

in the government of the whole as renders it wise to incorporate the two Canadas, the artificial work which would, in fact, supersede the lower part of the St. Lawrence, as the outlet of a great part of the Canadian trade, and would make Halifax, in a great measure, an outport to Quebec, would surely in the same way render it advisable that the incorporation should be extended to Provinces through which such a road would pass.

Union
desirable
to Prince
Edward's
Island and
New-
foundland.

With respect to the two smaller Colonies of Prince Edward's Island and Newfoundland, I am of opinion, that not only would most of the reasons which I have given for an union of the others, apply to them, but that their smallness makes it absolutely necessary, as the only means of securing any proper attention to their interests, and investing them with that consideration, the deficiency of which, they have so much reason to lament in all the disputes which yearly occur between them and the citizens of the United States, with regard to the encroachments made by the latter on their coasts and fisheries.¹

Opinion
of H.R.H.
the late
Duke of
Kent.

The views on which I found my support of a comprehensive union have long been entertained by many persons in these Colonies, whose opinion is entitled to the highest consideration. I cannot, however, refrain from mentioning the sanction of such views by one whose authority Your Majesty will, I may venture to say, receive with the utmost respect. Mr. Sewell, the late Chief Justice of Quebec,² laid before me an autograph letter addressed to himself by Your Majesty's illustrious and lamented father,³ in which his Royal Highness was pleased to express his approbation of a similar plan then proposed by that gentleman. No one better understood the interests and character of these Colonies than his Royal

¹ These disputes, arising out of the interpretation of the terms of the Fisheries Convention of 1818, were the subject of arbitration before the Hague Tribunal in 1910.

² As to Chief Justice Sewell, see above, p. 235, note.

³ The Duke of Kent, father of Queen Victoria, served in Canada for several years between 1791 and 1800. He commanded the forces in Canada for rather over a year in 1799-1800. He died in 1820.

Highness ; and it is with peculiar satisfaction, therefore, that I submit to Your Majesty's perusal the important document which contains his Royal Highness's opinion in favour of such a scheme :—

‘ Kensington Palace, 30 Nov. 1814.

‘ My dear Sewell,

‘ I have this day had the pleasure of receiving your note of yesterday, with its interesting enclosure : nothing can be better arranged than the whole thing is, or more perfectly I cannot wish ; and, when I see an opening, it is fully my intention to hint the matter to Lord Bathurst, and put the paper into his hands, without, however, telling him from whom I have it, though I shall urge him to have some conversation with you relative to it. Permit me, however, just to ask you whether it was not an oversight in you to state that there are *five* Houses of Assembly in the British Colonies in North America ? for if I am not under an error, there are *six*, viz. Upper and Lower Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the Islands of Prince Edward and Cape Breton. Allow me also to beg of you to put down the proportions in which you think the thirty members of the representative Assembly ought to be furnished by each province ; and, finally, to suggest whether you would not think two Lieutenant Governors, with two Executive Councils, sufficient for the Executive Government of the whole, viz. one for the two Canadas and one for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, comprehending the small dependencies of Cape Breton and Prince Edward's Island ; the former to reside at Montreal, and the latter at whichever of the two situations may be considered most central for the two Provinces, whether Annapolis Royal or Windsor. But at all events, should you even consider four Executive Governments and four Executive Councils requisite, I presume there cannot be a question of the expediency of comprehending the two small islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence with Nova Scotia.¹

‘ Believe me ever to remain, with the most friendly regard,

‘ My dear Sewell, yours faithfully,

(signed) ‘ *Edward.*’

¹ No mention is made of Newfoundland in this letter. By the Royal Proclamation of 1763, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island (the

Difficulty
in the way
of union.

I know of but one difficulty in the way of such an union ; and that arises from the disinclination which some of the Lower Provinces might feel to the transference of powers from their present Legislatures to that of the Union. The objection to this would arise principally, I imagine, from their not liking to give up the immediate control which they now have over the funds by which their local expenditure is defrayed. I have given such a view of the evils of this system, that I cannot be expected to admit that an interference with it would be an objection to my plan. I think, however, that the Provinces would have a right to complain, if these powers of local management, and of distributing funds for local purposes, were taken from Provincial Assemblies only to be placed in the yet more objectionable hands of a general legislature. Every precaution should, in my opinion, be taken to prevent such a power, by any possibility, falling into the hands of the Legislature of the Union. In order to prevent that, I would prefer that the Provincial Assemblies should be retained, with merely municipal powers. But it would be far better, in point both of efficiency and of economy, that this power should be entrusted to the municipal bodies of much smaller districts ; and the formation of such bodies would, in my opinion, be an essential part of any durable and complete Union.

Legisla-
tive union
should
have the
consent
of the
colonial
people.

With such views, I should without hesitation recommend the immediate adoption of a general legislative union of all the British Provinces in North America, if the regular course of Government were suspended or perilled in the Lower Provinces, and the necessity of the immediate adoption of a plan for their government, without reference to them, a matter of urgency ; or if it were possible to

Island of St. John), were annexed to Nova Scotia, which thereby, as New Brunswick had not then been made a separate colony, included the whole of the present Maritime Provinces. In 1770 Prince Edward Island, and in 1784 Cape Breton, were again separated from Nova Scotia, but in 1820 Cape Breton was once more annexed to Nova Scotia. Prince Edward Island, under the French régime known as the Isle St. Jean, was called by its present name after the Duke of Kent in 1798.