

the people than a House of Representatives, those members afforded great satisfaction to the Canadian people generally and as after events proved kept them from being drawn into the revolutionary vortex in which the other colonies were involved.

Those last three acts received the royal assent on 20th May, notwithstanding great opposition from the Revolutionary party whose conduct on this and other occasions merits the most severe censure as being the direct means of abetting the treason, and hostility, in the Colonies.

The House of Assembly of Massachusetts determined to push matters to extremities when they met in the beginning of the year 1774, employed themselves in passing measures directly contrary to their duty as British subjects and subversive of all lawful authority, their first act was to send a message to the Judges requiring a declaration from them whether they meant to receive their salaries from the Assembly or the Crown; to this all the Judges, with the exception of the Chief Justice truckled to the turbulence of the Assembly and consented to receive their salaries from them.

As there was no redress in the case of the Chief Justice, the Assembly resolved to impeach him for an unconstitutional proceeding, a course which should have been better applied to themselves, and if the Governor had been anything but the dolt he was, most of those gentlemen would have been on their way to England to be tried for treason and sedition before matters had reached such a ridiculous climax.

Charges in the form of impeachments was voted and sent to the Governor and Council but were sent back with a message that no authority existed for any such proceeding. The Assembly now changed the mode of attack and presented a petition praying for the removal of the Chief Justice, the Governor refused to comply and finding the Assembly still intent on pursuing an illegal course dissolved them in the month of March.

Early in May intelligence arrived of the act for closing the port of Boston and nothing could exceed the rage and consternation consequent thereon, especially when the astute commercial men of that town thought what a fine opportunity some other port would have of acquiring the commerce which once centered in their own port.

That fruitful source of all their trouble, a town meeting, was held, at which a vote was passed addressed to the inhabitants of the other Colonies entreating them to come to a joint resolution to give up all intercourse with Great Britain in the way of trade till the Boston port bill was repealed; such a course would prove the salvation of America and her liberties, but if they did not there was too much reason to fear that both would be prostrated under an odious tyranny; copies of this resolution were sent to all the other Colonies, and the people of the neighbouring towns instead of attempting to profit by their distress, offered the use

of their warehouses and wharves for the purpose of carrying on their trade.

The landing of the tea had been resisted in all the Colonies and therefore all shared in the criminalities for which Boston was about to be punished, and the desertion of the cause of their brethren would have been ungrateful and pusillanimous; the Assembly of Virginia which was sitting at the time set the example of making common cause with the Boston Rioters and passed a resolution appointing the first of June (the day on which the Boston Port Bill was to come into force) as a day of fasting, prayer, and humiliation "to implore the divine interposition to avert the heavy calamity which threatened destruction to their civil rights with the evils of a civil war and to give one heart and one mind to the people fairly to oppose every injury to American rights." Thus the Boston Puritans called for prayer and humiliation wherever they meditated a piece of more than ordinary rascality, and the Virginians, apt scholars in the country school, blaspheme the divine attributes by praying for protection in the perpetration of fraud, treachery, treason, and opposition to all constitutional law, social and legal authority, just as the Italian Brigand implores the protection of the Madonna on robbery and murder.

As this resolution was entirely outside the power of the Assembly and a clear encroachment on the Royal prerogative, the Governor at once dissolved the Assembly; but before they separated a private meeting was held in the town at which a declaration was subscribed that the punishment about to be inflicted on the inhabitants of Boston, to compel them to pay unconstitutional taxes, was in truth an attempt on all the Colonies, and would prove destructive to the rights and liberties of all unless they all intended to prevent it, and therefore they remembered that an annual congress for all the colonies to deliberate on such general measures as the united interests of America might require, and concluded with the intention that a regard for their fellow subjects, the manufacturers of Great Britain prevented them from giving further at that time.

It is very evident that those ex-members of the Assembly were guilty of sedition, and what would have been a death blow to their aspiring hopes was to treat them as common demagogues and attempt at least a prosecution of every one of them in their own counties, a single correction at this stage would have been more than sufficient to turn the whole affair into ridicule, but unfortunately the laxity of the Colonial Government and the total inability of the Governor tended more to make this incipient rebellion formidable than the number or acts of its leaders.

All the other Colonies followed the example set by Massachusetts, and the 1st of June was very generally observed as a day of fasting, humiliation and praying.

In the midst of the excitement consequent

on the intelligence received in Boston respecting the closing of the port, the new Governor General Gage arrived and was received with the usual honors, having filled the position of Commander-in-Chief for many years and being personally known in Boston, he was respected for his amiable character and manners. But popular excitement had reached such a height in the Colony as to make it impossible for any personal characteristic apart from great energy, decision and ability to calm it down, and of the latter qualifications General, Gage, was totally deficient. The Assembly met according to custom soon after his arrival, and in his speech delivered at the opening of the session he informed them that the Seat of Government would be removed to Salem on the first of June, and that was in futuro to be considered the capital of the Province. This was far from being palatable to the members, and they presented a petition to the Governor entreating him to appoint a day of general fasting and prayer, the usual Puritan cover for treason or any other rascality of a like nature. Of course he declined to comply with this very reasonable and modest request and soon afterwards adjourned the session to meet at Salem on 7th June. During this interval letters were received from the other Colonies who had warmly espoused the views of the people of Massachusetts, who were by this encouragement confirmed in their resistance to the authority of Parliament. When the Assembly met at Salem their first act was to pass a resolution declaring the expediency of a *General Congress* for all the Colonies, and appointing five of the most violent of their own members to represent them therein, voting a sum of money to defray their expenses. Justly fearing that their own dissolution would follow the moment this illegal document saw the light they followed it up by another declaration of their sentiments on the present state of affairs, recommending to their constituents what measures they wished them to pursue, lamenting their present situation, obliged to struggle against the heavy hand of power; that their petitions to the King and Parliament had been disregarded, that it was apparently the design of the British Government to destroy the free constitutions of the Colonies and to erect in their stead the systems of tyranny and arbitrary sway incompatible with liberty and totally subversive of their constitutional rights. The people of the Provinces were required to obstruct as far as in their power the execution of such evil designs, and for this purpose to give up as much as possible all intercourse with Great Britain till all their grievances should be completely redressed. This resolution, at once treasonable, seditious and entirely outside their functions as a representative Assembly, was passed on the 17th of June, the Governor being immediately informed thereof at once dissolved the Assembly, which was the last held under the charter of the Province of Massachusetts.