# Address of the Sons of Liberty of Montreal to the Young Men of the North American Colonies.

Brothers:-

When unusual circumstances in the affairs of a country make it necessary for men to form themselves into Bodies, it appears a proper respect for the opinions of mankind demands from them an explicit declaration of the causes which have induced them to combine, and of the principles which they intend to advance.

We consider, that next to the principle of acting for himself, man possesses, from the very foundation of society, that of uniting his energies with those of his fellow citizens for all purposes of mutual interest, or defence, and that, therefore, the right of association is as sacred and inalienable as the right of personal liberty. We hold that governments are instituted for the benefit, and can only exist justly by the consent of the governed, and that there may be artificial changes in human affairs, that a government of choice is an inherent right of the people. It cannot be alienated, and consequently may always be asserted and exercised. All governments being instituted for the benefit of a whole people, and not for the honor or profit of any individual, all pretentions of Divine or absolute authority to rule, claimed by or for any men or set of men, are blasphemous and absurd, alike monstrous when vindicated

and degrading when admitted. The authority of a parent state over a colony can exist only during the pleasure of the colonists. For the country being established and settled by them, belongs to them by right, and may be separated from all foreign connection, whenever the inconveniences resulting from an Executive power, residing abroad, ceasing to harmonise with a local Legislature, makes such a step necessary to the inhabitants for the protection of life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness.

The Young Mens association of Montreal, adopting the title of "The Sons of Liberty", is not intended to be a private cabal, or secret junto, but an active Democratic body comprising all young men in the city, patriotically alive to the interests of the country, whatever may be their creed, country, & the nation of their ancestors.

The causes which demand, at the present juncture, from all, but more especially from young men, coming forward into active life, a heroic devotion to their country's cause, are manifold and imposing.

At the cession of this Province in 1763 with a view to consolidate British power on the banks of the St. Lawrence, certain rights of property, religion & government were guaranteed to the Canadians, and afterwards more fully confirmed in 1774, when the approaching noble revolt of the American States rendered concessions to the new subjects of the empire extremely politic. The brilliant success of those States, and the overwhelming movement of revolution in France having made England tremble for the safety of her remaining American

possessions, she passed in 1791, the Act called the "Constitutional Act" which divided Upper from Lower Canada, & established a Representative Assembly in each. But reconciliation was again rendered necessary by the declaration of war with the United States. These times of danger have been the ~~seemin~~ seasons of seeming justice to Canada, while the intervening succeeding periods furnish but one long history of repeated injuries, atrocities, usurpations and wrongs. Thus we have seen British rulers, with a cowardice and perfidy unworthy of the representatives of a powerful nation, continue to allure the people of Canada by deceptive promises in times of pressing necessity, and when the emergency had passed, resorting to every unwarrantable & petient to defer or avoid the fulfilment of their solemn engagements.

After seventy-seven years of British rule we behold our country miserable, compared with the prosperous Republics who wisely threw off monarchy. We feel that our population is equal in capacity to theirs. We see emigrants from beyond seas, of the same race, wretched if they remain here, happy if they join the great Democratic family and we have daily evidence that our illfortunes are attributable to the destructive action of a colonial government. A pretended protection has withered our energies. It has preserved all that was bad in our ancient institutions, or unfitted to the present state of

poetry, it was hailed the free operation of all that was good, and hammered by reviling every measure of reformation and elevation. Whilst every sound & thoughtful mind in the immense territory of our neighbors is happily governed by its own free Democracy, which is hereby trained from its youth upwards to political knowledge, self reliance, and energetic action, we are saddened and confounded by a government in which the people have no voice, where influence leads to the corruption of public virtue, the repression of enlightenise, and the annihilation of every generous impulse we all feel as patriotism for the advancement of the country's greatness.

Hosts of officers, appointed without consent of the people, to whom they are too frequently obnoxious and never responsible, and holding commissions during the pleasure of irresponsible Executive, are placed in authority over us with salaries enormously disproportioned both to our means and to their services, whereby office is made a means of family or personal aggrandizement instead of being suited to the resources & wants of the people.

The trial by jury, which we have been taught to look upon as the palladium of our liberties is made a vain illusion & mockery of justice, inasmuch as Sheriffs & creatures of the Executive upon whom they depend daily for a commission in an office in which vast emoluments are attached, can select & summon such Juros as they please, and thereby

become themselves the strikers in that progressive institution against the people by their oppressors.

Immense funds bestowed by a provident government or by generous individuals, on the cause of Science for purposes of education, have been diverted from this commendable object, and made an instrument of aggrandizement for the reward of useless or unscrupulous officials, while the children of the province, deprived of the funds provided for their instruction, have grown up without the benefit of school education, to be overtaken with want of learning.

