

Wednesday, 27th February, 1839.

SIR GEORGE ARTHUR, K. C. H. *Lieutenant Governor.*

external hostility, might render the protection of these Colonies burthensome, the assistance of the Mother Country would be withdrawn, and their loyal inhabitants left alone to support a most unequal conflict. This false and pernicious opinion has given encouragement to treason—influenced the conduct of the wavering—excited the apprehensions of the timid—and even put to a severe test the constancy of the loyal and resolute. It has turned the tide of immigration from our shores—transferred the overflowings of British capital into other channels—impaired public credit—depreciated the value of every description of property—and in a word, has been the prolific source of almost all our public calamities.

Recent events, however, have clearly demonstrated, that the fidelity of the mass of the people of this Province is not to be shaken by the severest trials. Experience has also proved, that under all circumstances you may confidently rely on the fostering care of the British Empire; and I have been directed by Her Majesty to convey to you the most positive assurances of Her continued protection and support.

At the same time, I do not wish to inspire you with a belief, which I am very far from entertaining, that the dangers with which we have been threatened are at an end. The hopes of our enemies have certainly been greatly humbled, and their schemes disconcerted, by the failure of their repeated attempts to seduce the Queen's Subjects from their allegiance, and thus to overrun the country; but all the motives in which these attempts originated—the love of plunder—an avidity to seize our fertile lands, and an impatient desire to extend republican institutions, continue to operate with unabated force, while unhappily new and deeper passions have since been superadded. That men agitated by such feelings will remain quiet, longer than they are constrained by fear, is not to be expected; and whilst I most sincerely desire conciliation, and conjure you to promote it by every honourable means, I do not hesitate to assert, on the sure ground of experience, that upon our own ability to repel and punish hostile aggression, we must henceforth chiefly depend. Among the considerations arising from this impression, I deem it advisable to invite your early and most serious attention to such amendments in our Militia Laws, as shall place this force upon the best possible footing—efficient, but not burthensome, either to the Government, or to the People.

One of my principal and most arduous duties, has been the disposal of the numerous criminals who have fallen into the hands of Justice. With respect to such of the Queen's Subjects as were concerned in the civil commotions during last winter, Her Majesty's Government have uniformly desired a merciful administration of the Law. In the punishment of the invaders of the Province, I have acted upon the same principle, and have anxiously endeavoured to confine capital punishment within the narrowest limits, which a due regard to the public welfare and security would admit. But the reiteration of unprovoked injuries, called for increased firmness in the administration of Justice, and forced upon me the painful necessity of making some severe examples.

The case of Her Majesty's Subjects who have suffered in their persons or property, claims your early attention. The wanton destruction of the Steam-boat *Sir Robert Peel*—the pillage of the farms on Pointe au Pelé Island, and the River St. Clair—the robberies at the Short Hills—the damage done at Prescott and Sandwich, with the burning of the *Thames Steamer*, form together an aggregate of extensive loss, most serious to the sufferers, and have occasioned earnest application for relief.

It gives me the greatest pleasure to inform you, that Her Majesty has been most graciously pleased to extend to the wounded Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men, of the Provincial Militia, in arms since the insurrection last winter, the same liberal provision as is granted to Her Majesty's Regular Land and Naval Forces: and to make a similar beneficent provision for the Widows of those Officers in the Provincial Corps, who may have fallen in action.

The strongly excited feelings to which the long-agitated question of the Clergy Reserves, has given rise in the Province, have sensibly impaired that social harmony, which may be classed among the first of national blessings, and have augmented the hopes of the enemies of the Country, in proportion as they have created divisions among its defenders. It is painful to reflect, that a provision, piously and munificently set apart for the maintenance of religious worship, should have become the cause of discord among professors of the same faith, and