

CANADA.

Her Majesty's Government are unfeignedly anxious to preserve all their rights and privileges to the French population of the Canadas; and to avoid any measure which may shock their prejudices or abruptly violate their feelings of nationality; but they do not attempt to conceal their opinion that, so far as it can be accomplished consistently with these views, it is of great importance that Canada should gradually become an essentially British province; and well knowing the effect which language must have upon such a result, they would, under any circumstances, be unwilling to take a course which could be understood as affirming an opinion on their part that such an amalgamation could not be hoped for.

Your despatch of a later date respecting the probable desire for a rupture of the Union, affords an additional reason for taking no step of which the tendency could be in any degree to keep up the distinctions which now separate the two races who occupy the respective divisions of the now united province. They can have no doubt but that such would be the tendency of a repeal of that portion of the Imperial Act which introduces a common language for all legislative purposes; and with this feeling they would earnestly deprecate the agitation of such a question in the Provincial Legislature; but should it, as you anticipate, be unavoidable, and an address in favour of the change be presented to you in consequence, I have to request that you will inform the House in answer that you are precluded by your instructions from giving any encouragement to the expectation that her Majesty's Government could take upon themselves the responsibility of recommending to the Imperial Parliament the legislative measures which would be requisite in order to give effect to the alteration proposed.

I have, &amp;c.

The Right Hon. Sir C. T. Metcalfe, Bart.  
&c.

(Signed)

STANLEY.

No. 3.

(No. 227.)

No. 3.

COPY of a DESPATCH from LORD METCALFE, G.C.B., to LORD STANLEY.

Government House, Montreal, March 8, 1845.

(Received April 14, 1845.)

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a joint address to the Queen from the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly of Canada, praying for the repeal of the 41st clause of the Act of Union relating to the French language, which I beg leave earnestly to recommend to Her Majesty's gracious consideration.

This address was carried unanimously in both Houses and in the Legislative Assembly with acclamations, in which the several parties vied with each other.

I have, &amp;c.

The Right Hon. Lord Stanley,  
&c.

(Signed)

METCALFE.

Encl. in No. 3.

Enclosure in No. 3.

To the QUEEN'S Most Excellent MAJESTY.

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

WE, Your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of Canada, in Provincial Parliament assembled, most humbly beg leave to approach Your Majesty for the purpose of renewing the expression of our faithful attachment to Your Majesty's Person and Government, and of representing,

That, sensible of the advantages we enjoy from Your Majesty's care and protection, and which we trust may long be continued to us under Your Majesty's parental sway, it is at all times our duty to submit for Your Majesty's most gracious consideration such matters as may have a tendency, with any class of Your Majesty's subjects, to diminish that contentment which we are well assured Your Majesty desires should exist in every portion of Your dominions.

That the French is the native language of a very large class of Your Majesty's subjects in this province; of this class the great mass, indeed, speak no other language. In it the largest portion of their laws and the books on their system of jurisprudence are written; and their daily intercourse with each other is conducted; it is the language in which alone they can invoke the blessings of heaven on themselves, and all that is dear to them. A language indispensable to so many of Your Majesty's faithful people cannot, they will believe, be viewed by their Sovereign as foreign when used by them.