

CORRESPONDENCE

RELATIVE TO THE

AFFAIRS OF CANADA.

(No. 53.)

No. 1.

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COPY of a DESPATCH from Lord METCALFE to Lord STANLEY.

Government House, Montreal, Canada,
April 17, 1845.

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to submit a copy of a sketch of a Civil List prepared by the gentlemen of the Executive Council, in order that it might be laid before the Legislative Assembly during the recent session; but by some inadvertence in the hurry with which the session closed, that intended proceeding was forgotten, and the Civil List consequently remains, for the present, on the footing upon which it was established by the Imperial Act of Re-Union.

2. If the Legislative Assembly in its next session should vote a Civil List, in accordance with this sketch, I am disposed to think that it might be accepted by Her Majesty's Government as sufficient; for I am not aware of any equivalent advantage that would attend its rejection, in comparison with that of settling a question which, as long as it remains in its present state, will always furnish a convenient handle for inflammatory agitation.

3. The sketch has been prepared with the double view, of evincing to the Legislative Assembly a desire for reduction on the part of its framers, and of meeting, as far as practicable, the just expectations of Her Majesty's Government. It was proposed to me to sanction a reduction of the salary of the Governor. Such a measure would no doubt in some degree be popular, and if its consequences were confined to myself, I might not think it necessary to withhold my assent; but I did not consider myself to be at liberty to alter what had been determined by Her Majesty's Government on this head, nor would it have been just towards my successors; for I am bound, by my own experience, to affirm that the salary is not more than adequate to the station. I objected, therefore, to any further reduction in the Governor's salary, beyond what I had spontaneously adopted, by making over to the province the Governor's share of custom-house seizures—a sort of emolument which might always, I conceive, be well dispensed with. The separate salaries of the Civil Secretary and the Private Secretary, when those offices be disunited, will, I have no doubt, find objectors in the Legislative Assembly, where the idea is popular, that the Civil Secretary and the Private Secretary ought to be the same, and that both together ought to receive the smallest possible amount of salary. The province ought, however, to be satisfied with the considerable reduction already spontaneously effected in that department.

4. In addition to such specific reductions as appeared to be practicable, the general principle of reduction adopted in the accompanying sketch, is that of eventually paying most of the salaries in currency instead of sterling. This arrangement, however, is not to affect actual incumbents. Whether this sketch, even with the reductions proposed, will be adopted by the Legislative Assembly, is, I conceive, doubtful; and all that I have to offer on that subject is, that if the Assembly will not grant a moderate and reasonable Civil List, they can only expect that Her Majesty's Government will adhere to that which is established by the Imperial Act.

5. The interval which will elapse before the next legislative session, will enable me to receive your Lordship's instructions regarding the sketch now sub-