

London and its Vicinity
1837-38

Fred Landon

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Title: London and its Vicinity 1837-38

Date of first publication: 1927

Author: Fred Landon (1880-1969)

Date first posted: 19th December, 2024

Date last updated: 19th December, 2024

Faded Page eBook #20241216

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LONDON AND ITS VICINITY 1837-38

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Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records,
Volume XXIV, 1927

I.

To the mind of an Ontario citizen the words "Rebellion of 1837" denote certain military events which took place in December of that year in the vicinity of Toronto and in which William Lyon Mackenzie was the chief figure. The uprising is usually thought of as due in part to a faulty system of government and in part to the agitation of a group of Reformers. These Reformers, together with the members of the so-called Family Compact and the absurd figure of the governor, Sir Francis Bond Head, supply the personal element.

There has sometimes been some reticence on the part of historians in dealing with the period of the Rebellion. To express too marked admiration for Mackenzie was likely to create a suspicion of tainted loyalty. On the other hand there has been a tendency to withhold from the Family Compact credit for positive achievements and for a considerable amount of ability. Apart from either of these viewpoints there has been the feeling that the events of 1837 form an ugly chapter of our history from which the curtain should be drawn away no more than is necessary.

All students of history recognize, however, that it is in such episodes of a country's history that great under-lying movements make themselves manifest, and when we consider the striking contrast between the thirties and the forties in Upper Canada the events of 1837 challenge our attention as a possible point of departure out of one era into another. Here we may see the culmination of a process of change long under way just as sixty years before there had come in the American colonies along the Atlantic seaboard the culmination of a long drawn out change. Samuel Adams spoke of the American Revolution as a change in men's minds, and thought of it as something accomplished before ever a shot was fired. From that standpoint the conflict of arms after 1774 was the bursting asunder of an order which refused to adapt itself to new conditions. It is a repetition of this on a smaller scale that we find in 1837 in Upper Canada.

When we examine the causes of unrest in Upper Canada we find that they are exceedingly complex. The province in the first forty years of the century was really a frontier community, quite as much so in some respects as the more western states of the republic in the same period. It stood indeed in the very path of much of that great westward movement of peoples which took place in the quarter century after the War of 1812 and many of those whose intended destination was the Mississippi valley went no farther after viewing the fertile lands of the British province. Among the problems of a pioneer community those of land are usually most prominent and it was so in Upper Canada—questions of land grants, clergy reserves, of taxation and the holding of great tracts of unimproved lands by friends of the administration. It was in relation to his land that the individual settler most frequently found a real grievance against the government and the accumulation of such grievances was one of the forces making for the Rebellion. Pioneer conditions were bound to have their effect upon the mental outlook of the settlers. Restless, impatient, with old associations broken and by this very fact forced to be self-governing with respect to most of the acts of his life, the pioneer was more inclined to strike down than to reason with opposition.

The influence upon Upper Canada of the great changes taking place in the United States in the thirties deserves more attention than it has yet received. It was the period of Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren, the era of “Jacksonian Democracy”, a time when the eager and impetuous spirit of the west was in conflict with the accepted way of doing things. It was a period of industrial change, great material advance and of ferment in men’s minds. The westward movement of population, stimulated by the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, was being speeded up anew by the coming of railroads, of which 3000 miles had been completed by 1840. The westward movement brought modifications of the land policy. The old method of selling great tracts was changed so that an individual could take up as little as 80 acres at the low price of \$1.25 an acre. All this was contemporaneous with the extension of manhood suffrage, the spread of education and a general intellectual awakening. Philanthropy and reform were active on every hand. It was the period of the American Anti-Slavery Society, of William Lloyd Garrison and *The Liberator*. Upper Canada could not but be affected by these great movements taking place almost at its door, particularly when it had within its bounds large numbers of former American citizens to whom the affairs of the republic continued to be of interest and concern.

Of equal importance to those of British birth were the changes that were taking place in the home land. The passing of the Reform Bill was a great step in the democratization of Britain, for even though the changes it brought were

limited the moral effect was very great. It was accomplished by methods that at times seemed almost revolutionary and it was followed by a whole series of reforms and by the rise of yet other movements of a democratic character, Owenite socialism and Chartism among them. In England, as in America, there was an intellectual awakening. We know that some of the leaders of British radicalism were in touch with the Reform leaders in Canada and the general influence of the movements which they represented must have been felt in the colony.

What Upper Canada wanted in 1837 and what it secured in the next decade was something close to the democracy which existed in the United States and to that which was rapidly being brought about in Britain. Radical ideas had just as much right to exist in Upper Canada as in Britain or the United States, and they were just as sure to develop, given proper conditions, as in those other lands. Moreover, they were just as certain to be opposed by those who feared change and we might apply to Upper Canada's crisis the words used by Prof. Andrews with respect to the American Revolution: "A government representative of a privileged social and political order that took existing conditions as a matter of course, setting nature at defiance and depending solely on art, was bound sooner or later to come into conflict with a people whose life in America was in closest touch with nature and characterized by growth and change with constant readjustments."^[1]

We shall better understand the events of 1837 when we have more carefully investigated the influences mentioned above, and when we have better knowledge of the economic and social background of this period in Upper Canada. Undoubtedly much of the political agitation in the Assembly was very superficial and even to-day it attracts less attention as the actors tend to lose personal interest for us. There is another method of approach which will also aid our understanding of the period of 1837 and that is by the investigation of the unrest in separate communities. Why was there such marked unrest in certain districts in 1837 and comparatively little unrest in others? To what extent was Mackenzie's influence felt outside of the Home District? Who were the leaders of the radical party in these other districts and against whom were their attacks directed? In the belief that such investigation will aid the general understanding of the wider problem the writer presents a statement of conditions in the village of London and its vicinity in the period of Mackenzie's outbreak, accompanying this by a selection of illustrative documentary material from the Canadian Archives.

The first point to be noted, in connecting London with the events of 1837, is its relation to the neighbouring village of St. Thomas and to the townships adjacent. The population being still relatively small, these various communities were by that very fact bound together to meet their needs. There was not that completeness of community life which we find to-day and there was constant intercourse between the separate groups of people. As far as London was concerned, this was increased by the fact that it was, from its very beginning, the judicial centre of the London District.

The political character of London Village was influenced by the presence of a group of officials, Tory in politics and in temperament, who viewed radical opinions askance and who would not hesitate to use stern measures to preserve things as they had been. Such a community is, of course, the most likely of all places for radicalism to develop.

The village of St. Thomas, while it also had its Tory element, was somewhat more tolerant of reform opinion. During 1836-37 John Talbot published violent tirades against the administration and against the local Tories without interference and it was a group of London Tory officials and not his own fellow-villagers who tried to arrest him in December, 1837, when news came of Mackenzie's rising at York.

