

6-7 EDWARD VII., A. 1907

Council, the Gentlemen who wished to fix the price, did not immediately signify any desire to file their reasons of Dissent, but at a subsequent meeting when only Three of them were present, they Proposed to have their reasons of Dissent incerted in the minutes, as it would be the certain means of having the opinion of the proper Law Officers in England on the Legality of the measure, as it was of much Consequence to the good of the Province that the question should not be left in Any respect doubtful. This Proposal tho' reasonable in itself was refused under pretence of Form, tho' as yet there is no kind of Form established by the Legislative Council for its proceedings. The Paper was filed in the Council Office, it is here annexed as well as the opinion of M^r Williams,¹ the only Lawyer of any note, except the Attorney General, and I beg that Your Lordship will lay the reasons of Dissent, the Attorney General's and M^r. William's opinions before the proper Law Officers.²

However diffident I might be of my own opinion with regard to the Legality, I could entertain no doubt of the expediency of the measure. It was the only one that could without delay reduce the high Price of Provisions and check the Spirit of speculating in the necessities of Life, which is equally prejudicial to the Welfare of the People as to the service of the Prince. Notwithstanding the other measures which the Legislature adopted and which I will Afterwards mention, the exorbitant price of Wheat and Flour continued the same, or rather increased, till the certain prospect of a new & plentiful crop lowered it a little about the latter end of August, but not till after I had been under the necessity to order the Commissary General to purchase Flour at a high rate from the Ingrossers, who thus in spite of all my efforts have profited by the Public Distress

When it is considered that Great Britain is engaged in an expensive War, and which is carried on at 3000 miles distance by which the supplies of Provisions &c. are exposed to the Danger of the sea and Powerful enemies, it becomes the Duty of every good Citizen to do every thing in his Power to Diminish the Price of Provisions, as by that means Government may be enabled to establish and fill Magazines so as to obviate the Bad Consequences which might arise from the Provision Fleet from Europe for New York, & the Northern Parts of America falling into the Hands of the Enemy, or an Enemy's Fleet being the first in the River St. Lawrence. This Country is in peculiar Circumstances, whilst the Rebellion continues in the neighbouring Colonies, little or no Resources can be had from Importation, which is the natural means to Reduce the Price of any Commodity, besides, the Climate absolutely prevents it for seven months of the Year, hence occurs the great necessity of Government taking precautions to Secure

¹ Jenkin Williams was born in Wales and after coming to Canada was appointed Register in Chancery for Quebec province, 1768-1775, Clerk of the Council from 1777, Sol.-General 1791, and Judge of the King's Bench at Montreal about 1793.

² The reasons for dissent given by A. Mabane, F. Baby, and Saml. Holland will be found in Q 17-1, p. 324; The motion to enter this paper in the minutes of Council was defeated. See minutes of Leg. Council, v. D., p. 101, the opinion of Attorney General Monk in Minutes of Leg. Council, v. D., pp. 68-69, and that of Jenkin Williams in Q 17-1, p. 315. The latter was not presented in Council.