

feel the trying nature of the duty they had to fulfil. We must keep this situation in view, when we undertake to estimate the zeal and ability with which Haldimand performed his onerous obligations.

I have dwelt upon the fact how impossible it was for him to learn what was happening in the southern provinces. The reports which reached him by no means tended to lessen his anxieties. They rather encouraged expectation that active operations would with little delay be undertaken against the province. In this position of danger and uncertainty he never faltered in what he held to be the true performance of his duty; undeterred by the limited support accorded to him in London; by the opposition he received in the Quebec council; by the personal unpopularity which many of his acts called forth, and by the more painful feeling that the bulk of the French Canadian population had become alienated from British rule, under which they had lived so prosperously. He exerted himself with wisdom and determination to assure the welfare of the whole community, and, while guarding the province against invasion, he strove, as far as in him lay, to protect every interest.

The facts which establish the views I am expressing are incontrovertible. Nevertheless, the character of Haldimand has been persistently assailed. He has been represented as in no way recognizing the principles of constitutional government, and, as a ruler, naturally harsh and austere, who, from an unrestrained love of arbitrary power, was ready to persecute on the slightest provocation. The vindication of his government is completely established by the records in which his acts are narrated. It was fortunate for the tranquillity of the province that a man of his well regulated and undemonstrative firmness was placed in the position he held. He did not magnify the difficulties with which he had to contend, but met them calmly and resolutely with unfailing judgment. However severely his acts may be judged, not a single one calls for reprobation as even inexpedient; and his personal conduct during the trying times of his government remains

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