To the southwest of London, in the Talbot settlement, there was unrest from the very beginning of the thirties. As early as 1832 Col. Talbot himself perceived that all was not well. A "rot" had got in among his hand-picked settlers. He tried to combat it by denunciation, by scolding and by inciting his own adherents to violence against those holding reform opinions, but it would not down.^[2] In his opinion, the "Damned cold water drinking societies", as he termed the temperance organizations, were one source of unrest.^[3]

It might be argued that Colonel Talbot was himself one of the causes of unrest. He was a part of the system of government; he exercised wide powers under government (and sometimes in defiance of government) and the authority which he assumed, little checked by regulation from York, brought him into conflict with many of the pioneer settlers and stirred hatreds which have been transmitted to the second and third generation. His policy of withholding valuable lands near Lake Erie from settlement was a breach of the terms under which those lands first came into his hands. He must be given due credit for his zeal in pressing upon the government the necessity of building roads, though none benefited more directly from those roads than himself. He did not hesitate to act entirely counter to official instructions, in road-building or in other matters, when he pleased, and too often his relations with the settlers were determined by a whim. There is no evidence that he ever actually

brought one settler into the district. They would doubtless have come in as great numbers if he had never existed. He had but to sit at Port Talbot and with pencil mark the names of newcomers upon his map. When he gave them 50 acres he gave himself three times that amount for his trouble and was able to close his active career with upwards of 70,000 acres in his hands.

It is, of course, improper to judge Colonel Talbot's actions by our present day methods and standards. There were others who received liberal land grants and did infinitely less for the province than he. His interest in the settlement which grew up about him was in many ways sincere and deep. His paternal feelings were exercised towards a community instead of a family. There are little acts of kindness recorded and in general we may say of him that his character was a mixture of good and bad. He was probably much like his own class in society in the Britain of his day, and by late eighteenth century standards rather than by twentieth century standards should he be judged.

Though Colonel Talbot himself probably had a distinct dislike for Americans, there was a considerable sprinkling of them through the London District, and even some in the area over which he exercised closest supervision. The majority of these people were content to mind their own business, and we find a few who were almost as Tory as the Governor himself. It was their indirect rather than their direct influence which makes them in any degree a factor in the unrest before 1837. That they were suspected by the official group is no proof that they were, except in isolated instances, trouble-makers.

The unrest throughout the district in the neighbourhood of London had crystallized by the year 1836. Party politics had become exceedingly bitter and in the election of that year there was a certain amount of violence in the village of London. We have this picturesque description of events preserved in a contemporary diary:

“The magistrates ceased to do their duty and a general riot ensued every day that the polls were open. I attended the election on Saturday, the last day, which is as fresh in my memory as yesterday. A procession headed by a negro with a national standard, waving it, and at the same time shouting an offer of five pounds for any Liberal heads. This procession turned out to be an Orange mob who commenced beating a number of Liberals who were taken up for dead. Two hours before the polls closed Member Parke had to be rescued by a guard and marched to a place of safety and Member Moore had to make his escape out of town for home. The Liberal poll was secured by two clerks who made their escape into the jail

for protection and were locked up.”^[4]

The diary of Rev. William Proudfoot, Presbyterian minister in London in the thirties, also contains a number of references to this period of which the following are of interest:^[5]

January 4, 1836, C. Waugh came down with me this morning and we went together into the village to attend the Town Meeting. A hubbub, I never was at one before and my curiosity is satisfied to the full.

June 23, 1836, Everybody wholly occupied with the approaching elections, party spirit runs high. Parson Cronyn has been all over the township electioneering.

July 2, 1836, Went into the village . . . to see the election which was a scene.

August 25, 1836, Every time I go into the village, I meet with something to make me think meanly of the people, i.e. those who think themselves the leading people. The Tory party have become insolent since the late elections and seem determined to take vengeance on all who are not of their way of thinking, and they are at best a sorry set.

September 7, 1836, The society of the village is now very little to be desired. The influence of political strife has eradicated everything amiable that was in it.

September 20, 1836, I like these people less every time I go in.

We know to what an extent the result of the election of 1836 embittered Mackenzie, and the effect upon many of his supporters was, no doubt, of a similar character. In the spring of 1837 other events came which added fuel to the flames. The failure of the government to implement its pre-election promise to deal with the clergy reserves, the attitude shown by the colonial secretary towards Baldwin and Dr. Duncombe and the adoption of the Russell resolutions authorizing the seizure of funds in the hands of the receiver-general in Lower Canada all stimulated Reform feeling, and we find the beginning of the formation of “Political Unions” in the district around York, to be followed soon after in the London district as is evidenced by the following letter addressed by John Talbot from St. Thomas to William Lyon Mackenzie:^[6]

St. Thomas, Nov. 21, 1837.

Dear Sir,

Some of the good folks in these parts are about to form Political Unions and some have already formed them. Would you favor me with a copy of your “Printed documents and Blank lists” in order that we may advance “decently and in order”. A little advice on the subject would do us no harm. The Tories in this part of the parish are beginning to think that something must be done to satisfy the Reformers or—they must be put down at the point of the bayonet—or revolution will take place. What think you?

Your very obedient servant,
John Talbot.

Wm. L. McKenzie, Esq.

On December 8, 1837, there was a meeting of the radical group in the village of London, not to form a Political Union but to concert measures for their common defence in case of an attack upon their persons or property by the Tory and Orange element in London Township, whom they evidently feared.^[7] We have a number of accounts of this meeting contained in the depositions of those who attended when they were under examination by local magistrates a few weeks later. Those present at this meeting in London included John Talbot, the St. Thomas editor; his brother, Edward Allen Talbot,^[8] a resident of London where he had formerly been schoolmaster and editor of the local paper; William and Joshua Putnam; William Niles, James Little, Thomas Gibbins, William Hale, John O’Neil and Charles Latimer, the latter a merchant in the village. Edward Allen Talbot acted as a sort of secretary and a paper was drawn up and signed by which those present agreed in case of an attack upon any one of them to meet at the Scotch church. The signal of assembling was to be the firing of two guns and immediately to be followed by the blowing of a bugle. It was evidently expected that there might be an attack on the following Monday night when the Orange lodge would be meeting. Latimer, it seems quite clear, intimated to the gathering that there was powder weighed up in parcels at his store which they might secure if they needed it.

