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C.O. 537, Supplementary Correspondence,
P.R.O. Index No. 17976, 17977, 18765, 18766 (C.O. 694)

C.O. 537 contains correspondence relating to all the colonies which for one reason or another, usually because it was secret, was not filed in the public series to which it would normally have been assigned. Within C.O. 537 papers relative to specific colonies were filed in blocks of volumes, other blocks of volumes have been allotted to general correspondence, others to "Dominions" correspondence etc. Thus the organization of the series mirrors that of the Colonial Office records as a whole and for the latter half of the nineteenth century no search should be considered complete until these records have been consulted.

For most searches finding aid no. 651 provides an adequate guide to the material copied from C.O. 537. It consists principally of a list giving either the major subjects contained in each volume or titles of the files which have been copied from each volume. There is also a broad subject index for volumes 97-114. In a few instances it may be necessary to refer to contemporary Colonial Office registers of secret correspondence; it is with these registers and their use that this paper will deal. They are:

PRO Index 17976. Register of Secret Correspondence, North American Department, 1865-1869.

PRO Index 17977. Register of Secret Correspondence, North American, Australian, African and Mediterranean Department, 1870-1873.

PRO Index 18765. Register of Secret Correspondence, North American, Australian, African and Mediterranean Departments, 1874-1885 Jan. 2.

PRO Index 18766. Register of Secret Correspondence, North American and Australian Department, 1885 Jan. 2 - 1898.

The bulk of the Canadian correspondence registered in these volumes will be found in volumes 96-114, Canadian Correspondence, or in volumes 118-120, Newfoundland correspondence but a certain amount will be found in various other colony series such as C.O. 42, Canada, C.O. 188, New Brunswick or C.O. 60, Vancouver Island. In addition a few letters will be found in volumes 466-483 of C.O. 537.

The registers used for this index are the same as those described in the paper "Use of Colonial Office Colony Registers, 1850-1925" and a knowledge of the colony registers will be invaluable in using the secret registers. Some difficulty may be experienced in the use of the registers at first because the arrangement of the entries into various categories ("Despatches", "Offices", and "Individuals") is rather haphazard; however, the table provided in Appendix A should solve most of these problems.

There are, however, other problems. One is that the registers contain secret correspondence for many different colonies; a glance at their titles will indicate how broad the range was. Although

the correspondence was all entered in the same registers it was not interfiled in the same volumes; instead, separate blocks of volumes were set aside for the correspondence of various colonies. Thus most of the Canadian correspondence may be found in volumes 96-114 (the term 'Canadian' includes British Columbia, Vancouver Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island), the Newfoundland correspondence is in volumes 118-120, the Australian is in volumes 91-94 and so on. From about 1874 on one column in the register, usually the one on the extreme left, gives the name of the colony to which a letter pertained. From this one may determine which volume it will be in with little difficulty. Prior to 1874 this information must be inferred from the name of the governor in the case of "Despatches" or from the subject of the correspondence in "Offices". It also helps to know that the bulk of "Offices" correspondence entered in the secret registers prior to 1874 was filed in the Canadian volumes.

From 1850 onwards virtually all correspondence received in the Colonial Office was given a registry number from an annual series which was common to all the office. One major exception to this rule was the secret correspondence entered in these registers which was given a secret registry number from a special series and was not normally entered in the public registers. For the period 1865-1869 the secret registry number came from a continuous series but from 1870 to 1887 the series was renewed annually. From 1888 to 1898 the secret registers reverted to a continuous numbering system.

As was noted above, secret correspondence was not normally entered in the public registers. The major exception to this rule occurs in the period 1865-1866 when the secret registry system was in its infancy. Between August of 1865 and March of 1866 secret despatches were frequently registered in both the secret and public registers and received both secret and public registry numbers. Items of this type may be difficult to locate because they may have been filed either in C.O. 537 or in the colony series to which they relate. Although there is no definite rule by which to determine where such a document will be found the following rule of thumb will be of considerable help:

If the entry in the "Registry No." column of the secret register gives two numbers, for example $\frac{11907}{13}$ or $\frac{15996}{64}$, then the document has been entered in both the secret and public registers and has probably been filed in the appropriate colony series of correspondence. In this case the denominator is the public registry number and the numerator is the secret registry number.

