

PROCLAMATION

BY WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE,

Chairman pro. tem. of the Provincial Government of the State of Upper Canada.

INHABITANTS OF UPPER CANADA!

For nearly fifty years has our country languished under the blighting influence of military despots, strangers from Europe, ruling us, not according to laws of our choice, but by the capricious dictates of their arbitrary power.

They have taxed us at their pleasure, robbed our exchequer, and carried off the proceeds to other lands—they have bribed and corrupted ministers of the Gospel, with the wealth raised by our industry—they have, in place of religious liberty, given rectories and clergy reserves to a foreign priesthood, with spiritual power dangerous to our peace as a people—they have bestowed millions of our lands on a company of Europeans for a nominal consideration, and left them to fleece and impoverish our country—they have spurned our petitions, involved us in their wars, excited feelings of national and sectional animosity in counties, townships and neighbourhoods, and ruled us, as Ireland has been ruled, to the advantage of persons in other lands, and to the prostration of our energies as a people.

We are wearied of these oppressions, and resolved to throw off the yoke. Rise, Canadians, rise as one man, and the glorious object of our wishes is accomplished.

Our intentions have been clearly stated to the world in the Declaration of Independence, adopted at Toronto on the 31st of July last, printed in the Constitution, Correspondent and Advocate, and the Liberal, which important paper was drawn by Dr. John Rolph and myself, signed by the Central Committee, received the sanction of a large majority of the people of the Province, west of Port Hope and Cobourg, and is well known to be in accordance with the feelings and sentiments of nine tenths of the people of this state.

We have planted the Standard of Liberty in Canada, for the attainment of the following objects:

Perpetual Peace, founded on a government of equal rights to all, secured by a written constitution, sanctioned by yourselves in a convention to be called as early as circumstances will permit.

Civil and Religious Liberty, in its fullest extent, that in all laws made, or to be made, every person be bound alike—neither shall any tenure, estate, charter, birth, or place, confer any exemption from the ordinary course of legal proceedings and responsibilities whereunto others are subjected.

The abolition of hereditary honours, of the laws of entail and primogeniture, and of those of pensioners who devour our substance.

A Legislature composed of a Senate and Assembly chosen by the people.

An Executive to be composed of a Governor and other officers elected by the public voice.

A Judiciary to be chosen by the Governor and Senate, and composed of the most learned, honourable, and trustworthy of our citizens. The laws to be rendered cheap and expeditious.

A free trial by Jury—Sheriffs chosen by you, and not to hold office, as now, at the pleasure of our tyrants. The freedom of the Press. Alas for it, now! The free presses in the Canadas are trampled down by the hand of arbitrary power.

The vote by ballot—free and peaceful township elections.

The people to elect their court of request commissioners and justices of the peace—and also their militia officers, in all cases whatsoever.

Freedom of Trade—every man to be allowed to buy at the cheapest market, and sell at the dearest.

No man to be compelled to give military service, unless it be his choice.

Ample funds to be reserved from the vast natural resources of our country to secure the blessings of Education to every citizen.

A frugal and economical government, in order that the people may be prosperous and free from difficulty.

An end forever to the wearisome prayers, supplications and mockeries attendant upon our connexion with the Lordlings of the Colonial Office, Downing St. London.

The opening of the St. Lawrence to the trade of the world, so that the largest ships might pass up to Lake Superior, and the distribution of the wild lands of the country to the industry, capital, skill, and enterprise of worthy men of all nations.

For the attainment of these important objects, the patriots now in arms under the standard of Liberty, on NAVY ISLAND, U. C. have established a Provisional Government of which the members are as follows, (with two other distinguished gentlemen, whose names there are powerful reasons for withholding from public view,) viz:

WILLIAM L. MACKENZIE, Chairman, Pro Tem.

NELSON GORHAM,
SAMUEL LOUNT,
SILAS FLETCHER,
JESSE LLOYD,
THOMAS DARLING,

ADAM GRAHAM,
JOHN HAWK,
JACOB RYMALL,
WILLIAM H. DOYLE,
A. G. W. G. VAN EGMOND,

CHARLES DUNCOMBE.

We have procured the important aid of Gen. Van Rensselaer of Albany, of Colonel Sutherland, Colonel Van Egmond, and other military men of experience; and the citizens of Buffalo, to their eternal honour be it ever remembered, have proved to us the enduring principles of the revolution of 1776, by supplying us with provisions, money, arms ammunition, artillery and volunteers; and vast numbers are floating to the standard under which, heaven willing, emancipation will be speedily won for a new and gallant nation, hitherto held in Egyptian thraldom by the aristocracy of England.

BEAVE CANADIANS! Hasten to join that standard, and to make common cause with your fellow citizens now in arms in the Home, London and Western Districts. The opportunity of the absence of the hired red coats of Europe is favourable to our emancipation. And short sighted is that man who does not now see that although his apathy may protract the contest, it must end in INDEPENDENCE, freedom from European thraldom for ever!

Until Independence is won, trade and industry will be dormant, houses and lands will be un-

saleable, merchants will be embarrassed, and farmers and mechanics harassed and troubled; that point once gained, the prospect is fair and cheering, a long day of prosperity may be ours.

