

Address of the Honorable Francis Hincks to the Reformers of Frontenac.

GENTLEMEN,

In addressing you publicly on the present occasion my first duty is to explain the circumstances which have rendered it necessary that I should do so. About ten days ago I was requested by some gentlemen, freeholders of the County, to attend a meeting of Reformers, at the village of Sydenham, on Wednesday the 7th inst., the object of which was to appoint a committee to select a Candidate to oppose Mr. Smith at the next general Election. It was stated that I could render service to the cause, by explaining the measures and the policy of the late Ministry. I cheerfully acceded to the request, on the distinct understanding that it was to be a *party meeting* of our own friends. I have long since determined to avoid public meetings open to both political parties, not that I fear discussion, but because I know by sad experience, that our opponents have no arguments but those of the bludgeon and bowie-knife. And I would most earnestly recommend you gentlemen, and our brother Reformers every where, to avoid public meeting on all occasions, and to let it be distinctly understood that the meetings of our opponents are mere party demonstrations. By keeping away from them altogether you will destroy the effect that they are intended to produce. I could not have believed it possible, had I not been present, that any gentleman would have acted with such total disregard to delicacy and propriety as your representative Mr. Smith. A rumour having been circulated that the Orangemen from Kingston intended going out to our meeting, I called on Mr. Smith to remonstrate with him on the subject, but I found him determined to attend. Mr. Thibodo then addressed a letter both to Mr. Gowan, Grand Master of the Orangemen, and to Mr. Smith, warning them that the meeting was not open to the public, but only to the supporters of the late Ministry—Mr. Thibodo also took the necessary steps to bring the meeting under the protection of the late Act of Parliament, 7 Vic. Cap. 8, which expressly recognizes the right of “particular classes of the inhabitants” to hold meetings. The legal notice was issued by two Magistrates, who described the meeting as “a Public Meeting of the supporters of the late Provincial Administration”—notwithstanding all this, I found on going out to Sydenham that the peaceable inhabitants had been deterred from attending their own meeting in consequence of the determination of the Orangemen to muster in force to put them down. As was expected, these Orangemen came out in procession from Kingston, and, I regret to say accompanied by persons connected with the government, such as the Deputy Sheriff, Deputy Inspector of Licenses, Constables, &c. Among them were the very men who had been most active at the last Sydenham riot. They were armed in various ways, in open violation of the law. They introduced themselves into the place of meeting, even into the very room where I was sitting with some of my friends, and hardly had they come in before I