If the entry in the secret register reads as follows
not registered — one may assume that the document was not entered in the public register and was filed in C.O. 537.

The major exception to this rule is that entries for Foreign Office correspondence never give the public registry number; however they do note when an item was not registered in the public register by giving

the secret registry number plus the notation "Not Registered". One may assume that all Foreign Office correspondence for 1865 and January to March of 1866 which is not marked "Not registered" was entered in the public register and may be found in the appropriate colony series. By about April 1866 this rather cumbersome system had been abandoned and secret correspondence was normally registered only in the secret register. Occasionally it was also entered in the public register but when this was done it was not assigned a public registry number. From mid-1866 on virtually all of the correspondence entered in the secret registers may be found in C.O. 537.

A further complication arises from the fact that a significant amount of correspondence has been withdrawn from its normal place in volumes 96-114 and placed in volumes 466-482 of C.O. 537. These volumes constitute part of a distinct subseries titled "Canada". The exact reason for this subseries existence is not clear but it seems probable that the files were withdrawn in order to prepare a number of files on special subjects. For example, the material in volume 466 consists entirely of correspondence relating to Fenian activities for the period 1866-1868. The subjects covered by the other files pulled from volumes 96-114 may be determined by consulting finding aid 651, volumes 466-482. It is not always possible to tell from the secret registers whether a paper is to be found in the regular series, that is volumes 96-114 and 118-120, or in the subsidiary series. In the case of the correspondence relating to Fenians which was placed in volume 466 a notation "N.D." was placed in the "Registry No." column of the secret register. Unfortunately this was not done with the correspondence files in volumes 467-482 and to locate these items one must check both series.

Once one has located the entry for the desired item one should note the secret registry number, the public registry number, if one is given, the author of the correspondence, the date, and the colony to which it relates. With this information and the use of a microfilm shelf list, or of finding aid 651, one may determine the volume in which it is most probable that the correspondence was filed. If, as is probable, this is one of volumes 96-114 or 118-120 one should consult the table of contents at the beginning of the volume; these give the author (or office of origin), the date and the general subject location of each item in the volume. It also indicates the relative location of each item in the volume; generally speaking the correspondence is arranged by origin (Governor's Despatches, Foreign Office, War Office, etc.) and by date within these categories. It also helps to know that the correspondence for all the British North American colonies, except Newfoundland, was interfiled chronologically in volumes 96-114. If, on having searched these volumes one fails to find the item, then recourse should be had to volumes 466-482; if even these volumes prove of no help it may be necessary to carry the search on in the public series of correspondence.

Finally it must be emphasized that C.O. 537 and its attendant registers must be used carefully; there are many irregularities

in the registers which cannot be accounted for and there are a number of letters in Volumes 96-114 and 118-120 which are not registered in either the public or secret registers. This is especially true of volume 96 which contains material dating from 1842, before the secret registry system was begun.

Colonial Office 694

Appendix A

<u>P.R.O. Index 17976</u>	Register of Secret Correspondence North American Department 1865-1869	B-1160
3 Nov. 1865 - 16 Dec. 1869	Despatches - Canada	1-8
24 Aug. 1868	Foreign Office	12
31 Aug. 1865 - 15 May 1866	Foreign Office	13-15
1865 - 8 Sept. 1868	Home Office, War Office	16-24
2 Jan. - 28 May 1866	Despatches - New Brunswick	25, 37
6 - 20 Jan. 1866	Admiralty (New Brunswick)	43
1 Oct. 1868 - 16 Nov. 1869	Home Office and others	48-51
29 May 1866 - 24 Feb. 1868	Foreign Office	59-69
10 March - 8 Sept. 1868	Foreign Office	76-82
9 April 1869	Despatches, Newfoundland	83
7 Jan. - 28 Dec. 1869	Foreign Office	88-93
<u>P.R.O. Index 17977</u>	Register of Secret Correspondence North American, Australian, African and Mediterranean Department 1870-1873	B-1160
7 Feb. 1870 - 15 April 1872	Despatches - Canada (Two despatches on San Juan Boundary from British Columbia)	2-20
1 Jan. 1870- 30 Dec. 1873	Foreign Office	21-39
25 Feb. 1870 - 27 Jan. 1870	Home Office	61
19 April 1872 - 17 Dec. 1873	Despatches - Canada and British Columbia	62-73
24 June 1870 - 26 Dec. 1873	Despatches - Other colonies including Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island	81-92
20 June 1871 - 26 Dec. 1873	Miscellaneous Offices (including, Adm., F.O., W.O., H.O. and T.O., and individuals, for all colonies including Canada)	101-105

