

and when they did supply them with these things, they have exacted three times the price for which they were sold at other markets. That they had been indolent and idle on their lands, had neglected husbandry and the cultivation of the soil, and had been of no use to the province either in husbandry, trade or fishery; but had been rather an obstruction to the King's intention in the settlement.

"They were then asked whether they could mention a single instance of service to the government. To which they were incapable of making any reply."

In answer to this paragraph—

"We are now in the same disposition—the purest and sincerest—to prove in every circumstance, fidelity to His Majesty, in the same manner as we have done, provided that His Majesty will leave us the same liberties which he has granted us."

"They were told that it was hoped they would hereafter give proofs of more sincere and pure dispositions of mind in the practice of fidelity to His Majesty, and that they would forbear to act in the manner they have done, in obstructing the settlement of the province, by assisting the Indians and French, to the distress and annoyance of many of His Majesty's subjects, and to the loss of the lives of several of the English inhabitants."

It was also stated them—

"That they, in particular, though they had acted so insincerely in every opportunity, had been left in the full enjoyment of their religion, liberty and properties, with an indulgence beyond what would have been allowed to any British subject, who could presume, as they have done, to join in the measures of another power."

And, in reference to another paragraph—

"They were then informed that a very fair opportunity now presented itself to them to manifest the reality of their obedience to the government, by immediately taking the oath of allegiance in the common form before the Council. Their reply to this proposal was, that they were not come prepared to resolve the Council on that head. They were then told that they very well knew, for these six years past, the same thing had been often proposed to them, and had been as often evaded, under various frivolous pretences; that they had often been informed that, sometime or other, it would be required of them, and must be done; and that the Council did not doubt but they knew the sentiments of the inhabitants in general, and had fully considered and determined this point with regard to themselves before now, as they had been already indulged with six years to form a resolution thereon."

"They then desired leave to retire to consult among themselves, which they were permitted to do; when, after near an hour's recess, they returned with the same answer, that they could not consent to take the oath, as prescribed, without consulting the general body; but that they were ready to take it as they had done before. To which they were answered, that His Majesty had disapproved of the manner of their taking the oath before; that it was not consistent with his honor to make any conditions; nor could the Council accept their taking the oath in any other way than as all other His Majesty's subjects were obliged by law to do, when called upon, and that it was now expected they should do so; which they, still declining, were allowed till next morning, at ten of the clock, to come to a resolution. To which time the Council then adjourned."

The Deputies, still persisting to refuse, were put under arrest on the following day.

After they had been imprisoned, they sent word that they would take the oath; but as an oath under such circumstances would not have been binding, being a *compulsory oath, in foro conscientie*, and as there was a statute of the realm, by which Roman Catholics, once refusing to take the oath of allegiance, were incapacitated from taking it thereafter; the Council refused to allow a form to be gone through, that would have been, not only technically, but substantially, a nullity. American writers have supposed that this incident referred to all the Acadians; but the only persons concerned were a few deputies from Piziquid, the inhabitants of which were ordered to send other deputies to the Council, who subsequently attended, and also refused to take the oath.

There has been a great deal of capital made out of this incident, and much injustice has been done to Governor Lawrence. It is evident that, though the oath would not have been morally or legally binding; and though, under the circumstances, he might