What happened in the village of London in the next few days is related in the following extract from a letter written on December 14, 1837, by Mrs. Amelia Harris, wife of John Harris, Treasurer of London District, to Henry C. R. Becher, also of London, but at the time in York. Mrs. Harris says:

“Information was sent here yesterday that the rebels are assembling in Oakland, about nine miles this side of the Grand River. Today the London militia were called out and they have

marched for St. Thomas and are going down the front street. Mr. Harris and Mr. Wilson are gone with them. Col. Bostwick's regiment left St. Thomas yesterday for Oakland. Mr. Askin, Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. Douglass and Henry Rapelje had gone to St. Thomas to arrest John Talbot but he had made his escape. They joined Col. Bostwick and are a day in advance of the Londoners. Old Longworth, with about 200 men, have arrived in town this evening from Goderich. The Lobo Scotch, who have nearly all turned Tories, and the Adelaide people are to be here to-morrow. All is enthusiasm now and the Radicals have no chance but there was a great deal of apathy in our sheriff and Col. Commandant at the commencement. He will never be able to recover the confidence of the towns people. There was a meeting of the Radicals, that is all the leaders, in the middle of the night preceding our news of their defeat at Toronto. Mr. Harris urged and entreated to have them arrested but his answer was 'Oh, no, we must remain quiet, we must not irritate them'. There was Mr. John Talbot, Mr. O'Brien, Tommy Park, old Proudfoot, Bill Hale, Putnam, Little the carpenter and would you believe it Morrill was one of them, Mr. Latimer, in all they numbered about thirty, which, had I been a man and clothed with any authority, they should have all been lodged in the cells to keep them out of harm's way. On Saturday night, when the news came the rebels were defeated, Col. H. said 'Don't hurrah, do not hurrah, it will excite them', but I am happy to say it was not in his power to suppress the true British feeling. Latimer was weighing out powder to the Radicals until yesterday. The sheriff and magistrates could not be prevailed upon to seize it. Yesterday Mr. Harris and Mr. Wilson were determined to take the responsibility upon themselves. I persuaded them to insist upon his (Col. H.) saying yes or no. It was placing him in an awkward situation for he was afraid to do either. He at last said if they thought best they might do it and it was done. Last Sunday, during the hours of service, the children and myself were employed running bullets. I was rather abashed when Mrs. Cronyn came in and caught me at it but she displayed a pair of bullet moulds which she had just borrowed and was going home to employ herself in the same way. We have been several times notified that Mr. Harris was to be shot and our house burned. Mrs. Cronyn was notified that her house would be burned as it was church property but she need not be alarmed as her and the children would be allowed to walk out—very civil. Two of the leaders in this place, Hale and Little, disappeared last night, whether they have gone to join the rebels in Oakland or

Detroit we cannot tell. Goodhue has come out on the right side and behaved most handsomely, and Mr. Shaw also at St. Thomas. Our kitchen is turned into a guard room and it appears to me it is not the same world we were living in when you left us.”^[9]

The situation in the village of London in the week of the Mackenzie uprising may be summed up in this way. There was a group within the village whose sympathies were with the Reform leaders and who would probably have been in arms had circumstances favoured such action. They were under suspicion by the official group and were themselves in fear of being attacked by the Tories. The leaders of this group were John Talbot (living in St. Thomas but connected by family ties with London) and Charles Latimer. It is doubtful if Rev. William Proudfoot was at the meeting which Mrs. Harris describes, although his sympathies were undoubtedly with this group. He had already been a contributor to *The Liberal*, and that at the time when it was most virulent.^[10] It is interesting also to note that the rendezvous in case of attack was the Scotch church, to which he ministered. The quotations already made from his diary indicate that he had no love for the Tory element in the village which included his fellow-clergyman, Rev. Benjamin Cronyn. Mr. Proudfoot’s nephew, James Aitcheson, who was living with him in 1837 was, a year later, mixed up in the Patriot attack upon Windsor and was transported to Van Dieman’s Land.

The case against John Talbot is entirely clear. He was an out and out radical, bitter in his attacks upon the government and the Tories generally. Ermatinger quotes some verses from *The Liberal*, printed in 1836, which show his attitude:

Up then, for Liberty, for Right,
Strike home, the tyrants falter;
Be firm, be brave, let all unite,
And despots’ schemes must alter.
Our king, our government, and laws,
While just, we shall obey them,
But Freedom’s Heaven-born, holier cause
We hold supreme above them.^[11]

Talbot was in such bad repute with the official group at London that at almost the first word from Toronto of the trouble there a party headed by Col. John B. Askin set out for St. Thomas to arrest him. He had anticipated their coming, however, and made his escape across the border. From Detroit we find him repeatedly writing to Mr. Hugh O’Beirne and Mr. Bela Shaw at St. Thomas asking that his effects be looked after and some money sent to him. A

number of these letters from Detroit are in the Archives at Ottawa. He intimates in one of his letters that other Canadians who are exiles in Detroit have been endeavouring to get the Americans to intervene, but adds “I have taken no part whatever in these proceedings, nor shall I. All is over with the Reformers of Upper Canada.” His brother, Edward Allen Talbot, was subjected to examination before Magistrates Henry Cook and Lawrence Lawrason on January 8, 1838, and his deposition is also in the Archives at Ottawa.

Taking this London village group as a whole it would appear that they were radicals by nature rather than because of special grievances affecting their own fortunes. They were a fairly intelligent group and were, no doubt, well informed of the general political conditions of the province. They were suspected and disliked by the official group whom they, in their turn, disliked quite as heartily. In the weeks following the uprising at York there were numerous arrests in the London District and the trials of those arrested occupied considerable time during 1838. One of those arrested, Alvaro Ladd, of Delaware, was sentenced to death but the sentence was never carried out. He was a brother-in-law of Mrs. Dennis O’Brien, wife of the leading merchant of the village, and the strain of his experiences seems to have severely affected his health. In a curious document drawn up by Ladd while he was in jail in Toronto and entitled: “A Perpetual Memorial from Alvaro Ladd, a State Prisoner, to his Sister-in-law, Mrs. Jane O’Brien”, he says:

“I was arrested on the 17th December, 1837, tried on the 4th May, 1838, and found guilty of high treason by a packed and partial jury, was sent from London to Toronto on the 17th July, 1838, and received Sentence of Death on the 18th Augt., 1838, during which time I have suffered many indignities and great mental sufferings—a most awful dispensation for no other offence than honestly declaring the corruptions of wicked and designing Administrations. Toronto Gaol, August 28th, 1838.”^[12]

Such evidence as is available does not indicate that Ladd had been a more grievous offender than some of the others who were arrested. It is a surmise that his American ancestry may have tended to have him made an example by the authorities.

One immediate effect of the troubles of 1837 was to make London a garrison town, the 32nd Regiment being sent there at once, to be joined a little later by the 83rd. London continued to have a garrison until early in the fifties. The year 1838 was one of much unsettlement in the district. There were

constant alarms of invasion from the borders while the examinations and trials were going on in the village. There was a sense of insecurity which is reflected in the following letter, written by Mrs. Dennis O'Brien to her friend, Mrs. Crichton, under date of May 31, 1838. Mrs. O'Brien says:

“London since December last has been one continual scene of confusion, crowded with soldiers and large numbers were billeted on each house for want of barracks, and it has been but recently since we got rid of them; and arrests of persons suspected of being implicated in the rebellion were going on through the winter, and among the number was my brother-in-law, Mr. Ladd, and I am sorry to inform you he has been convicted by a packed and partial jury, but the Judge did not think proper to pass sentence upon him and we daily expect his release, but it has been most ruinous to him and his family, and all of us have been in extreme trouble about him. I expect as soon as he is released he will quit the country . . . Mr. O'Brien is very well. He has escaped censure from all parties and has done a great amount of business with the government, and has gotten nearly all his money. He has rented his brick buildings for barracks. We have in town about 300 regulars and expect the number to be increased shortly to 1000. Great dissatisfaction and excitement prevails in the country and many are daily leaving.”^[13]

The diary of Elijah Woodman also gives some details of the unsettled conditions during 1838. Under date of June 28, he writes:

“News arrived that the rebel army was coming and would be in London on the 4th. July to take dinner. Of course, all was confusion and bustle. Families began to move, goods and all. The jailor's wife left and went to her relatives in the country.”

