

in our ranks. If, under the system of accepting office at any price, there are persons who, for a personal and momentary advantage, do not fear to break the only bond which constitutes our strength, viz., union among ourselves, I do not wish to be, and I never will be, of the number. Having no desire to keep secret my thoughts or my political views, I permit you to make whatever use of this letter you think best.

I am,

L. H. LAFONTAINE.

[From the Hon. R. E. Caron to the Hon. W. H. Draper.]

TRANSLATION.

QUEBEC, 17th Sept., 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,—After the conversation I had with you at Montreal last month, I promised you that I would place myself in Communication with some influential persons, belonging to the French Canadian party, for the purpose of ascertaining whether there would not be some means of effecting an arrangement under which they might be induced to take a share in the administration and to join the party now in power.—My last letter will have informed you that I had been endeavouring to keep my promise, and will have acquainted you with the causes which had retarded the conclusion of my negotiation; it is only to-day that I have been enabled to inform you of the result of my undertaking, and in doing so I will speak to you with that frankness which you have a right to expect from me after the confidence you have shown me.

If I correctly recollect our conversation,—after having premised that there were in the two Sections of the Province two great parties,—your own in Upper, and that to which I belong in Lower Canada,—you insisted upon the advantages which would result to the Province generally, and to Lower Canada in particular, from the Union of these two great parties, the result of which would be a strong administration enjoying the confidence of the great majority of the people throughout the whole country.—You spoke to me of the mischief arising to that portion of the population to which I belong, from the isolation from public affairs to which we had been for some time subjected; and you shewed me the best possible reasons for wishing that the arrangement first mentioned should be accomplished in order to obviate the state of things last referred to.

When we came to examine the difficulties to be encountered in reaching this result, we paused upon the following, as being those which appeared to us to be the most serious:—1st, All the seats in the Council being filled, how was room to be found for those it might be wished to introduce into it.—2nd, Would it be just to leave out and to abandon certain influential individuals justly respected by the party whose support is

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sought for, and who yet, from their peculiar position, could not make part of an Administration so long as His Excellency the present Governor in Chief should remain at the head of the Government? 3rd. There are now in the Council individuals with whom the said members it is desirable to introduce could with difficulty be upon friendly terms. Several other details were also touched upon, but as compared with the other difficulties they were considered as of little moment and easy to be arranged.

This view of the subject is that which I presented to those of my friends whom I have consulted, and I must at once assure you that I have not met with a single one, who did not, like you and me, sincerely desire to see an end put to a division so contrary to the interests of the country; all were of one mind as to the necessity of a change, and agreed that such change to be beneficial ought to be effected by means of a coalition between the two parties most numerous and influential in either section of the Province, and, I have reason to be pleased with the disposition which I have found to endeavour to accomplish this object.

The desirableness and the necessity of the thing being once admitted, the means of accomplishing it were next to be considered, and on this point even there was but one opinion. It was admitted as a principle, that the administration of affairs (so far as it belongs to the Council) ought to be in the hands of the two dominant parties in the two sections of the Province; that the administration ought no more to govern Lower Canada by means of a majority drawn from Upper Canada, than it ought to govern Upper Canada by the aid of Lower Canada; that any administration ought to remain in power so long only as it should be supported by the majority in each section of the Province, respectively; it was said that things were as they ought to be with regard to Upper Canada, where the administration was supported by the majority, but that it was not the same in our portion of the Province, where the minority only supported the Ministry while the majority opposed it; that there was, nevertheless, no reason why things should not be put upon the same footing here as there; and that this could only be done by making such arrangements that the party representing the majority here could join the administration upon terms honourable to them and consistent with their principles.

No objection is made as to the manner in which the Council is composed as far as regards Upper Canada, the same apportionment of power is demanded for Lower Canada. It is thought that the persons now in office ought not to form an obstacle to the desirable arrangement,—since by accepting office under the system of Government now established, they must have expected and must be willing to resign, from the moment when others should, from circumstances, become better able than they to conduct the public business advantageously for the country. It is therefore thought that if it be necessary to create a greater number of vacancies in the Council than was spoken of by us, the interest or personal convenience of those whom the change would affect ought not to be taken into consideration,—it is maintained that it would be necessary that the offices in question should be filled by men who enjoy the confidence of the greatest number and that if

this rule be adopted, the first difficulty of which we spoke, (that of finding seats for those whom it would be desirable to bring into the administration,) would at once disappear. It is thought that some one should be entrusted to elaborate and to settle the basis of the new arrangement, and to submit the names of those, whom it should be found desirable to include;—while it is wished to give a majority in the administration, as regards this section of the Province, to the party which forms the majority here, there is a disposition to give the minority a reasonable share in the direction of affairs, and to see it fairly represented in the Council—some names which have been mentioned as coming within the class here alluded to, would, I think, give general satisfaction.