P.R.O. Index 18765

B-1668

Register of Secret Correspondence
North American, Australian, African
and Mediterranean Department
1874-1885 Jan. 2

15 Dec. 1873 - 2 Jan. 1885

Despatches - all colonies

- 101

13 Jan. 1874 - 22 Dec. 1884

Offices, chiefly F.O. and C.O., for
all colonies

102-166

P.R.O. Index 18766

B-1668

Register of Secret Correspondence
North American and Australian
Department
1885 Jan. 2 - 1898

2 Jan. 1885 - 9 April 1898

Despatches - all colonies

1-35

10 Jan. 1885 - 11 April 1898 Offices - all colonies

40-84

MANUSCRIPT GROUP 11
1961 INVENTORY
CO 537, VOLUMES 22 TO 156

Volumes

- 22 Minutes and memoranda on the Colonial Office establishment, 1832-1872.
- 25 Defence, 1837, 1839-1841.
Memorandum, 23 December, 1837; tables of the distribution of troops, 1839-1841.
- 43 Secret service pensions, 1837-1880.
Cases of Israel Andrews for service in aid of the reciprocity negotiations, 1856; and Amable Loisel for services during the Rebellion, granted in 1839 and continued to his widow in 1880.
- 89 Case of the uncompensated loyalists, 1821.
These were persons who could not collect debts due in the United States. The background material goes back to 1785.
- 96 Despatches, 1842-1865.
Admiralty statement relating to vessels and civilian establishment on the Great Lakes, 1842; Red River and Fort Garry, 1845-1847; directions for composing differences with the United States, 1852; recommendation that Sir Allan McNab be rewarded for his services, 1856; naval defence of the North American colonies, 1861; report on a plot said to have been fostered by William H. Seward, 1861; reports on Fenian activities, 1865.
- 97-98 Fenian activities, 1866.
- 99 Despatches, 1867-1868.
Fenian activities, 1867-1868; retention of the Nova Scotia command by Major-General Hastings Doyle, 1867; acquisition of the Hudson's Bay territory, 1867; use of Lake Champlain, 1868.
- 100 Despatches, 1869.
British Columbia political affairs; Fenian activities and finances; Fenian plan to abduct Prince Arthur; Newfoundland fisheries; mission of Captain von Scheilka, a Prussian engineer; appointment of United States consular officers; forgery of Irish bank notes.
- 101 Despatches, 1870.
Annexation; Fenian activities; commission to Rupert's Land; Canada-United States relations; publication of confidential matters; Red River and Fort Garry; fisheries; transmission of address to the Queen from Nova Scotia Legislature; boundary with United States; John Hamilton Gray made a Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; passage of *Chicora* and other Canadian vessels through the Sault Ste Marie Canal; railway between Canada and British Columbia.
- 102 Despatches, 1871.
Fisheries; office of Military Secretary; knighthood for Hugh Allan; Treaty of Washington; Fenian activities; Island of San Juan and north west boundary; Canada-United States relations; ministerial crisis in Ontario; appointment of consul at Detroit; despatches to governors of British Columbia to be returned to the Colonial Office.
- 103 Despatches, 1872.
Fenian activities; Treaty of Washington; application of Staff Assistant Surgeon Kehoe for a home appointment; Colonel P. Robertson Ross, Adjutant General, and ten Deputy Adjutant Generals recommended for promotion; commutation of sentence of Louis L'Erendre; commercial treaties affecting Canadian fiscal arrangements; Canadian opinion on *Alabama* question; Joseph Howe's speech on separation from England; San Juan Island; fisheries; Canadian political situation; amnesty, Red River disturbances; militia training camps; duty on United States goods entering Canada; St. Alban's raid claim.
- 104 Despatches, 1873.
Entry of Prince Edward Island into Confederation; fisheries; Canadian Pacific Railway; Canadian political situation; New Brunswick School Act; disallowance of Oaths Bill; amnesty, Red River disturbances; A. M. Ross, Belgian consul at Toronto; Pacific scandal; Extradition Treaty with United States; abduction of Samuel Joy; Treaty of Washington; San Juan Island and water boundary; pursuit into United States of murderers of Assiniboine Indians; Mennonite immigration.