Again, on Sunday, July 1st, there was an alarm:

“The court house square was covered with regulars and militia all under arms. All the bridges leading into town were put into preparation for defence and if obliged to retire were arranged to be cut away. At ten o'clock in the evening sixteen waggon loads of prisoners, seventy two in number, drove up to the door of the jail. This filled the jail to overflowing. An examination took place in a day or two, many were released, some got bail for their appearance at court, while others got bail for three years for their future good

behaviour, and some were held in jail as rebels for high treason.”

Woodman was himself in jail as a suspect at this time and he speaks of the crowded conditions during the hot summer months causing much suffering. At night the prisoners had to take turns at a small window in order to get a little air.

Mrs. O’Brien’s letter speaks of the departure from the country of many who had become dissatisfied with conditions. There is other evidence of this emigration from Upper Canada. Elijah Woodman writes in his diary on September 9, 1838, that “many farmers who lived in the London District have sold farms worth three thousand dollars for five hundred or a like proportion. West of the Mississippi there has been a large company formed of Canadians for the purchase of lands and large numbers have been flocking in for the last eighteen months”.

The Detroit Free Press of June 7, 1838, noted this movement out of Upper Canada:

“The emigration to the new states from our neighboring province of Upper Canada the present season is immense. A large number of families, well provided with money, teams and farming utensils, have crossed over to this place within the last few weeks. Twelve covered waggons, well filled and drawn by fine horses, came over yesterday”.

The Buffalonian of the same date also mentions the arrival of people from the neighboring British province:

“A cavalcade of 16 waggons, containing the effects of 150 emigrants from the Johnstown District, U. C. passed our office yesterday on their way to Indiana”.

The Mississippi Emigration Society was organized at Toronto in the spring of 1838, its prospectus stating that as so many people were dissatisfied with conditions in Upper Canada it was planned to purchase a large tract of land in the American West upon which Canadians could be placed. The president of this land company was Peter Perry, a former member of the Assembly. Thomas Parke, of London, one of the directors, was also a former member of the Assembly.^[14]

- [1] American Historical Review, January, 1926, p. 226.
- [2] “Col. Talbot’s plan with the Liberals is to trample them down.”—Diary of Rev. William Proudfoot, March 21, 1833, London and Middlesex Historical Society, Transactions, Part VIII., p. 25.
- [3] C. O. Ermatinger, *The Talbot Regime*, p. 167. The Westminster Circuit of the Methodist Church, lying just to the north of the Talbot Settlement, declared as early as 1824 against the use of Spirituous liquors at bees and raisings.
- [4] Mss. diary of Elijah Woodman. Thomas Parke and Elias Moore were the members for Middlesex in 1835-6.
- [5] Portions of the Proudfoot diary have been printed by the London and Middlesex Historical Society in its Transactions, parts VI., VIII. and XI. The Parson Cronyn referred to was Rev. Benjamin Cronyn, rector of the Church of England in London, and later the first Bishop of Huron.
- [6] Canadian Archives. Papers re examination before magistrates at London of persons taken up for treasonable and seditious practices. A meeting at St. Thomas for the purpose of organizing a “Political Union” was held on November 17, 1837, and meetings were also held at this time in Westminster, Dorchester, Yarmouth, Norwich and other townships. At a meeting held at Jacob Wiltsie’s in Dorchester, Nathaniel Deo, of Westminster, urged correspondence with the Reform leaders at York. A meeting held at Abraham Sutton’s in Norwich, early in December, was addressed by Dr. Duncombe. Abram Sackrider, of Norwich, testified in his examination before the magistrates that a Methodist preacher named Bird preached to followers of Dr. Duncombe early in December at the meeting house at Sodom and that “the chief object of his sermon appeared to be to encourage the people to take up arms and fight for their freedom.”
- [7] Dr. Cl. T. Campbell, in his paper on the settlement of London (London and Middlesex Historical Society,

Transactions part III., p. 25), says there was an organized effort made in this period by the Tories and Orangemen to break up Reform meetings. He records one instance, in the township of Westminster, where the Reformers were prepared for an attack and drove their assailants off in disorder.

[8] John and Edward Allen Talbot came to Canada with their father, Richard Talbot, and settled in London Township in 1818. Edward Allen Talbot was a man of education. In 1824 he published his "Five Years' Residence in the Canadas" (London, 2 vols.), and in 1831 established *The Sun*, the first newspaper in the village of London. In 1838 he established a second paper, *The Freeman's Journal*, a short-lived publication. He died at Lockport, N.Y., on January 9, 1839. A notice of his death appeared in the *Quebec Gazette* of February 18, 1839.

[9] In the Harris papers, deposited in the library of the University of Western Ontario, at London. John Harris was a retired naval officer and his wife, the writer of the letter, was a daughter of Colonel Samuel Ryerse, of Long Point. Col. John B. Askin was Clerk of the Court. Sheriff James Hamilton had just been appointed to office when Norfolk was separated from London District. The "Old Proudfoot" referred to was Rev. William Proudfoot, first Presbyterian clergyman in London. G. J. Goodhue, American by birth, was a merchant who had come to London in 1829. The "Mr. Shaw" referred to was Bela Shaw, an American and a merchant of St. Thomas. He was intimate with John Talbot and other radicals, but stood aloof when the storm broke. Some of the Tories, especially Col. Burwell, suspected his loyalty and sought to have him arrested but could not produce sufficient evidence to convince the magistrates. Mrs. Cronyn was the wife of Rev. Benj. Cronyn, first Anglican rector of London. Mr. Wilson, to whom Mrs. Harris refers, was a lawyer in the village. Simeon Morrill was an American who operated a tannery and also manufactured shoes. He was prominent in the civic life of London at a later date. Mrs. Harris' reference to Goodhue and Shaw indicated that they had been suspected, doubtless

because of their American origin.

[10] “Mr. John Talbot called and engaged me to write articles for *The Liberal on the Church Question*”—MSS. Diary of Rev. Wm. Proudfoot, November 6, 1836. At a later date Rev. Mr. Proudfoot eulogized William Lyon Mackenzie from his pulpit and saw six his most prominent church members rise up and walk out in protest.

