

itself during the course of the Summer—This letter will necessarily be a long one, I have now been upwards of Two years in the Province and in some respect qualified to give your Lordship an account of the real state of Persons and things. It may be the means of rendering my correspondence with regard to the Civil Affairs of the Province less Prolix for the future.

I have frequently been much embarrassed and upon many occasions have been intirely prevented from carrying into execution measures which I have considered as necessary for the safety and Defence of this Province and its Frontiers from the exhausted state of the King's Magazines with regard to Provisions and from the Difficulty as well as enormous Expense of supplying the Defficiency in the Province.

It was therefore with Indignation & Regret that in March 1779, in consequence of an express from Halifax to Mess<sup>rs</sup> Drummond and Jordan, I saw a successful attempt on their part and that of several Merchants or Traders to engross the Wheat and enhance the Price of Flour.—At that time there was not the least shadow of scarcity, but in less than a Fortnight the Price of Wheat was raised from 4 shillg<sup>s</sup> or 4/6 per Bushel to 6/ and upwards. I lost no time with the advice of a Quorum of His Majestys Council to forbid the exportation of Provisions, and to issue a Proclamation against ingrossing, forestalling and regratting:<sup>1</sup> The evil was not remedied, but the Price of Wheat was by various Artifices, assisted by a Bad crop in the District of Quebec, tho' that in Montreal District was tollerable, raised early in the Winter to Ten shillings per Bushell.

It could not escape my observation that the Merchants des Côtes, who went up and down the Country, & who by purchasing small quantities of Wheat at a very high Price, engaged the Inhabitants on the River Chambly & Sorrel to keep up the remainder of their Wheat in hopes of a still greater Price, were under the influence and supported by the credit of such Merchants as were most disaffected to Government. Perhaps it is not going too far to suspect in some, worse motives than the love of gain, for a conduct, which rendered every Farmer's House in the Parishes of that part of the Country, where an Invasion if attempted during the Winter, must take place, a Magazine of Provisions for an Enemy, who from the difficulty of Transport and other local circumstances could not bring any with them.

The Magistrate[s] of Quebec & Montreal had found it very difficult to oblige the Bakers to continue the exercise of their Trade,<sup>2</sup> and still more so to procure Flour for the daily and immediate consumption of the Towns. The Poor suffered much and all Ranks of People looked up to the meeting of the Legislative Council as the time when something effectual would be done for the relief of the Poor, and to put a stop to a spirit of ingrossing

<sup>1</sup> On Nov. 7th, 1778, six of the Council were called together, and recommended the Governor to issue a proclamation prohibiting any one from exporting wheat, flour, or biscuits, without a license from the Governor, until Dec. 1st, and after that a total prohibition of export until Aug. 1st, 1779. This was approved by the Governor and the proclamation issued. See Q 16-2, p. 674; also B 78, p. 16. As this did not lower prices, the bakers were next dealt with, and a further proclamation, being the one here referred to, was issued. See also B 78, pp. 25 & 31.

<sup>2</sup> See B 78, p. 23.