- 105 Despatches, 1874.
Appointment of six additional Senators; fisheries; Reciprocity Treaty; nomination of George Brown as Canadian Commissioner to Washington; Extradition Treaty; amnesty, Red River disturbances; Copyright Act; British Columbia and Confederation; Marine Electric Telegraphs Act; Canadian Pacific Railway; British general officer to command Canadian militia; Intercolonial Railway; commutation of sentence of Lepine for murder of Thomas Scott; Philadelphia Exhibition; Land Purchase Act, Prince Edward Island; pursuit into United States of murderers of Assiniboine Indians.
- 106 Despatches, 1875-1879.
Commutation of sentence of Lepine, 1875; banishment of Louis Riel, 1875; promotion for Colonel H. C. Fletcher, 1875; amnesty, Red River disturbances, 1875; fisheries, 1875, 1877; Copyright Bill, 1875; salary of commandant of military school, 1875; customs regulations, 1875; Merchant Shipping Bill, 1875; instruction of military school cadets, 1875; Philadelphia Exhibition, 1875; Marine Telegraph Bill, 1875; death penalty in abortion case, 1875; Reciprocity Treaty, 1875; United States Aliens Claims Bill, 1875; Telegraphs Bill, 1875; Canadian Pacific Railway, 1875, 1876, 1879; railway terminus at Halifax, 1875; apprehension of Sergeant William Crofts, a deserter, 1875; salary of administrator during absence of Governor General, 1875; Land Commission, Prince Edward Island, 1875; Fenian activities, 1876-1878; enquiries respecting Herr Trentowsky, German consul at Saint John, N.B., 1877; commercial relations with France, 1879; tariffs, 1879.
- 107 Despatches, 1880-1882.
Status of Canadian representative in London, 1880; visit of Prince Leopold, 1880; appointment of Major-General R. G. A. Luard, 1880; military force at Halifax, 1881; extradition, 1881-1882; sale of Canadian ships in France, 1881; Fenian activities, 1880-1882; passage of United States cattle through Canada, 1881; Professor Henry Youle Hind's charges against Foreign Office, 1881; Panama Canal, 1881; Canadians included in Queen's Birthday Honours, 1881; Fugitive Offenders Bill, 1881; settlement of Fortune Bay claims, 1881; administration of government during absence of Governor General, 1881; French-Canadians for employment in Egypt, 1881; salary of Sir Patrick L. Macdougall, 1882; fisheries, 1882; payment of Aspee Bay claims, 1882; reported plot to abduct Princess Louise, 1882; Lord Lorne's request for use of British man of war on Pacific coast, 1882; visit to United States by Lord Lorne, 1882; murders of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Bourke in Phoenix Park, 1882; United States military and naval affairs, 1882; transmission of reports on torpedo boats to Canadian Government, 1882.
- 108 Despatches, 1883-1885.
Detectives sent to Bermuda for protection of Princess Louise, 1883-1884; Fenian activities and schemes, 1883-1885; commercial negotiations between France and Spain, 1883; term of Governor General's administration, 1883; arrival of Lord Lansdowne, 1883; Canadian visit of Lord Coleridge, 1883; suspicions regarding the brig *Richmond*, 1883; recall of Major-General R. G. A. Luard, 1883; plot to assassinate Lord Lansdowne, 1883; reports on torpedo boats transmitted to Minister of Militia and Defence, 1883; extradition of Jarrard, 1883; arrest of Thomas and William Bracken, 1883; appointment of Major-General Frederick Middleton, 1884; Canadian raftsmen for Nile expedition, 1884; expected trouble with Indians on Skeena River, 1884; expenses of Canadian Government on behalf of British Government, 1884; Treaty of Washington, 1885; recruiting for service in Egypt, 1885; fisheries, 1885; medals for North West Rebellion and K.C.M.G. for General Middleton, 1885; photographing of criminals, 1885; Canadian Pacific Railway, 1885; removal of John Moran, alias John Kelly, from Victoria to North West Territory, 1885.
- 109 Despatches, 1886-1889.
Fisheries, 1886-1888; leave for Governor General, 1886; Behring Sea, 1886-1889; case of Robert Sproule, 1886; Lt. F. C. D. Sturdee's plan for coastal defence, 1886; survey of the St. Lawrence, 1887; Treaty of Washington, 1887; Pacific steamship service, 1887-1888; movements of S.S. *Gulnare*, 1887; Reciprocity Treaty, 1887; Manitoba railway, 1887; Victoria as port of call, 1888; Fenians, 1888; defence of Halifax, 1888; visit of Baden-Powell, 1889.
- 110 Despatches, 1890.
Reciprocity Treaty; Behring Sea; United States-Newfoundland Convention.
- 111 Despatches, 1891.
Dissolution of Canadian Parliament; Newfoundland Convention; Canada-United States relations; Behring Sea; rumoured intention of United States to annex Sandwich Islands; reciprocity negotiations.

