

Wednesday, 27th February, 1839.

FOURTH SESSION, THIRTEENTH PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT, 2nd VICTORIA.

But notwithstanding the reasons I had for placing confidence in this information—the secrecy observed by the conspirators—the extreme wickedness and rashness of the proposed measure—the silence of the frontier press, before so clamorous—and the quiet of the frontier towns, at one time so agitated—were well calculated to cause the numbers and resources of the conspirators to be underrated, and to induce a belief that the presumptuous project of invading Canada would not be attempted.

After a short while, however, further proof was given that a conspiracy was actually organized, and that the combination extended along the whole line of the frontier, from east to west. I thought, however, that the accounts brought to me must be exaggerated: and that the parties named as being accomplices, could never have so far compromised their characters, as to have countenanced such a scheme; and though silently proceeding to make some essential preparations for defence, I still did not entirely rely upon the statements which were at that time made to the Government.

But as the information I continued to receive became more minute, and proceeded from various quarters, I could no longer doubt that the confederacy comprised a body of many thousand persons, whose numbers and resources were daily increasing: and what constituted the most revolting and alarming feature of this odious transaction was, the positive declaration, that many persons of wealth, and not a few public functionaries in the frontier cities and towns, had intimately connected themselves with this criminal alliance.

As the crisis drew nearer, strangers, without ostensible business, and under various pretences, were discovered to be scattered through the Province. It was ascertained that constant intercourse was kept up between the lodges of conspirators in the United States, and their adherents in Canada. The hopes of the disaffected appeared suddenly to revive. The intelligence from various quarters conveyed to this Government became more definite, shewing the immediate intention of the enemy to be the destruction of the British Steam-boats, and the seizing by surprise and simultaneously, several posts within the Canadian boundaries, where the disloyal might rally around the invaders assembled in arms, and procure reinforcements and supplies from the United States, without the risk of any collision with the American Authorities. An insurrection in the Lower Province was to be the signal for hostilities all along the line.

Under these circumstances, I took decisive measures to give immediate confidence to the country, and to ensure the security of the Province: and in now meeting you, although I deeply deplore that Her Majesty's faithful Subjects have been exposed to the greatest privations and hardships, and to the severest domestic injuries, I nevertheless enjoy the satisfaction of believing, that owing to our state of preparation at every point, the loss of valuable lives has been limited, the moral character of the people of Upper Canada strikingly exhibited, and a spirit roused throughout the Province, that will long survive passing events, and greatly tend to the future strength, security, and tranquillity of the Country.

After all the preparations that were so many months in progress, and after the expenditure of such large sums of money, voluntarily contributed, as are generally given reluctantly even for national objects, the conspirators and revolutionists were so entirely overawed as to have limited their operations to one attack upon our frontier, near Prescott, and to another in the vicinity of Sandwich. Not a Subject of Her Majesty joined them after their landing; in both attempts they were signally defeated—and the result was the destruction or capture of nearly the whole of the banditti.

In alluding to these events, it is impossible for me to praise too highly the gallantry of the Militia, the fidelity and prompt services of the Indian Warriors, and the patriotism of a vast majority of the Inhabitants of this Province, who have conspicuously vied with each other in the manifestation of a devoted attachment to our Most Gracious Sovereign—of an enthusiastic affection for their Country—and of deep regard for their revered Constitution.

Our great security against dangers resulting from a combination between the disaffected in the Province, and their confederates among the population of the contiguous country, consists in our happy union with the British Empire. The main foundation of the hopes of discontented persons in this Province, and of their foreign supporters, has been a mischievous notion industriously propagated, that England would desert her transatlantic possessions in their hour of difficulty and danger—that whenever the machinations of internal traitors, or threats of