

—No. 3.—

(No. 1.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Lord *Glenelg* to the Earl of *Durham*, G.C.B.

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Lord *Glenelg* to the
Earl of *Durham*,
20 January 1838.

My Lord,

Downing-street, 20 January 1838.

ALTHOUGH it will be necessary to reserve, until the approach of the period of your proceeding to Canada, the full instructions which it will be my duty to address to your Lordship, with respect to the important mission which you have undertaken, Her Majesty's Government feel it incumbent on them to take the earliest opportunity of briefly explaining to you, in an official communication, the general line of policy which appears to them best calculated to affect a permanent settlement of the various questions which will demand your attention.

I abstain here from adverting to the measures which may be requisite in order to suppress any remaining symptoms of resistance to Her Majesty's authority; because, from the information which I at present possess, I am induced to hope that, before your arrival in Lower Canada, all open attempts to disturb the public peace, or to impede the due administration of the law, will have been effectively put down; and I trust that the large increase which will be made to the military force in the province on the opening of the navigation will render hopeless any further designs of an insurrectionary character.

Tranquillity having been restored, it will be your duty to enter on the more arduous part of the task committed to you, and to consider what steps should be adopted in order to prepare the way for a return to a system of government founded on those principles of liberty which form the basis both of the British constitution and of that which was given to Canada by the Imperial Act of 1791.

It is upon such a system alone that, in the opinion of Her Majesty's advisers, the colony can be permanently governed with advantage either to its inhabitants or to the mother country; but, after the disturbances by which the province has been convulsed, it can scarcely be expected that it will at once be restored to such a state of calmness as to allow a regular constitutional mode of government to come into beneficial operation immediately on the suppression of the insurrection; it is therefore proposed that for a limited time Parliament should authorize a different method of administering the affairs of the province. This, however, is but a temporary expedient, intended only to meet the actual crisis, and to afford time for removing the obstacles which have of late years prevented the successful working of a more regular and liberal system of government. It will be your chief aim to prepare the way for the earliest practicable return to such a system, and for this purpose you will use every means in your power to undeceive those who have been betrayed into disaffection, and to reconcile the different classes of the population to each other and to the Government. Your personal influence, and your prompt and impartial attention to every real grievance and every well-founded complaint, Her Majesty is persuaded will have a powerful effect in contributing to this most desirable result.

I need not here advert to the differences which have so long prevailed between the executive government and the legislature of the province. You are already acquainted with their history and character; and you are also aware that, in the year 1835, Commissioners were sent out by the Government of his late Majesty for the purpose of ascertaining the causes which had led to these differences, and of inquiring what alterations it would be right to make in the laws and constitution of the colony with a view to their adjustment. Early in the last year the final reports of the Commissioners were received, and measures founded upon the information which they afforded, and the suggestions they contain were in the course of being submitted to Parliament, when the execution of this design was unavoidably interrupted by the demise of his late Majesty.

The events which have since taken place in Lower Canada, and the degree to which they have exasperated the contending parties in that colony, have rendered it inexpedient, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, again to bring forward propositions which were calculated to meet a very different state of things from that which at present exists.

More extensive changes in the Act of 1791 than were then in contemplation seem now to be required, since it is hardly to be hoped that when an actual conflict must have so greatly inflamed those mutual jealousies and animosities
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