

"I consider it prudent, "Prevost said," to avoid any measure which can have a tendency to unite the people of the American states. While disunion prevails among them, their attempts upon these provinces will be feeble. It is therefore our duty carefully to avoid committing any act which may even by construction tend to unite the eastern and southern States unless by its perpetration, we are to derive a considerable and important advantage. But the Government of the United States, resting on public opinion for all its measures, is liable to sudden and violent changes. It becomes an essential part of our duty to watch the effect of parties on its measures and to adapt ours to the impulse given by those possessed of influence over the public mind in America."*

This conviction was strengthened no doubt by a report from Sir John Sherbrooke that as the inhabitants of Eastport in Maine had displayed a strong inclination to continue amicable relations with the province of Nova Scotia, he had considered it expedient to issue a public notice of approval in conjunction with Admiral Griffith, hoping "by this measure to avoid that species of predatory war which would be particularly injurious to these provinces. Indeed I am led to believe that a considerable spirit of conciliation towards the subjects of Great Britain, if not of resistance to the measures of their own government, is inclined to show itself in the northern and eastern States, and the Admiral informs me that in one of their ports the inhabitants have entered into a resolution that if any person shall fit out a privateer for the annoyance of the British, they will instantly burn it."†

But he was obliged to add that the military chest at Halifax was so nearly empty that it would be impossible to remit any money to Quebec.

The Committee of the Executive Council, to whom the proposal of making an immediate and unconditional declaration of martial law, had been referred, reported that as it appeared that no sufficient hostile force had yet been assembled to excite fears of an invasion of Lower Canada and the resistance to the enforcement of the militia act had terminated in such a way as to remove any serious apprehension in that respect, they considered such a measure be inexpedient and impolitic except in the event of actual invasion or insurrection.‡

The Governor General prudently concurred in this opinion and declared that since the dispersion of the unlawful assemblage at Lachine, not the least symptom of disaffection had been observed anywhere.⁴

*Prevost to Brock, July 12; Prevost to Liverpool, July 15.

†Sherbrooke to Prevost, July 6.

‡Report of the Committee of the Executive Council at Montreal, July 7.

⁴ Brenton to the Chief Justice, July 7.