

the Province of Canada, issued manifestoes inciting its people to rebel, and at the moment when its rascally messengers, who ought to have been hung, knelt at the foot of the throne with the lying petition, those insurgents, under commission of their congress, were actually besieging the British troops at St. John's. History does not present so thoroughly disgraceful a page as that filled with the acts of the continental congress in 1775.

This petition was delivered to Lord Dartmouth on the 1st September and on the 4th Messrs. Penn and Leo were informed "that no answer would be given apart from the effrontery displayed in sending such a paper at all; it was designed to achieve historic fame from the fact the debates on it revived the party names of Whig and Tory (which had been dormant since the reign of Queen Anne) in the British Legislature.

It is probable that acting under the guidance of some of the astute politicians from Massachusetts Congress prepared this petition as a plausible cover for their own actions; first because they knew that with such a document the British executive would not dare to give decisive orders to the officers commanding their troops in North America; secondly that these gentlemen would not naturally wish to act on their own responsibility for what at any time they might be held personally liable; thirdly, that this would paralyze the action of the troops, enable the rebels to overcome the loyalists and to attain such positions as would leave the result of the contest at their own option; and lastly they reckoned on the opposition for giving effect, by direct attacks on the administration, to all this scheming which actually happened.

As a commentary on this treachery and an act calculated to show how thoroughly insincere those people could be, this very congress, by decreeing an embargo on provisions, actually succeeded in compelling the return of the fishing fleet from the banks of Newfoundland without the usual cargoes of fish, as supplies for the crews could not be obtained.

At this distance of time it is impossible to appreciate the feelings or account for the policy which treated a contemptible minority of the population of the British Empire with the forbearance extended to the North American rebels.

On the 26th October Parliament was opened with a speech from the throne in which his Majesty stated that the situation of affairs in North America was the occasion of his assembling both houses so early; he then declared that his revolted subjects had raised troops, assembled a naval armament, seized the public revenue, assumed legislative, executive and judicial powers which was exercised in a most despotic manner over their fellow subjects and till they had arrived at this possession of power they had endeavored to deceive and cajole the mother coun-

try by vague expressions of attachment to her and of protestations of loyalty to her sovereign, that although it was well known last session that a rebellious existed in the Province of Massachusetts the efforts of the Government had been directed to reclaim rather than subdue; the same course had been adopted with the other Colonies and although it had become necessary to employ stronger means to enforce respect for the laws and uphold the dignity of the crown, yet conciliatory measures had always preceded them; the self constituted Provincial authorities had rejected all measures of conciliation and prepared to repel force by force, it was therefore evident that the object of the insurgents was the establishment of an independent Empire; that if such an attempt succeeded the prestige of Great Britain would be destroyed, her power considerably weakened, and her commercial interests placed in jeopardy. It was therefore necessary to adopt the most decisive measures, and under this idea the naval and military establishments had been increased and that it was in contemplation to employ on this service some foreign troops which had been offered; that notwithstanding what had happened the misled should be received with tenderness and mercy whenever a sense of their error led them to return to allegiance which they had so treacherously and needlessly abandoned, and in conclusion Parliament was informed that the proper estimates for the necessary supplies would be laid before them.

In this able and moderate address the whole case was carefully reviewed without prejudicing the interests of the Colonists or laying undue claims to any prerogative or power except that strictly within the limits of the constitutional law. In answer thereto the ministry moved an address to his Majesty assuring him that both houses concurred in admitting the necessity for adopting vigorous measures in the Colonies and that they would assist him with the necessary supplies.

The address was met by violent opposition and it was moved in amendment "that a declaration should be adopted that Parliament were convinced that the means which had been adopted to allay the excitement in the Colonies had rather increased it, that consequently those means could not be properly adapted to secure the end proposed; that they were satisfied the present disturbances originated in the want of adequate information relative to the true state of the Colonies which had been the reason why obnoxious measures were also carried into execution; that Parliament would proceed to review in a most solemn manner the whole of the late proceedings in order to avoid the dreadful necessity of shedding the blood of fellow subjects and the dreadful expedient of arming Briton against Briton."

In opposition to all this fine sentiment but really factious and unreasonable attempt to

thwart the measures of the administration it was replied that the amendment misrepresented the whole case and that it was calculated to intimidate and repress the national vigor while it invigorated in a corresponding degree the spirits and councils of the insurgents from whose whole conduct it was absurd to infer that they aimed at less than a disruption of the Empire by compelling a recognition of unconditional independence.

In all their proceedings they had considered themselves as entirely separated from Great Britain and although their professions and petitions spoke of peace and moderation their actions and preparations denoted war and despised every attempt to conciliate which had been put in practice without effect and in proportion as their wishes were acceded to, they became more insolent and overbearing in their demands.

The right of taxation had been conceded yet with that they were not content but refused to contribute anything towards the expenses of the state which had so lately expended her blood and treasure in their defence all hope of accommodation was at end and only two other alternatives remained for the British nation—coercion or contempt.

The debate had occupied a whole night and the amendment of the opposition was rejected by a majority of one hundred and seventy, the number for it being one hundred and eight, against it two hundred and seventy-eight.

It appears that the introduction of foreign mercenary troops was unpopular from the first; the policy governing the measures appears to be founded on the fact that amongst British soldiers the tendency to desert would be great especially as many of the subordinates and some of the higher grades in the rebel army were filled by men who had been British officers, that sympathy would paralyze exertion and therefore for foreigners who would fight for present advantage would be more reliable troops for this particular service.

Events did not justify these premises but from what had and did appear, the general theory was correct. During the violent debates to which this event gave rise, intelligence was received that the insurgents were already soliciting foreign aid, and as the maritime powers had good reason for involving England in trouble there was every prospect that they would be successful, therefore after fierce opposition, which did no honor to the patriotism or intellect of the ministerial opponents, it was determined that the naval force for the year should be 28,000 seamen and 80 ships; the land forces to consist of 25,000 men.

In order further to embarrass ministers a motion was made in the House of Lords that Mr. Penn should be examined touching the contents of the petition, and in order to induce the ministry to comply it was stated that, being formerly Governor of Pennsylvania, he was well acquainted with the real