Our public lands, defended during war by the bravery of the habitants of the country, rendered valuable by the toil that has opened roads, & restored settlements back to the wilderness, have been sold or bestowed, in contempt of our remonstrances, to a company of speculators living beyond the seas, or parceled out among official parasites, who have grown into lines of interest, combined as a faction, to support a corrupt government inimical to the people, & opposed to the wishes of the people. Whilst our fathers, our children & our children's children are refused, or unable to procure, wild lands on which to settle.

Laws affecting the tenure of lands, inapplicable to the condition of the country, and injurious in their operation have been forced upon us by a foreign

Portsmouth. We left the cedar & pine
Grants & pine lands in Minnesota, same name.
Took a course of twelve miles from Grand Portage
Lake Superior. We struck the Pigeon River
Canal Portage. The portage is two miles
long. Took train up the Pigeon River
to the Grand Portage Indian Reservation
Pigeon River is the boundary line between
Canada & the United States. The Indians
have a very large reservation
The Government has built a large
Indian Church & school house
& the Indians are very industrious
farmers. They have a good
crop of potatoes, oats, corn & hay
Grand Portage Bay is a very
pretty place. Large Indian village
& Church. Indians are very
friendly. Saw Frank Gi Mo Indian chief
Left Grand Portage in the Canada
Indian Reservation for Fort William
Canada. Fort William is a very
pretty place. Large Indian village
& Church. Indians are very
industrious farmers. They have
good crop of potatoes, oats, corn & hay
Left Fort William for Port Arthur
Port Arthur is a very pretty place
Large Indian village & Church
Indians are very industrious
farmers. They have good crop
of potatoes, oats, corn & hay
Port Arthur is a very pretty place
Large Indian village & Church
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Governor remains unchanged, to protect the accumulation of official salaries that are connected with every public department: A Governor alike ignorant with his predecessors, & who has become, like each of them, an official partisan, conducts the Government for the benefit of the few, either unmindful of, or determinedly opposed to the prosperity of the many.

Our grievances have been faithfully & repeatedly urged upon the King & Parliament of the United Kingdom alone by the resolutions of primary assemblies by our Representatives in Parliament assembled, & by the humble petitions of the whole people. We have remonstrated with all the power of argument, & all the moral force of truth. No remedies have been extended & at last, when the tyranny of those entrusted with power in the province has increased insufferably from continued impunity, advantage is taken of an ungenerous European strait, of a time of general peace, to coerce us into a connivance & approval of our own debasement, by a threat to seize upon our public Revenues, with a hand of force, in defiance of natural right, & of every principle of law, policy or justice.

The present degraded position of our country, being the result of three quarters of a century of warm devotion to British connection, & of mistaken reliance upon British honor.

-it would be slavish & criminal to confine our resistance hereafter to simple remonstrance. The wicked designs of British authorities have severed all ties of sympathy for an unfeeling mother country. A separation has commenced between parties, which will never be reunited, but which will go on increasing. Till one of these sudden those unforeseen events that attend the march of time afford us a fit opportunity for assuming our rank among the independent and sovereign states of America. Two splendid opportunities have been lost. Let us not be unprepared for the third.

A glorious destiny awaits the young men of these colonies. Our fathers have passed a long life of vexation, a daily struggle against every degree of despotism. As they pass from the world they leave an inheritance improved by their patriotic sacrifices. To us they commit the noble duty of carrying on their grand designs, which, in our day, must disfranchise our beloved country from all human authority except that of the bold democracy residing within its bosom.

With such an inspiring prospect spread before us, with such a high responsibility resting upon us, so it becomes our imperative duty, laying aside the gay frivolities of youth, to take ourselves to the serious consideration of our country's politics, her wants & her resources, to increase her wealth by encouraging her manufactures or

product: & to preserve her strength by discouraging the consumption of articles brought from beyond seas — but, above all, to accustom ourselves to constant sacrifices, & so to curtail our personal expenses, by avoiding excess or superfluity, that we may treasure means for supporting each other in the struggle for life & liberty in which we must sooner or later be engaged, when the day of glory arrives that will see us emerge from a long dark bondage to the splendor of light & freedom.

Wherefore, we the officers & Managing Committee of the Association of the Sons of Liberty of Montreal, in our own names, & on behalf of those we represent, pledge ourselves to our abused country, & to each other that we will devote all our energies, & be prepared to act as circumstances may demand, in order to procure for this Province a Reformed system of government, based upon the elective ~~system~~ principle, a responsible Executive; the control by the Representative branch of the Legislature, of all public revenues, from whatever source derived; the repeal of all Laws & Charters passed by foreign authority, encroaching upon the rights of people & their Representatives, especially those relating to the property & tenures of land, whether belonging to the public or to individuals; an improved system of selling public lands, whereby those who wish to become actual settlers thereon may be able to do so at a small expense; the

abolition of pluralities, & irresponsibility of office, & an equality before the law for all classes, without distinction of origin, language or religion; & depending on God & on our own right, we hereby invite the young men of these provinces to form associations in their several localities, for the attainment of good, cheap, responsible government; & for the security, defence & extension of our common liberties.

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