[11] C. O. Ermatinger, *The Talbot Regime*, p. 202. John Talbot was born in Tipperary, Ireland, September 21, 1797, the son of Richard Talbot with whom he came to Canada in 1818. After his hasty exit from Upper Canada in 1837 he lived at Somerset, Ohio, where he engaged in business. In 1863 he removed to Terre Haute, Ind., and subsequently to Robinson, Ill., where he published the *Robinson Constitution*. He died at Robinson, September 22, 1874.

[12] The original of this is in the hands of relatives in Chicago, who kindly supplied a photographic copy.

[13] The original of this letter is in the library of the University of Western Ontario, at London.

III.

The unsettled state of affairs during the year 1838 reached its climax early in December when the Patriot forces crossed the Detroit River and attacked Windsor. The invaders were beaten off and a number taken prisoners. Others were rounded up in the woods near the river during the following week and in all forty-four were tried before a military court sitting at London between December 27, 1838, and January 19, 1839. Col. John Bostwick, of the 3rd Middlesex Militia, was President of the court and Lieut.-Col. Henry Sherwood, 2nd North York, was Judge Advocate. One prisoner, Abraham Tiffany, was acquitted, while all the others were sentenced to death, though a recommendation of mercy was recorded in the case of four of the condemned. Six executions took place between January 14 and February 4, the names of those hanged being Hiram Benjamin Lynn, Albert Clark, Cornelius Cunningham, all described as American citizens; Daniel Davis Bedford and Joshua Gillam Doan, residents of the province, and Amos Perley, from New

Brunswick. Of the remaining prisoners one escaped from jail, eighteen were transported to the penal colony of Van Dieman's Land and the remainder were freed and ordered out of the country.

The eighteen prisoners who were transported overseas left London on April 3, 1839, and after spending some weeks at Fort Henry, Kingston, embarked at Quebec on the ship Buffalo on September 28, 1839. They arrived at Hobart in February, 1840, and here they remained for varying periods, a few making their escape and others receiving pardons after from five to seven years of punishment. By the aid of friendly American whaling captains most of them were enabled to return to America though several died before the pardon came and a few stayed in Van Dieman's Land.^[15]

The new era which dawned in the province following the period of Lord Durham was soon evident in the village of London which in 1840 had ceased to be a portion of the township of London and had become a regularly incorporated village. Just as 1840 marked the end of the Family Compact's regime in the province, so in the village we find evidence that new men were about to take hold of affairs. London's first separate representative in the Assembly (elected in 1836) was Col. Mahlon Burwell, who had been associated with Col. Talbot in the opening up of a large portion of southwestern Ontario and who was a thorough-going supporter of the older regime. In the election of 1841 the successful candidate was Hamilton H. Killaly, a moderate Liberal, who was later chairman of the Board of Public Works, 1841-44 and 1844-46. He was a civil engineer by profession, a man of eccentric habits but of great energy and vision. He gave special attention to road-building and was able to secure large appropriations for the London District.

Another indication of the fact that new men were taking charge of affairs is seen in the appointment in 1841 of George J. Goodhue, of London, to the Legislative Council. He was an American by birth but had been in Canada for fifteen years before the Rebellion. As a merchant he had prospered, having the true Yankee instinct for engaging in any line of trade that would show a profit. He had in addition to his store an ashery where ashes were converted into black salts, an important item of trade in those days. He also speculated in real estate, loaned money, discounted notes and ended as one of the richest men in the western part of the province. Although his relatives in St. Thomas were distinctly inclined to the Reform cause, he himself was almost as Tory as anyone in the village. He was a cold, calculating business man and doubtless figured that the Tory side was most profitable to espouse. His home in London was at a later date the scene of elaborate social gatherings and there is a story

has come down that after one of his great balls the rector of the Church of England, Rev. Benjamin Cronyn, preached on the succeeding Sunday morning from the description of Belshazzar's feast, making pointed references to local revellings.

The old group had had their day and within a few years had either passed away or had ceased to have any part in affairs. From diaries and letters we can catch their feeling that an upstart generation had taken control, as was indeed the case not alone in London but in the province as well, looking at the situation from their standpoint. Yet they had left their impress both in politics and in social life. London, in politics, has continued to this day to be a Tory stronghold, while the impress of the early families, with their spacious homes and generous hospitality, has created a social tradition for the city of to-day that still has influence and that as long as it continues will have value.

[14] Toronto Mirror, May 26, 1838.

[15] The Buffalo took out 140 political prisoners in all, 18 from London, 64 from Kingston who had been concerned in the attack on Prescott, and 58 from Lower Canada, the latter group being landed in New South Wales and not with the Upper Canadians, the experiences of the Upper Canadian group can be traced in the narratives of Benjamin Wait, Samuel Snow, and others. Most of those who were transported were Americans who had been members of the "Hunters' Lodges" along the border and had been deluded into the idea that they were going to free Upper Canada from British oppression. For a recent discussion of the border troubles in 1837-8 see W. P. Shortridge, *The Canadian-American frontier during the Rebellion of 1837-8*, *Canadian Historical Review*, March, 1926, Vol. VII., No. 1.

APPENDIX A

The Deposition of Edward Allen Talbot made before Magistrates Cook and Lawrason on January 8, 1838.^[16]

London district, to wit. The Deposition of Edward Allen Talbot before Harry Cook and Lawrence Lawrason, Esquires, two of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the said district, who saith upon oath that he was at Flanagan's on Friday evening after the news from Toronto arrived. The cause of his being there was as follows. His brother John had come into town that evening and he went to see him. Asked his brother if he had heard the news and was informed that he had not. He was then at Claris's, afterwards met him at Flanagan's. It was arranged at Claris's that John Talbot, deponent, Hugh O'Beirne and Mr. Latimer should meet at Flanagan's after tea which they did. There were assembled there that evening William Niles, William Putnam, Joshua Putnam, John O'Neil, William Hale, James Little, David O. Marsh, Thomas Gibbins, William L. Harrison, John H. Carre, these persons were there when Deponent went in. Deponent did not know of these persons being there or any of them. Thomas Park was not there but he was in at Claris's before tea in a very short time. After the party had assembled at Flanagan's there was a good deal of conversation respecting McKenzie's attack on Toronto. All who did speak respecting it deprecated the measure with the exception of William Hale who approved of it and said as a commencement had to be made and the sooner it was made the better, and he knows this was responded to by Mr. Latimer. William Niles expressed his apprehension that should McKenzie succeed and shed blood at Toronto, that the Tories would revenge it by attacking the Reformers here. William Hale said the same and if an attack was made that the first step the Reformers took should be to secure the Treasury as he thought that a good deal of money was there, to which Deponent replied that from circumstances within his knowledge he knew there was not a shilling in it. Some person proposed that some effective mode of defence should be adopted and in consequence a Resolution was drawn up which was signed by all present. Mr. Latimer commenced drawing the Resolution but Deponent perceived that he was drawing it in a way that could not meet his approbation and deponent took a pen and drafted the Resolution in the following words: "The undersigned Reformers of the town of London do solemnly pledge ourselves that in the event of any attack being made upon the lives, liberty or property of any reformer in this town we will to the utmost in our power aid each other in any Constitutional way in repelling any such attack." Deponent thinks these are the exact words. That in order to give effect to this in the event of any attack as aforesaid, it was concerted that they should assemble in the

neighborhood of the Scotch Church on a signal being given, which signal was to be the firing of two guns and the blowing of a bugle. Three persons were appointed to cause this signal to be given without whose consent it should not be given. John O'Neil was one of these persons, Deponent was another and Thomas Gibbins or William Niles the third. It was the impression of deponent that Mr. Latimer was to have kept the paper for the signature of the other reformers in the town afterwards.

