

6-7 EDWARD VII., 1907

& prevent their trade, it would have a better effect & produce terms of accommodation more likely to be received than any other method that could be adopted, except that of pouring in the whole strength of G. Britain by sea & land & carrying destruction & Ruin thro' every accessible part of the Provinces. If this be so & there is any thing like truth in this observation what a melancholy thing it is to reflect in what a precarious situation this province stands by being deprived of the few Regiments we had here before these troubles broke out, so much so that the very preservation of it in the interest of the Crown depends more upon our Enemies than ourselves. we have hardly 500 men at St. Johns the most obvious pass to defend & are obliged to leave many others intirely neglected, & from what we have had occasion to see of the Canadians very little dependance is to be had upon them. They are terrified or corrupted to a degree that your Lordship can have no Idea of, & are impressed with the strangest ideas that ever entered into the minds of men. Sometimes they believe they are to be sent to Boston and nothing can persuade them that a few transports which are waiting for Provisions, are not lying in wait to receive them, at other times they are told that the People of Boston are fighting merely to prevent the return of the stamps, which they seem to think a matter of great Politeness & do not wish to see them disturbed in so good a work. Some amongst them believe they are sold to the Spaniards (whom they abominate) & that Gen. Carleton has got the money in his Pocket, in short such a mixture of ignorance fear credulity perverseness & Prejudice never yet I believe took possession of the human mind or made it more difficult to know what to do with them. in this situation it will readily occur to your Lordship that our only object at present is to keep these Ruffians from invading us in the course of the winter, & wait 'till better & more sober times for the Establishment of the Country under the new Act of Parliament. And yet something of that sort at least in a temporary way must be done and is indeed in agitation at present, in the course of which as far as it has gone it is wonderful to observe as great an instance of folly & strange infatuation amongst the Canadians as in the article of the Militia. what will be your Lordships astonishment when I tell you that an act passed for the express purpose of gratifying the Canadians & which was supposed to comprehend all that they either wished or wanted is become the first object of their discontent & dislike. English officers to command them in time of war, & English Laws to govern them in time of Peace, is the general wish. the former they know to be impossible (at least at present) & by the latter if I understand them right, they mean no Laws & no Government whatsoever—in the mean time it may be truly said that Gen. Carleton had taken an ill measure of the influence of the seigneurs & Clergy over the lower order of people whose Principle of conduct founded in fear & the sharpness of authority over them now no longer exercised, is unrestrained, & breaks out in every shape of contempt or detestation of those whom they used to behold with terror & who gave them I believe too many occasions to express it. And they on