

**Extract from letter from Alexander MacArthur to his brother Duncan concerning his move from the Toronto Bank to the Hudson Bay Company in Montreal. Toronto 13 July 1864** (NLS reference: Acc. 10623/2)

Transcription

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Toronto 13<sup>th</sup> July 1864.

My dear Duncan,

I wrote you last about a fort-night ago. That letter would have prepared you in some manner for the news which I have to give in this one. I said in a P.S., that I had received from Mr. Hopkins a letter offering me £192 Sterling per annum in the Hudson's Bay Company. On the day I posted my letter to you I received word by telegram from Mr. H. to meet him at the Station here on his way to the interior. I accordingly did so, driving down to a station about a mile and a half to the east of the City, and going on board the cars there conversed with him until the tram reached the City Station, where, (as I supposed he would be), he was fully engaged with other parties until the train departed for the West. Our conversation was

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over by the time the train stopped. The result of my interview with him was that I agreed to enter the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, as second officer and accountant in the Montreal Office, at a salary of £242 Sterling per annum. This will be equal at least to what I will get here for the next twelve months, and I look upon the prospects as much better there than here. The appointment has the sanction of the Resident Governor, A.G. Dallas Esquire, and only requires to be confirmed by the board and Governor in London, whose sanction I expect will be out here in about a month hence. There is little or no doubt as to their sanction, but yet it may be refused and as the former correspondence on the subject was dropped by Mr. Hopkins, at the instigation of my superiors in the Bank, I have to be careful this time in not letting them know any thing about the present

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offer I have. You will please look upon the matter in the same light until I can give you news of the confirmation from England. Mr. Hopkins particularly desired me to consider the matter as confidential, and I am breaking that tacit consent which I gave to its being treated so on my part in letting any person whatever know about it. But I have little fear of its coming over here from you. My acceptance of his offer would bind me to service in any part of the Company's dominions but I will not likely ever be sent, against my desire, from Montreal. The prospects you will naturally be anxious to know something of. Well then in the first place; the salary is as good as I will get here for next twelve months; and Mr. Hopkins, who since Sir Geo. Simpsons death has been in Charge of the Montreal Office

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thinks of leaving the Service, and there would only be one Officer above me in Montreal. I believe there is little doubt of his leaving; if not immediately at least within the next few years. The Officer who is now next to him in Montreal is in poor health, and can only stand the work for some years more, so that in the course of some few years I would fall into his place, which would be the place now occupied by Mr. Hopkins and the most influential of any under the Governor. Unless I find that this will fall to my share in a few years, I would enter business, but I have Mr. H's own opinion the Montreal Office would

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fall to me after some time. Then there is as an inducement, the change of employment, which cannot but excersize a beneficial effect upon me. Again, I do not care for my superior in the bank here. He is a peculiar man to deal with and I have a dislike for him which it is impossible to get over, and in Consequence I will be glad to get rid of him, and the institution. There are not sureties either in the Hudson's Bay Company and now, seeing that Mr Cameron is gone, I cannot but think that I might have some difficulty in regard to them by and bye, as they are not resident in the Province. The Hudson's Bay Company are to carry on a different system now to what was previously in force, and Mr. Hopkins assures me that merit and zeal, combined with perseverance

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and diligence will in future be well and quickly rewarded. Mr. Hopkins had the option of increasing his first offer, and it was on my refusal of that offer that I stated I would accept the sum I have stated to which he agreed, so that I have received my own terms. My knowledge of business and account will give me an immense advantage over the other officers of the Company, and I think I will not be slow in improving upon that advantage.

I cannot too much praise Mr. Hopkins for the kind and disinterested manner in which he has, ever since my entering the province, thought of me, and the renewal of this correspondence after Mr Camerons death is particularly striking, as it shews that he does not easily forget. Not withstanding that I have not received my just reward in the Bank I will leave it on good terms with all.

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In the meantime I say nothing about it in the Bank, as in case of an adverse decision from London it might do me harm. My salary here will likely be raised this day week or fortnight. When it is I will write mother and she must excuse me at present as our halfyearly and yearly accounts and interest etc. take up all my time. You will be good enough to give her the particulars of this letter as I daresay in strict filial duty they should first have been addressed to her. Peter is quite well and got your "Scotsman". Tell Maggie to write me.  
Yours very affectionately

Alexander

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It is too late now to think of going to the States, but if I find time, and a suitable travelling companion, I may take a trip down to New York in August. The cost, there and back, is only about £2.10 s. If I go I will take some letters of introduction to Merchants & Bankers there, and learn their views upon matters in the States, and the probability of your obtaining a situation when you come out in March next. My visit would, I think, prove of some service to you, and this would be my principal object in going there, as I would only have about a week there altogether.

Alexander McArthur

Mr. Hopkins goes home next month with his family and Mrs. Cameron accompanies them.

I will not likely leave the Bank for two months yet as some notice will be required by them.

Alexander McArthur