

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 18

which had perverted the Province. Therefore I ordered the Legislative Council to assemble on the 27th of January and recommended the high Price of Wheat & Flour (the first being at that time at ten Shillings per Bushel, the other at 40/. per 100 lbs for the worst of Flour) to their serious consideration.¹

A Committee consisting of Mess^{rs} Finlay, Dunn, Cuthbert Harrison, Alsop, S^t Luc, Gogy, Grant & Baby were appointed to consider and propose ways and means to reduce the high Price of Wheat & Flour. Their Report was that an Ordinance should be made to prevent the exportation of Provisions for a limited time, and that an address should be presented to me, requesting a Renewal of the Proclamation against ingrossing &c.—

This did not appear sufficient to many members of the Council, who considered that tho' the exportation had been prevented last summer, and that tho' the Proclamation, of which the Renewal was requested, had been published early in the Summer—The Price of Wheat and Flour had been gradually raised to an exorbitant highth, not from any real scarcity, but from the avarice of Ingrossers. It was therefore proposed that an Ordinance should be passed or a clause added to that for non exportation, fixing or rating for a limited time or untill the new Crop could be got in, the Price of Wheat and Flour. This was the more necessary as otherwise there would be a risk of great part of the Lands in the District of Quebec remaining unsown, as the Inhabitants could not afford to give 10/- per Bushel for Seed Wheat.

This gave occasion to much altercation and great variety of Argument, the Attorney General² was applied to for his opinion as some Members contended that the Legislative Council had under the Quebec Bill no authority to levy Taxes or impose Duties, and that fixing the Price of Wheat And Flour was Synonimous to imposing Taxes or Duties : His opinion coincided with theirs, but as it was couched in a mysterious manner as if it had been founded more upon the words in which the Question was stated than the merit of it, It was Proposed to have the sense of the Legislative Council with regard to the Legality of the measure, as if the Legislature had not the authority it was in vain to reason on the Expediency of the measure this Proposal sō necessary to the Discussion of the Measure in question and seemingly so essential to the Authority of Government, was overruled by one Voice. It was then Proposed whether the price of Wheat and Flour should be fixed by Ordinance for a limited time, and it was resolved by a Majority of one voice in the negative—Mess^{rs} Cramaché, Finl[ay], Dunn, Cuthbert, L'Veque, Collins, Pownall, Alsop, De Lery, Harrison & Grant being against fixing the price—Mess^{rs} Mabane, S^t Luc, Bellestre, Gogy, Fraser, Caldwell, S^t. Ours Longue[u]il, Baby and Holland being for it. Not willing to disturb the Proceedings of the Legislative

¹ See Minutes of Leg. Council, v. D., p. 57.

² James Monk was appointed Attorney General in 1776, to succeed Henry Kneller who had died. His opinion here referred to is given in Minutes of L.C., v. D., p. 68.