

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 18

CRAMAHÉ TO DARTMOUTH.<sup>1</sup>QUEBEC 21<sup>st</sup> Sep<sup>r</sup> 1775.

My Lord !

I am sorry to transmit to Your Lordship the disagreeable account of a disagreeable Business, some time in the Beginning of this Month, upon News of the Rebel Army approaching, General Carleton set out for Montreal in great Haste ; the 7<sup>th</sup> instant the Rebels landed in the Woods near St. John's, and were beat back to their Boats by a Party of Savages incamped at that Place ; in this Action the Savages behaved with great Spirit and Resolution, and had they remained firm to our Interests, probably the Province would have been saved for this Year, but finding the Canadians in General averse to the taking up Arms for the Defence of their Country, they withdrew, and made their Peace.

After their Defeat the Rebels retired to the Isle aux Noix, where they continued till lately, sending out some Parties, and many Emissaries, to debauch the Minds of the Canadians and Indians, in which they have proved too successfull, and for which they were too well prepared by the Cabals and Intrigues of these two last years ; We knew of their being reinforced, and very considerably, I suppose, as they appeared in Numbers near St. John's last Sunday Evening ; where or when they landed, or the Particulars since, we have but very imperfect Accounts of, all Communications with the Forts of St. John's and Chambli, being, as far as I can find, entirely cut off.

No Means have been left untried to bring the Canadian Peasantry to a Sense of their Duty, and engage them to take up arms in Defence of the Province, but all to no Purpose ; The Justice must be done to the Gentry, Clergy, and most of the Bourgeoisie, that they have shewen the greatest Zeal and Fidelity to the King's Service, and exerted their best Endeavours to reclaim their infatuated Countrymen ; some Troops, and a Ship of War or two, would in all likelihood have prevented this general Defection.

Some of the King's old Subjects have joined the Rebels, and it were to be wished all of them, inclined to that Cause, had done the same, we should be the safer for it, the Copy of an intercepted Letter from one of them is

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Archives, Q 11, p. 249. This and the succeeding letter from Chief Justice Hey give two other versions of the quite unexpected sequel to the Quebec Act. In the meantime Lord Dartmouth was fully relying upon Carleton's previous assurances of what could be expected from Quebec in support of the British interests on the continent, if only the French laws and system of government were re-established and the noblesse and clergy restored to their former ascendancy. Hence, when the crisis was precipitated at Boston, he wrote to Carleton, July 1st, 1775, saying that "the King relies upon the Loyalty & Fidelity of His Canadian Subjects for their Assistance to suppress Rebellion, and it is His Majesty's pleasure that you do, if you see no objection, immediately upon the Receipt of this Letter take the proper Steps for raising a Body of 3,000 Canadians in such form & manner as you shall judge most proper, to act as Light Infantry, either in a separate Corps, or in conjunction with His Majesty's other Troops, as shall, upon consulting Gen<sup>l</sup> Gage, be thought most expedient." Q 11, p. 152. On receiving still worse news from Gage, Dartmouth writes again to Carleton, on the 24th of July, "and it having been judged proper, upon a consideration of these Despatches that the number of Men to be raised in Canada, should be double what was first proposed, It is His Majesty's Pleasure that instead of 3,000 Men which you were authorized to raise by my Letter of the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, the number to be raised be 6,000, and I have accordingly given directions for an additional supply of Arms, Cloathing, & Accoutrements in proportion." Q 11, p. 182.