

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 18

There is no Doubt, but the Canadians may again be reduced to that state of Deference and Obedience, which they formerly paid their ancient Government, tho' it must necessarily be the work of some time ; untill it is firmly accomplished, it will require a Military Force to support the Civil Authority ; the Noblesse, Clergy, and greater Part of the Bourgeoisie, in the Course of the present Troubles, have given Government every Assistance in their Power, and will greatly help in restoring a proper subordination,¹ without which all Regulations are vain ; but this depends still more on Your Lordship's Office, and the King's confidential Servants at Home, without whose steady concurrence, all the Efforts of a Provincial Administration, for many years, must come to nothing.

Some of the British Traders here having taken up the Idea of a Chamber of Commerce, in place of Juries, a Plan was accordingly drawn up, which is herewith inclosed ; the Militia Ordinance is to continue only for two Years by Way of Trial, and as an Essay towards training the Canadians to Obedience by Degrees, untill we have time to perfect a more solid and permanent system, if our present Tranquility continues uninterrupted, we shall be able next Session, I hope, to make a further Progress in the settlement of this extensive Province.²

With these Ordinances your Lordship will receive a Proclamation, prohibiting the Exportation of Cattle and live Stock for this Year, and of Corn, Flour, and Biscuit, untill our Victuallers arrive, and we can hear how His Majesty's Forces to the Southward, under the Command of Sir William Howe, are supplied.

¹ There are numerous references in the documents of the period, to the strong objections which the general body of the French Canadians manifested at being subjected once more to the feudal control of the noblesse. Gen. Burgoyne, in a letter to Lord Germain, May 14th, 1777, says he finds it impossible to obtain much assistance from the Canadians, and this he attributes to two causes; "I believe principally to the unpopularity of their Seigneurs, & to the poison which the Emissaries of the rebels have thrown into their minds." Q 13, p. 108. Having made further complaints on the same score to Carleton and Germain, Carleton answers him, on the 29th May, in the following manner:—"The Desertion you give me Notice of in your Letter of 26th instant does not surprise me, it has been the same here, and was no more than what I expected; if Government laid any great Stress upon Assistance from the Canadians, for carrying on the present war, it surely was not upon Information proceeding from me, Experience might have taught them, and it did not require that to convince me, these People had been governed with too loose a Rein for many years, and had imbibed too much of the American Spirit of Licentiousness and Independence administered by a numerous and turbulent Faction here, to be suddenly restored to a proper and desirable Subordination." Q 13, p. 222.

² In another letter, of July 10th, 1777, to Germain, Carleton throws further light on this subject:—"That in the Beginning, I might not have the Disobedience of great Numbers to contend with, under many Disadvantages, a small Force in Arms was demanded of the Province for this Season, and agreeable to their former Plan of Service; in Order to reconcile them by Degrees, to what under the French Government was deemed an indispensable Duty." He then refers to the more successful effort to raise an additional force by the volunteer system, and, in response to Burgoyne's request and Germain's expectation, he had ordered a Corvée of 500 men to follow the army. "Nevertheless Your Lordship will be pleased to observe, that these services are a considerable Burthen upon the People, and that after the Disuse of them for many years, it is not surprising, they should forget the Duty, to which they were bound by the Tenure of their Lands, and their original Government. Nor is it a Matter of Wonder, that after so many concurring Circumstances to destroy that Obedience, for which they formerly were remarkable, and to encourage all Kind of Disrespect to the King's Authority in this Province, that I should meet with Difficulties in restoring those ancient Usages, without either Laws, Strength in Government, or even Your Lordship's Countenance as Minister, to assist me;" Q 13, p. 333.