At the meeting after the signal was concerted a conversation took place about who had arms, believes all who were present said that they had arms except Deponent who said he had no need of arms. Latimer was asked if he had powder and replied that he had 30 or 40 pounds, it was proposed that he should keep this but he objected on account of his partner and said if they wanted it to come and buy and some said they would take a pound, some half a pound and so forth. There was some conversation as to the probability of John Talbot being arrested—who said that he hoped that would not take place, if it did it would make the Liberal party the aggressors for nothing could stop the people south from rescuing him—for that it was with great difficulty they were prevented from attacking the Gaol on the day of the Westminster meeting. Deponent further says that on inquiring of Mr. Latimer whether they had found any papers—Mr. Latimer stated that they had found with him a minute or minutes of the meeting at Westminster meeting or Lobo, does not recollect which—and also a list of the names of the Reformers in the town of London. Dept. then asked what he had done with the paper drawn up at Flanagan's to which he replied that whilst they were searching Truman's papers he had destroyed it. Deponent then said he was sorry he had done so as the paper was intended to speak for itself.

E. A. TALBOT

Sworn before me at
London this 8th. January
1838

Harry Cook, J.P.
Lawrence Lawrason, J.P.

[16] This and the succeeding papers are from the Canadian Archives, Papers re Examination before Magistrates at London of persons taken up for treasonable and seditious practices.

APPENDIX B

Memorandum or minutes of meeting held at St. Thomas on November 17, 1837:

On the 17th of November 1837 the Reformers of St. Thomas met agreeably to notice at the Middlesex Hotel for the purpose of forming a Political union on the Principles laid down by the Reformers of Toronto and for the obtainment of the same ends—namely, “The establishment of the Constitution on the broad basis of freedom, peace and justice”.

Bela Shaw, Esq. was chosen President

Mr. Hugh O’Beirin Vice President

Mr. James McKinlay Vice President

Mr. John Talbot secretary

The following persons enrolled their names as members:—John Westlake (this name is afterwards struck out from the list), Hollis H. Holmes, Maurice Kuly, John Talbot, Bela Shaw, James Philpot, George Alexander, George E. Shaw, Thomas Brown, John Alexander, Oliver Trowbridge, James Gilbert, Hugh McIntyre, Robt. Cribb, Alexander Love, T. A. Williams, E. Mokey (?), Elijah W. Duncombe, Charles Colquhoun, L. Peake, Hugh O’Beirin, James McKinlay, Jno. Campbell, John Waltham, William Ross, Thomas Moore, W. B. Disbree, Arch. McIntyre, Robert Gunn, William Woodman, Thomas Lemon, E. Leonard Jr., L. Leonard.

The Union met on the 1st. Decr. according to adjournment, and after some persons adding their names Mr. McKinlay, Vice President, took the chair and the meeting was further adjourned to the 11th. instant to meet then at the home of Dr. Duncombe.

APPENDIX C

Deposition of Alvaro Ladd, of Delaware:—

District of London. To Wit, The Information of Alvaro Ladd, of Delaware, in the said District of London, Merchant, taken before us, Lawrence Lawrason and William Richardson,^[17] Esquires, two of Her Majesty’s Justices of the Peace for the said District, who saith that the Political Meeting held at Delaware on the 2nd. day of December instant was convoked at his instance, at the suggestion of Mr. John Johnston of Delaware for the purpose of discussing politics and diffusing information respecting the political state of the country. At the meeting several resolutions were passed and a Constitution submitted, the title of which was “The Constitution for the Delaware Reform Association,

a Branch Political Union”—which Society was intended to be one of the Branches of the General Political Union throughout the Province, the head of which was at Toronto. The Constitution contained the following among other things—“this Society may consist of forty members, well known and tried Reformers, and no more”. The 2nd. Article provided for the appointment of the officers of the Society and set forth their duties. The Officers would be a President, Vice Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer, and a Committee of Management consisting of — persons; the duty of the President was to preside over all deliberations of the Society and to preserve order at their meetings; the Vice President’s duty was to preside in the absence of the President; the Secretary’s duty was to record the proceedings in a book to be kept for the use of the Society, and the Treasurer’s was to receive monies for the Society and to disburse them under the orders of the Chairman of the Committee of Management; the duty of the Committee of Management was to obtain and lay before the Society political information; that he considered that the Branch Political Unions were to cooperate and correspond with the Political Union at Toronto, and with one another, in fact there was to be a regular system of Political Unions established throughout the Province. The meeting was adjourned till the first Saturday in January. Among those who signed the Constitution were the following persons, viz., Gideon Tiffany, Jonathan Millar Sr., Almerin Munro, William Putnam, John Stevens, Andrew Martin, David Johnston and himself. After the news of the commencement of the insurrection at Toronto had reached Delaware there was a special meeting of the Society convened on the 16th. December instant for the purpose of embodying and organizing the members of the Society for their own personal protection as they were apprehensive that the Government would call out the Indians to act against the Reformers.^[18] Examinant was led to this belief from having personally called upon Mr. Clench, Superintendent of the Indians, to request him to induce the Muncey Indians to keep quiet if any collusion should take place between the parties, and Mr. Clench having stated to him in answer that being at the head of the Indians he could not interfere but if ordered by the Government he should of course call them out. The Union met on the 16th. instant. Mackenzie’s defeat at Toronto and Dr. Duncombe’s army having dispersed was canvassed and the meeting adjourned until the day for the Town Meeting, as there would be likely to be a larger attendance. Examinant attended the Lobo meeting on the 16th. or 17th. November and proposed the last Resolution but one, as published in the Liberal newspaper^[19] with the exception of the conclusion of that Resolution as published in the said paper. The Resolution was proposed in his own handwriting. All the other Resolutions were read at the meeting by Mr. James Farley of London who acted as Assistant Secretary except one which was read by Mr. Charles

Latimer of London. Examinant was at the Westminster meeting on 6th. October last, saw the Resolutions passed at that meeting in the hands of John Grieve of Westminster,^[20] they were all in the same hand writing. Mr. Charles Latimer of London acted as Secretary of the meeting. There were three or four Resolutions passed at the meeting at Delaware on the 2nd. December, and another proposed and negatived. Examinant states that there was to have been a Convention at Toronto on 21st. December instant of Delegates from all parts of the Province, which information he received through the Constitution newspaper. He states that one of the Resolutions passed at the meeting of the Delaware Union and proposed by Gideon Tiffany recommended that the Delegates to the Convention should be instructed to propose to the Convention to petition Her Majesty to effect a peaceful separation of the Province from the mother country in order to prevent a civil war, that examinant proposed a Resolution at the meeting that the members of the Union should use all lawful means to reduce the revenues of the Government in every manner that laid in their power. Examinant further states that he had in his possession until after his arrest the paper which contained the Constitution of the Society heretofore alluded to, since which time he destroyed with the full intention of totally abandoning politics while he remained in the country.