- 112 Correspondence and papers from the Foreign Office, 16 May-31 December 1891, on Behring Sea negotiations.
- 113 Despatches, 1892-1895.
Newfoundland Convention, 1892; Canada-Newfoundland relations, 1892; Behring Sea, 1892-1894; retirement of Lord Stanley of Preston, 1893; Mackenzie Bowell asked to form government, 1894; negotiations with Newfoundland to enter Confederation, 1895; German-United States cable, 1895.
- 114 Despatches, 1896-1898.
Canadian political affairs, 1896; report on United States naval vessels stationed off the Pacific coast, 1896; Pacific cable, 1896; Copyright Conference, 1896; possible attempt on life of Joseph Chamberlain, 1896; mission of E. R. Bate to survey vessels on Great Lakes, 1897; defence works at Seymour Narrows, B.C., 1897; purchase of armaments for Quebec, Montreal and Kingston, 1897; salutes for Governor General, 1897; anti-British sentiment in France, 1897; Behring Sea, 1897; Klondike relief expedition and passage of United States troops through Canada, 1898.
- 118-120 Newfoundland, 1869-1895.
Deals principally with fisheries and the Fortune Bay claims, the Atlantic cable, and proposal for Confederation. Volume 120 contains a considerable amount of material on financial difficulties.
- 136 Extract. Despatch of 1886 refers to the Newfoundland convention.
- 137 Minutes and memoranda, 1834-1836.
Canadian affairs, 1834-1837 (pp. 1-237); the Prince Edward Island currency question, 1847-1854 (pp. 238-304); and Sir Edmund Head's memoranda on federation of the Maritime colonies, 1857 and 1860 (pp. 306-351).
- 138 Despatches on Canadian affairs as approved or disapproved by William IV, 1835-1836.
- 139 Destruction of the steamer *Caroline*, 1838.
- 140 Despatches and private correspondence of Sir Charles Bagot, 1842.
- 141-143 Despatches and private correspondence of Sir Charles Metcalfe, 1842-1845.
- 144 Intercolonial Railway, 1849-1858.
- 153 Extracts. Civil Service Uniforms, 1859-1870.
- 155 Extracts. Military, 1827-1861.
Memoranda on the state of the army in the colonies.
- 156 Extracts. Government House, 1879-1920.

C.O. 537: Supplementary

This series is supplementary to C.O. 42 and C.O. 43. In addition to Colonial Office memoranda, it contains despatches and correspondence of a confidential nature with letters from the Foreign Office and other departments. Only material relating to British North America and Newfoundland has been microfilmed. Titles have been given to approximate the type of material microfilmed. 1955 feet.

Volume

22 Minutes and memoranda on the Colonial Office establishment, 1832-1872.

25 Defence 1837, 1839-1841
Memorandum, 23 December, 1837; tables of the distribution of troops, 1839-1841.

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~~26~~ Secret service pensions, 1837-1880

Cases of Israel Andrews for service in aid of the reciprocity negotiations, 1856; Amable Loiselie for services during the rebellion, granted in 1839 and continued to his widow in 1880.

89 Case of the uncompensated loyalists, 1821

These were persons who could not collect debts due in the United States. The background material goes to 1785.

96 Canada, 1842-1865

Admiralty statement as to vessels on the Great Lakes, 15 Sept., 1842; civil establishment of the Navy; troops for Red River; directions for composing differences with the United States, 1852; recommendation that Sir Allan McNab be rewarded for his

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Report by P. Vankoughnet on his return from England, 1865 (Vol. 97, pp. 51-57).

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