

on the line of march by keeping their grain in possession were furnishing, more or less, a granary to sustain the troops of the invading force. Their stores gave an assurance of supplies on that event taking place.

The poor of the towns suffered greatly from the excessive dearness. To many bread became known but by name. It had been hoped that the harvest would improve matters, but no change was experienced; public expectation was therefore turned to the legislative council in the hope that it would interfere and give some relief. Wheat was then ten shillings a bushel, flour forty shillings a barrel, and it was hoped in some vague way that the council would act with decision.

The council met on the 27th of January, 1780. The committee, appointed to report upon the situation, recommended an ordinance forbidding the export of wheat for a further special period, and the renewal of the proclamation against engrossing. This limited restriction being considered as incapable of effecting the benefit desired, and as actually there was no scarcity, it was proposed to extend the term of non-exportation until the new crop was harvested. The proposition led to great altercation. The members opposed to this course contended that the proceeding was illegal; that the council, under the Quebec act, had no authority to levy taxes; and that arbitrarily to take steps to determine the price of flour was identical with such legislation. The matter was referred for the opinion of the attorney-general Monk.\* He coincided with this view; but his opinion was so peculiarly and vaguely worded, as to shew that it was founded more on the form in which the question was submitted to him, than in itself an abstract conclusion as to the legality of the course involved.

It was then proposed to take the views of the council on the legality of the measure. By the majority of one the decision was adverse.†

\* Monk's opinion on the subject is to be found [Can. Arch., Q. 17.1, p. 311]. That of Williams, which held that the council had the power to fix the price of wheat and flour as a matter of local police, is given [Can. Arch., Q. 17.1, p. 318].

† The ayes for its legality were: Mabane, St. Luc, Bellestre, Guty, Fraser,