada.

It is in these circumstances, and under such disadvantages, that this Report has been prepared. I may not, therefore, present as extended and as complete a foundation as I could have wished, for those measures of vast and permanent importance which Parliament will find it necessary to adopt. But it will include the whole range of those subjects which it is essential should be brought under Your Majesty's view, and will prove that I have not rested content without fully developing the evils which lie at the root of the disorders of the North American Provinces—and at the same time suggesting remedies which, to the best of my judgment, will provide an effectual cure.

The same reasons, and the same obstacles, have prevented me from annexing a greater amount of detail and illustration, which, under more favourable circumstances, it would have been incumbent on me to collect, for the purpose of rendering clear and familiar to every mind, every particular of a state of things on which little correct, and much false information, has hitherto been current in this country. I cannot, therefore, but deeply regret that such a drawback on its efficacy should have been a necessary consequence of the circumstances under which the Report has been prepared. I still hope that the materials collected by me, though not as ample as I could have desired, will, nevertheless, be found sufficient for enabling the Imperial Legislature to form a sound decision on the important interests which are involved in the result of its deliberations.

These interests are, indeed, of great magnitude; and on the course which Your Majesty, and Your Parliament may adopt, with respect to the North American Colonies, will depend the future destinies, not only of the million and a half of Your Majesty's Subjects, who at present inhabit those Provinces, but of that vast population which those ample and fertile territories are fit and destined hereafter to support. No portion of the American Continent possesses greater natural resources for the maintenance of large and flourishing communities. An almost boundless range of the richest soil still remains unsettled, and may be rendered available for the purposes of agriculture. The wealth of inexhaustible forests of the best timber in America, and of extensive regions of the most valuable minerals, have as yet been scarcely touched. Along the whole line of sea-coast, around each island, and in every river, are to be found the greatest and richest fisheries in the world. The best fuel, and the most abundant water-power, are available for the coarser manufactures, for which an easy and certain market will be found. Trade with other Continents is favoured by the possession of a large number of safe and spacious harbours; long, deep, and numerous rivers, and vast inland seas, supply the means of easy intercourse; and the structure of the country generally affords the utmost facility for every species of communication by land. Unbounded materials of agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing industry are there: it depends upon the present decision of the Imperial Legislature to determine for whose benefit they are to be rendered available. The Country which has founded and maintained these Colonies, at a vast expense of blood and treasure, may justly expect its compensation in turning their unappropriated resources to the account of its own redundant population; they are the rightful patrimony of