

130

private

June 28 June 1842

My dear Sir

I have little doubt that the provincial Administration feel as you say "that their position is not secure" and that some of them as you suggest would like to have us with them to secure their seats - Some perhaps may have a similar wish from better motives - With respect to the goy I am glad that he is popular - It indicates a belief that he has personally no prejudices against us and I think it desirable that henceforth under all circumstances we should so act towards the head of the Government as not to excite in him any prejudices against us - The present goy is the first goy we have ever had who from his assumption of the Government has been in a position to act as the head of the whole people without reference to parties to classes to races or any other of the divisions into which we are or are supposed to be divided and I think it at once the duty and the interest of all so to conduct themselves towards him personally that there never under any combination of circumstances can be the least ground of personal objections on his part to any party or individual that in every revolution of politics he may be always perfectly free to employ those in the public service whose weight and influence in the country the best fit them to rally round the goy.

Wm. L. Montague

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subject of the great mass of the people and thus adapt the Government
to the People and place it where it should be at the head of
Public opinion - ~~to this position~~

In this position (I speak of course of what I have before said of a Govern-
ment position) Sir Charles Bagot is now placed and from what I have
been able to gather I believe him qualified to retain it and not de-
termined of abandoning it - Lord Sydenham if he had even been a
man fitted for such a position was disqualified from assuming it after
the dictatorship which he had exercised in Lower Canada during the
suspension of the Constitution to say nothing of the prejudices which
he had imbibed against the Lower Canadians and other difficulties
consequent on the unhappy state of the Country arising out of the
late troubles - and as to any of the Governors under the old system
they were by what under that system was considered their duty
essentially heads of a party & not of the people -

It was in my opinion a great misfortune to the Country that
they did not at once feel the benefit of the change of system by
a corresponding change in the provincial administration - The
consequence of their not having done so is that it affords the
enemies of our system an opportunity of imputing to the
system itself and the principle upon which it is founded
evils which though they may have acquired additional ac-
tivity from the action of that principle are in themselves no
more akin to it than the noxious exhalations of the miasmata
to the Acuminaria whose warmth raises them to an elevation
to be injurious to the health of the surrounding Country. But
some will not & others do not see this and we have a

Archives de la Ville de Montréal

part of the Liberal Reps actually assailing those very principles
which we have been endeavouring to consecrate - The advantage this
has given to our opponents - and those of our own party who are
willing to sacrifice at the shrine of power is immense - It is
true there is a large body of staunch Reformers who are not dis-
armed and ^{who} will remain firm under every discouragement
who feel in whom they can confide and who ~~will~~ confide in
no others - But they are not as numerous as it would be the
interest of the Country they should be - This with recent events
greatly increases the weight of responsibility of deciding on
a course of conduct at the present moment And this I
suppose was the reason why our friend Mr Chernin shrank
the state of his health as placing him in a position in
which he could not entertain the proposal to accept office.
For this was the amount of his answer as I understand
it - Not that he would have accepted it if his health
had permitted - The acceptance of office by a public man
involves one of two consequences, either he takes with him
into office the confidence of his party and they ought
thereupon to support the administration as he sees fit - that
confidence it must be considered as having departed
from his former friends - The great and constant cry of
the seven Canadian Reformers has been that they never
would give their support to any administration - but that
the moment any of their public men became members
of the administration, ^{no matter under what circumstances} they would lose the confidence of

their friends who would remain as hostile as ever - That a
belief in the truth of this is more prevalent even among
friends of Lower Canada than I could wish is too true - There
is therefore nothing which would give me greater satisfac-
tion than to see the Reformers of G. C. enabled to take their
seats on the right of the chair - But if they should do so
as the supporters of "The G. C." & not as the supporters
of "the Provincial Administration" in my opinion would
ultimate harm than immediate good will grow out
of it - To enable them to become the supporters of "the
Provincial Administration" that administration must
be placed on a footing to deserve their confidence - The
proper and by far the most beneficial means of arriving
at such a result would be a dissolution of the present
Cabinet as a Cabinet and the construction of a new one
No would such in my opinion necessarily lead to the services
of all the present Ministers being dispensed with - A
second course would be the re- construction of the present
Cabinet without a formal dissolution of it - In either
case I look upon it that the basis to be acted upon is
that pointed out in my letter to the late G. C. -
Without obtaining a substantial share of political power
by having a competent number of those in whom they
have confidence in the Councils of the Representatives of the
People the Reformers of Lower Canada

28 June 1842 (Mon)

their support to administration - with that provided it
be accompanied with no degrading compromise of
principles on the part of their public men I think they
ought to give it their support - whenever they have
an inclination to act honestly upon this basis I think
they should be met with frankness and a readiness to
give & take in all matters of minor arrangement.

But as to the wretched & concealing system they have
been pursuing lately (although I really believe it
has been acquiesced in by some of them at least
more from fear than any other motive) we
never can give it the sanction of our names let
what may be the consequence - For myself
while I do not profess to be wholly indifferent as to the
possession of power I will never either on the one
hand make a sacrifice of principle to obtain it or
on the other make myself an impediment to any
arrangement that may be beneficial to the
interests of my Country - If therefore a new Admin-
istration can be formed on the present one re-
-constructed upon a basis to insure the confidence
& support of the Lower Canada People

willing to take office if I can do so consistently
or to give such administrations an independent
support without office - I desire to see the power
concentrated in a position to give the most complete
reputation to the imputation of them being ^{hypocritical}
and to this end I am myself ready to make
any sacrifice ~~inconsistent~~ with principle -

As to embarking in a contest with the friends in
Oppid I never contemplated it for many reasons
which I have not now time to recount - I
have no doubt he will be returned with little
or perhaps no opposition -

My father's & family desire to be kindly
remembered to you & yours.

I believe me

Yours truly

R. A. Baldwin

P.S. The marked private I of course do not mean that
this letter should not be shown to such of our leading friends
as you may think desirable -

Too Late
Private



L. H. de Montaigne

Montreal



Route
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28 June 1842