ALVARO LADD

Sworn before us at London
this 27th. day of December
1837, Lawrence Lawrason, J.P.
Rich. Richardson, J.P.

[17] Signed as Rich. Richardson at foot of the Deposition.

[18] There were Indian Reserves within a few miles of Delaware.

[19] John Talbot's paper published at St. Thomas.

[20] John Grieve was in prison for several months and was so broken in health by his experiences that he died, within two months of his acquittal. He was a member of Rev. Mr. Proudfoot's congregation. See London and Middlesex Historical Society, Transactions, part III. (1911), pp. 34-35.

APPENDIX D

Deposition of Rutherford Muttleberry, of London:

London District, To Wit, Personally appeared before us Rutherford Muttleberry of the town of London in the London District and Province of Upper Canada and made oath and said that he has been personally acquainted with Charles Latimer for some time past, that he has lived at the same house with the said Charles Latimer during the greater part of that time and has had repeated conversations with him on the subject of the political affairs of the said province.

That in one of these conversations some time last spring he said that Sir Francis Bond Head, Lieutenant Governor of said province, was a tyrant and was capable of doing any dishonest act and that he with all other officers under his late Majesty's Government was deficient in principle and that the said Charles Latimer could not conceive how any man could be an honest man holding any situation under the then Government.

In another conversation during the summer last past in Claris's hotel in the said town he stated that William Lyon Mackenzie intended to visit the said town with a force of two hundred men fully armed to hold this meeting for the appointment of delegates to a general convention, that he should be amongst them and asked the deponent what side the deponent should take in case a struggle should take place in the said province. That he told this deponent distinctly that meetings had been held for the appointment of delegates in the eastern parts of the said province, that he had taken part in these meetings by addressing them.

This deponent saw him at the meeting in Westminster at Griffith's tavern when several persons appeared armed, that afterwards in another conversation with this deponent he advocated the principle of men meeting armed but defended it on the principle of its being in defence of the people's rights.

That soon after the receipt of the news of his late Majesty's decease and the accession of Her present Majesty he said that he conceived that a woman had no right to the throne, that he ridiculed the idea of any spirited man living under the government of a woman and especially under a little girl scarcely in her teens who could not be supposed to understand anything of Government and would be a dupe to every succeeding Minister of State.

R. MUTTLEBERRY

Sworn before us at
London this 19th. day of

December 1837.

L. Lawrason, J.P.

T. H. Park, J.P.

Thos. Radcliff, J.P.

Charles Latimer, the person charged before us in the foregoing deposition, being brought before us says that Mr. Muttleberry is a perjured man, that part of what he has sworn to is true and part is false.

London 19th. December 1837

T. H. Park, J.P.

Thos. Radcliff, J.P.

L. Lawrason, J.P.

(The following notes, apparently made by counsel for Latimer, are scribbled on this paper)

Note Wm. L.

Political meeting on Octr. 6th—its motives well understood
armed at Westminster

Magistrates put people's lives in jeopardy—Mr. Burwell

No papers produced against him

Only 16 *combined* at Flanagan's

36 day of treatment enough to make humanity shudder

Prisoner did not fly—Eves (evidences?) innocent

He was marked for execution

No man safe without unions, &c, &c, &c.

APPENDIX E

Deposition of Joshua Putnam, of London:—

London District, To Wit, The examination of Joshua Putnam, of London, in the said district, given before Harry Cook, Lawrence Lawrason and Richard Richardson, Esquires, who states upon oath that on the evening the meeting was held at Joseph Flanagan's in London he met Wm. Niles who told him that there was to be a meeting of Reformers that night and asked him if he was

going. Examinant said he would, in consequence of this conversation he went. He states that when he got to the meeting he understood that the Orangemen intended to make an attack upon the Reformers to drive them out of town and burn their buildings and that the meeting was called to unite to defend themselves or any person in case of attack—did not hear that anything was said about rescuing any person who might be arrested by the authorities. The substance of the engagement entered into was that in case of attack upon the town by any set of ruffians they should hang together and defend themselves and their properties. The following persons were there: William Niles, William Putnam, Joshua Putnam, John O’Neil, William Hale, James Little, David O. Marsh, Thomas Gibbins, William L. Harrison, Charles Latimer, John Talbot, E. A. Talbot, Hugh O’Beirne. Thinks William Niles was chairman and he does not know who was secretary but he believes Edward Allen Talbot was. States that he believes that there was conversation respecting the disturbances at Toronto but does not recollect what it was, the meeting did not relate to them, does not think that the object of the meeting was in any way connected with those disturbances. It was apprehended that the attack by the Orangemen would be made on Monday following when there was to be a meeting of their lodge. There was something said at the meeting about giving notice to the Reformers in the country. It was stated in the agreement which was in writing and signed by those present that a signal should be given in case of an attack. The signal was the firing of two guns accompanied by blowing of a horn. That if any person was attacked any of the party who knew of it was to give the signal. Upon the signal being given they were to assemble at the Scotch church. Understood that they were to come armed. When enquiry was made about gunpowder Mr. Latimer said that he had some for sale, that as he had a partner he would sell to the first that came for it. Believes Harrison after the meeting told him that the signal was discovered. Understood that Mr. Latimer had his gunpowder weighed up in parcels and he bought a pound himself. Mr. Latimer took the agreement with him to keep it.

JOSHUA PUTNAM

Sworn before us at London
in said District this 17th.
day of January 1838

L. Lawrason, J.P.

Harry Cook, J.P.

Rich. Richardson, J.P.

APPENDIX F

Deposition of Joseph Seabrook, of Carradoc:—

Joseph Seabrook, of Carradoc, voluntarily appeared before me, Harry Cook, one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the District of London, and stated that on the 2nd of December inst. he was present at a meeting held at the school house at Delaware, pursuant to a public notice fixed in various parts of that village calling upon all Reformers to meet and form a Political Union.

That — Putnam was called to the chair, when Alvaro Ladd addressed the meeting from a written paper. He enumerated various grievances the people of Canada were subjected to and recommended as the first step towards remedying them that resistance to payment of taxes should be adopted, and also that measures should be taken to embody themselves for mutual defence.

Gideon Tiffany then addressed the meeting in confirmation of A. Ladd's statements and recommendations and incited the meeting to use their utmost endeavors to obtain a separation from the mother country. A. Ladd then produced a paper writing which he called the Constitution of the Society and read over the Resolutions.