The reverses in the Home District were owing, 1st, to accident, which revealed our design to our tyrants, and prevented a surprise, and 2dly, to the want of artillery. 3500 men came and went, but we had not arms for one in twelve of them, nor could we procure them in the country.

Three hundred acres of the best of the public lands will be freely bestowed upon any volunteer, who shall assist personally in bringing to a conclusion the glorious struggle in which our youthful country is now engaged against the enemies of freedom all the world over.

Ten millions of these lands, fair and fertile, will, I trust, be speedily at our disposal, with the other vast resources of a country more extensive and rich in natural treasures than the United Kingdom or Old France.

Citizens! Soldiers of Liberty! Friends of Equal Rights, let no man suffer in his property, person or estate—let us pass through Canada, not to retaliate on others for our estates ravaged, our friends in dungeons, our homes burnt, our wheat and baras burnt, and our horses and cattle carried off; but let us show the praiseworthy example of protecting the houses, the homes, and the families of those who are in arms against their country and against the liberties of this continent. We will disclaim and severely punish all aggressions upon private property, and consider those as our enemies who may burn or destroy the smallest hut in Canada, unless necessity compel any one to do so in any cause for self defence.

Whereas, at a time when the King and Parliament of Great Britain had solemnly agreed to redress the grievances of the people, Sir Francis Bond Head was sent out to this country with promises of conciliation and justice—and whereas, the said Head hath violated his oath of office as a governor, trampled upon every vestige of our rights and privileges, bribed and corrupted the local legislature, interfered with the freedom of elections, intimidated the freeholders, declared our country not entitled to the blessings of British freedom, prostrated openly the right of trial by jury, placed in office the most obsequious, treacherous and unworthy, of our population—and sought to rule Upper Canada by the mere force of his arbitrary power, imprisoned Dr. Morrison, Mr. Parker, and many others of our most respected citizens, banishing in the most cruel manner the highly respected speaker of our late House of Assembly, the Honorable Mr. Bidwell, and causing the expatriation of that universally beloved and well tried eminent patriot, Dr. John Rolph, because they had made common cause with our injured people, and setting a vast price on the heads of several, as if they were guilty persons—for which crimes and misdemeanors he is deserving of being put upon his trial before the country—I do therefore hereby offer a reward of FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS for his apprehension, so that he may be dealt with as may appertain to justice.

In Lower Canada, divine providence has blessed the arms of the Sons of Liberty—a whole people are there manfully struggling for that freedom without which property is but a phantom, and life scarce worth having a gift of. General Girard is at the head of 15,000 determined democrats.

The friends of freedom in Upper Canada, have continued to act in strong and regular concert with Mr. Papineau and the Lower Canada Patriots—and it is a pleasing reflection that between us and the ocean a population of 600,000 souls are now in arms, resolved to be free!

The tidings that worthy patriots are in arms is spreading through the Union, and the men who were oppressed in England, Ireland, Scotland and the continent are flocking to our standard.

We must be successful!

I had the honor to address nearly 3,000 of the citizens of Buffalo, two days ago, in the Theatre. The friendship and sympathy they expressed is honorable to the great and flourishing republic.

I am personally authorised to make known to you that from the moment that Sir Francis Head declined to state in writing the objects he had in view, in sending a flag of truce to our camp in Toronto, the message once declined, our esteemed fellow citizen Dr. John Rolph openly announced his concurrence in our measures, and now decidedly approves of the stand we are taking in behalf of our beloved country, which will never more be his until it be free and independent.

CANADIANS! my confidence in you is as strong and powerful, in this our day of trial and try, as when, many years ago, in the zeal and ardour of youth, I appeared among humble advocate of your rights and liberties. I need not remind you of the sufferings and persecutions I have endured for your sakes—the losses I have sustained—the risks I have taken—I ten lives I would cheerfully give them up to procure freedom to the country of my early and disinterested choice. Let us act together; and warmed by the hope of a patriotic course, be able to repeat in the language so often happily quoted by Ireland, lions,

The nations are fallen and thou still art young,
Thy sun is but rising when others have set;
And tho' Slavery's cloud o'er thy morning hath hung,
The full tide of Freedom shall beam round thee yet.

Militia-men of 1812! Will ye again rally round the standard of our tyrants! believe it possible. Upper Canada Loyalists, what has been the recompense and devoted attachment to England's Aristocracy? Obloquy, and contempt!

Verily we have learnt in the school of experience, and are prepared to the past. Compare the great and flourishing nation of the United States, a distracted land, and think what we also might have been, as brave, if we had then, Sir Francis Head's defence to the miserable serfs of the last hour of your lives the proud remembrance will be yours—liveries of our country."

Navy Island, December, 18, 1837.

This is the only known Surviving Proclamation
of William Lyon Mackenzie in his ill-fated 1837 Rebellion.
His Patriots seized, hanged and banished, he fled to
Navy Island, above Niagara Falls and issued this
last Bid for Canada's Freedom. It is worthy of
a Frame and Honored Place on Every Canadian Wall.
(You will never see another)

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