

Enclosure 1, in No. 4.

Toronto, Thursday, 28 December 1837.

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Sir F. B. Head to
Lord Glenelg,
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This day, at 11 o'clock, his Excellency the Lieutenant-governor proceeded in state from the Government House to the Chamber of the Honourable the Legislative Council, where, being arrived and seated on the Throne, the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod was sent with a message from his Excellency to the House of Assembly, commanding their attendance. The Members present being come up accordingly, his Excellency was pleased to address the two Houses with the following

SPEECH.

Honourable Gentlemen of the Legislative Council, and Gentlemen of the House of Assembly,

I HAVE deemed it necessary to convene the Legislature of Upper Canada a few days earlier than has been customary, for the purpose of communicating with you on the present state of the province; but before I draw your attention to this important subject, I cannot refrain from condoling with you on the loss which, since our last meeting, we have sustained in the demise of his late Gracious Majesty King William the Fourth, of blessed memory, whose parental attachment to the Canadas will, I feel confident, long be remembered by its inhabitants with filial gratitude and respect.

The Throne of the British empire is now adorned by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, whose youth, education, virtues and sex, endearing her to her subjects, claim their loyal protection and support.

Notwithstanding the prosperity and happiness of this province, it is with pain I inform you, that I have suddenly been called upon to suppress a rebellion, which must have appeared to the province at large of so extraordinary a character, that it is proper I should advert to its origin and progress.

With every disinclination to revive political differences of opinion, which must exist in every free country, and which no liberal man would ever be desirous to suppress, I will merely remind you, that shortly after I arrived in this province, with instructions from his late Majesty to correct whatever grievances might exist, it unavoidably became necessary that I should constitutionally appeal to the sense of the people; I did so, and they unequivocally supported me.

A few individuals, disappointed at the result, did not scruple to declare, that the people of Upper Canada had been mistaken in their verdict, which it was asserted had been obtained by improper means.

This second subject of discussion I deemed it advisable to bring plainly before the public; it was accordingly submitted to the consideration of his late Majesty and the Imperial Government, the House of Commons and the House of Assembly of Upper Canada, and by all these tribunals the question was decided against those who, with groundless slander, had assailed their Government, and who, being rapidly deserted by their original supporters, were now reduced to a very few individuals.

Finding that against cool argument they could advance nothing, they desperately determined to try an appeal to physical strength, the avowed object of which was to force Her Majesty's subjects from their allegiance, and to subvert the British Constitution under the pretext of reform.

As soon as this conspiracy became known to me, I determined that for the public good I would allow it to work its own cure, but as I felt convinced that that cure would never be admitted to be perfect if Her Majesty's troops were required to take any part in the contest, I cheerfully approved of their leaving the province, in order that the people of Upper Canada, in a state of uncontrolled independence, might be allowed another opportunity of unequivocally demonstrating whether they would support me or desert me in the determination I had evinced, "to maintain for them the British Constitution inviolate."

Besides parting with the troops, I further resolved to place in the hands of the civil portion of the community all the muskets (about 4,000) which the Government had in store, and I accordingly delivered them over to the custody of the mayor, aldermen and commonalty of the city of Toronto.

Without either soldiers or weapons to enforce my cause, I allowed the leader of the intended insurrection a full opportunity to make his intended experiment—I freely allowed him to write what he chose—say what he chose—and do what he chose; I allowed him to assemble his deluded adherents for the purpose of drill; I even allowed them, unopposed, to assemble with loaded fire-arms, and in spite of the remonstrances which, from almost every district in the province, I received from the peaceable portion of the community, I allowed him to make deliberate preparations for revolt; for I freely confess that I did under-rate the degree of audacity and cruelty which these armed insulters of the law were prepared, as events have proved, to exhibit. It did not seem to me credible that in the bosom of this peaceful country, where every one was enjoying the protection of equal laws, and reaping the fruit of his labours almost undiminished by taxes, any number of persons could be found willing to assail the lives, plunder the property of their unoffending fellow-subjects, and to attempt the destruction of a Government from which they had received nothing but good.

The ultimate object of the conspiracy was veiled under a mysterious secrecy which I had no desire to penetrate; and relying implicitly on the people, so little did I inquire