

No. 5
Despatch from
Lord Glenelg to
Sir F. B. Head,
5 December 1835.

that careful investigation of the grounds of their complaints, which He graciously pledged himself to bestow on the representation of any individual petitioner. I feel myself therefore entitled, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, to object to any resort on the part of the House to that ulterior measure to which they allude, but which they will feel with me is to be justified only by an extreme emergency.

I now proceed to the consideration of the various topics embraced in the seventh report of the committee of grievances, and in the addresses of the two Houses to His Majesty: and I shall advert to them in the order in which they are pursued in the report itself.

In the following pages, if any subject should appear to be passed over without due regard, you will understand that I have at least been guilty of no intentional omission, but have, in obedience to His Majesty's commands, made it my endeavour to meet every question which the committee and the House have thought it necessary or proper to raise.

1. It is stated that "the almost unlimited extent of the patronage of the Crown, or rather of the Colonial Minister for the time being, and his advisers here, together with the abuse of that patronage, are the chief sources of colonial discontent. Such (it is added) is the patronage of the Colonial Office, that the granting or withholding of supplies is of no political importance, unless as an indication of the opinion of the country concerning the character of the Government, which is conducted on a system that admits its officers to take and apply the funds of the colonists without any legislative vote whatever." The committee then proceed to an enumeration of the various public offices, and the different departments and branches of the public service, over which this patronage is said to extend; and by bringing the whole into one view, they suggest what must be the amount of the authority and influence accruing to the executive government from these sources.

The statement is substantially this: that the number of public offices in the colony is too great; and that the patronage, instead of being vested, as at present, in the Crown, and the local representative of the Crown, should be transferred to other hands.

In the long enumeration of places at the disposal of the executive government in Upper Canada, the committee have not adverted to one consideration to which I think that great prominence might justly be assigned. It is perfectly true, as it is quite inevitable, that in Upper Canada, as in other new countries, the number of public employments is and will be far larger in proportion than in older and more densely-peopled states. The general machinery of government must be the same in a scanty as in a large and redundant population; corresponding departments of the public service, whether legislative, judicial or administrative, must exist in both. And in a new country, besides, there will be some establishments for which in the settled states of Europe no counterpart can be found; such, for example, are all which relate to the allocation, surveying and granting of wild lands. Nor is it to be forgotten, that in the early stages of such a society many duties devolve upon the government, which at a more advanced period are undertaken by the better educated and wealthier classes, as an honourable occupation of their leisure time. Thus in the Canadas, although the mere text of the law would there, as in England, authorize any man to prefer and prosecute an indictment in His Majesty's name, yet virtually and in substance the prosecution of all offences is confided to the government or its officers. These causes have inevitably tended to swell the amount of the patronage of the provincial government, without supposing any peculiar avidity on their part for the exercise of such power.

With respect to the patronage of the requisite offices, His Majesty's Government are not solicitous to retain more in their own hands, or in those of the governor, than is necessary for the general welfare of the people and the right conduct of public affairs. I confess myself, however, unable to perceive to whom the choice amongst candidates for public employment could with equal safety be confided. It requires but little foresight or experience to discover that such patronage, if exercised in any form of popular election, or if committed to any popular body, would be liable to be employed for purposes far less defensible, and in a manner less conducive to the general good: chosen by irresponsible patrons, the public officers would themselves be virtually exempt from responsibility; and all the discipline and subordination which should connect together in one unbroken chain the King and his representative in the province, down to the lowest functionary to

whom