The difficulty which we both felt with regard to the exclusion, under the proposed arrangement, of certain influential and prominent persons, who under other circumstances would of necessity be included, has been fully appreciated. Nevertheless, adhering to the principle above stated, that personal considerations ought to be disregarded and the general good above all to be consulted,—it was subsequently understood by all, that it would be a contradiction of this principle to insist, as a condition of the arrangement, upon the admission of those against whom it was known that there existed objections which there was no hope of removing;—it was thought that they might be omitted for the moment, without committing any injustice or appearing to sacrifice them, convinced as all are, that the persons in question will know how to appreciate the motive by which their friends are actuated, and that they will not consider themselves abandoned, because those friends yield to a necessity which they all regret. As regards one of these persons Mr. Lafontaine, I am authorized to say from him, that he will see with pleasure the formation of an administration enjoying the confidence of the country, and that he will cheerfully support any administration, although he may not be a member of it, which shall be composed of persons whose principles he approves,—I have therefore understood, and state to you as nearly certain, that the second of the objections we spoke of is far from being insurmountable.

As to the third difficulty (the presence in the Council, as now composed, of persons who would prevent the entry into it of those whose services would be required)—it is met by the same reasoning which has been suggested as that by which the first may be surmounted;—for it is said that if there be found in the Council some persons with whom it is probable that those whom the interest of the country makes it requisite to bring into it, could not sit, it is clearly necessary that such members should resign their seats, and that in so doing they would do no more than comply with the condition to which they submitted on accepting office.

What I have now stated must convince you that the conviction here is, that the administration, as regards this portion of the Province ought to be reconstructed,—that any change made by introducing one or two members in the places of an equal number who should retire, would produce no effective result,—would bring no strength to the Ministry, and would only isolate from their fellow countrymen those who should accept office,—that the

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measure would be totally useless to the Government at the same time that it would be very injurious (in a political point of view) to those who should become parties to it.

I think I am not mistaken when I tell you that such is the opinion of all those to whom I have spoken, and this being the case, you will find no person disposed to lend himself to the arrangement you contemplate, (that of putting new men in the seats of the two members who would retire) or, that if you find any one willing to do so, his services will be of no kind of use to you.

Such is the information I have been able to gather; I believe it to be consonant to the opinion of the great majority of those who take part in politics in this portion of the Province. The realization of the desired coalition is not without difficulty but it is *possible*,—and if it offers the only means of putting an end to our troubles, it must be accomplished. If I could contribute to bring about such a state of things, I should account myself very fortunate, and for this purpose, as for every other which may tend to the welfare of the country, you may always command my services.

Trusting that you will have the goodness to pardon the want of arrangement in this letter, written as it is in the midst of a multitude of business, I have the honor to subscribe myself, with the highest consideration and esteem, dear Sir, your very humble and devoted servant,

ED. CARON.

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[From the Hon. W. H. Draper to the Hon. R. E. Caron.]

MONTREAL, 16th October, 1845.

MY DEAR SIR,—You may not have observed by the papers that I have been rather more than a month absent on circuit, from which I returned only yesterday, and you will, I am sure, readily excuse me that I do no more at this moment than acknowledge the receipt of your's of the 17th, and thank you most sincerely for the frank explanations it contains.

You will feel that some reflection is necessary before I can fully appreciate how far any exertions of mine are likely to be successful in bringing to a favourable result the subject of our conference. My heart is earnestly engaged in the effort to obtain a result so beneficial:—content either to share in the task or to witness its successful accomplishment by others.

You shall hear from me as soon as I can possibly devote to the subject the time its importance demands—for no one will better understand than yourself that while individually I am ready to make any effort to attain an end I consider so desirable, and for that purpose have fully opened to you my desire to learn what prospect there was of success with those with