These Resolutions went to forming a Society to act as a Branch Political Union in cooperation with the Political Union on Yonge Street, to be composed of well tried and substantial Reformers and that a proper establishment of officers should be formed therefrom. The Constitution was then signed by William Putnam, Delaware; Alvaro Ladd, do; Jonathan Miller, Sr do; Gideon Tiffany, do; Andrew Martin, do; Joel Midden, do; David Johnston, do; Almerin Munro, Carradoc; John Stevens, Delaware, and many others strangers to Mr. Seabrook.

The meeting was then adjourned to Saturday, the 16th December next. An adjourned meeting was held at Van Norman's Tavern in Delaware on Saturday the 16th. when Joseph Seabrook again attended and the chair was taken by Andrew Martin. The Constitution was then produced for signatures and the following persons added their names, — Defield, Carradoc; Job Hart, at J. Carey's, Carradoc.

HARRY COOK, J.P.

APPENDIX G

Deposition of Robert Ironside, of Delaware:—

Robert Ironside, Postmaster of Delaware, appeared before me, Harry Cook, one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the District of London in the Province of Upper Canada and stated that on the 2nd. of December last past he

attended a meeting held at the School House in the said village of Delaware, pursuant to a notice affixed in various parts of said village, calling upon all Reformers to meet and form a Political Union, when he found William Putnam in the chair who stated the object of the meeting to be, to take into consideration the state of the Province and to pass certain Resolutions which would be proposed.

Alvaro Ladd then addressed the meeting from a written document of a very inflammatory nature, positively tending to alienate the minds of his hearers from their allegiance and he recommended the formation of a Political Union to correspond and cooperate with other Unions below, or words to that effect.

HARRY COOK, J.P.

24 December 1837.

APPENDIX H

Deposition of George Stephen Reed of St. Thomas:—

London District, To Wit, The Information and Complaint of George Stephen Reed, of St. Thomas, in the said District, yeoman, taken on oath before us Harry Cook and Lawrence Lawrason, Esquires, two of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said District, who saith:

That on the 6th. day of December last, informant went to a meeting at Anson Gould's shop in Yarmouth for the purpose of forming a Political Union. Descom Simons requested informant to go. Simons brought a Constitution for the Political Union which he endeavored to get those at the meeting to sign. Informant took a copy of the paper. It was nearly to the following effect, We the undersigned do pledge ourselves to be governed by the leading Reformers at Toronto as published in their Declaration at Toronto and to be ruled and to be ruled at any time by their actions, or words to that effect. Informant refused to sign it because he thought it was not right to be governed by the Reformers at Toronto. Thinks it was in John Talbot's handwriting.

Simons was very anxious to get some signatures and obtained the signature of Peter Hampton and Barclay Doyle. The meeting could not be brought to order but was adjourned till the following Saturday.

After that meeting informant saw Anson Gould and Descom Simons who both endeavored to persuade informant to join Anderson's Company to go to Oakland in arms against Her Majesty's Government. They both said that it was far better for Deponent to go, as he would secure his land by it and that if Deponent turned out to fight for the Government he might lose his land.

Simons told Deponent that he thought he should go.

Gould said that he would go if he could leave his business or words to that effect.

GEORGE S. REED

Sworn before us at
London this 22nd. day
of January 1838

L. Lawrason, J.P.
Harry Cook, J.P.

APPENDIX I

Deposition of William Norton, of Westminster:—

London District, To Wit, The information of William Norton, of Westminster, in the District of London aforesaid, Innkeeper, taken before me, William Robertson, Esquire, one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said District, who being duly sworn upon the Holy Evangelists deposeth and saith that he was on the 15th. day of December instant employed to convey several persons from his house in Westminster to Delaware, that after arrival at Delaware he was employed to carry them eight miles further, that when he had arrived at the end of the journey one of the persons told him that his name was David Anderson, that he was Captain of a Company which was in Dr. Duncombe's army of insurgents at Scotland, that Dr. Duncombe had fled the country and that his men were making the best of their way out of the country, that the said William Norton told the innkeeper in whose house they were, whose name he believes is Millar, that Anderson was one of Dr. Duncombe's captains, that he was then fleeing the country, that Duncombe's army was defeated, that Duncombe himself had left the country; that the said William Norton at Delaware on his return home saw William Putnam of Delaware who asked him where he had been, to which Norton answered that he had been a few miles down the road with a load of passengers who had told him when he was leaving them that they had been in Duncombe's army, that Anderson was among them and that Duncombe had fled the country, to which the said William Putnam replied that if that were the case there is no use for the Liberal party to rise for the purpose of taking Canada, as Mackenzie and Duncombe had been defeated and the Liberal party had been for the most part deprived of their arms and ammunition, that the Liberal party might as well give up first as last as there was no chance for them, or words to that effect: that the said William Putnam seemed to be favorable to the party which had taken up arms against the Government and seemed annoyed at their giving up without firing a

shot and called them a pack of cowards for so doing; that the said William Norton also saw Gideon Tiffany whom he heard say that the Tories were robbing stores of their guns and ammunition, that it was not right, that it would go from one step to another and that the next thing they would rob people of their pensions, he was violent.

WILLIAM NORTON

Sworn before me at London
in the said District of
London this 26th. day of
December 1837
Wm. Robertson, J.P.

APPENDIX J

Deposition of Hugh O'Beirne, of St. Thomas:—

Hugh O'Beirne examined says that he does not know who excited the people in front of Yarmouth, that he was at a meeting held at St. Thomas 17 Novr. to be on the same principles laid down by Reformers at Toronto and for the attainment of the same ends, which principles so laid down at Toronto he believes were published in *The Liberal*—the Reformers under Dr. Baldwin he means. It was proposed by John Talbot to have a Political Union at St. Thomas and he became a member, this was held on the 17th. Novr., it was adjourned to the 1st. Decr. next.

John Talbot, Edw. A. Talbot, Wm. Putnam, Joshua Putnam, Wm. Niles, James Little, Thos. Gibbins, Wm. Hale, Jno. O'Neil, Chas. Latimer, persons present at meeting in London on 8th. Decr. to defend themselves from the Orangemen, either Niles or Wm. Putnam were chairman, Edw. A. Talbot was Secretary.

There was a paper signed by several persons, how many he does not know. O'Beirne thinks it was drawn up by E. A. Talbot, it was styled a Resolution to defend themselves and their properties and keep the Queen's peace. The paper he thinks was not kept by E. A. Talbot but handed by him to Latimer. They undertook that if any attack was to be made upon their property or persons to meet at the Scotch church, the signal of assembling was to be the firing of two guns and immediately to be followed by the blowing of a bugle, that after he came into the barroom at Flanagan's with the intention of taking something to drink young Flanagan said, Do you not wish to go upstairs, your friends are there. That he heard Mr. John Talbot say in reference to Latimer that he was an active and clever talented man, supposed he meant a zealous Reformer. A

Scotchman warned John Talbot to be off. On Sunday of (incomplete)

HUGH O'BEIRNE

Sworn before me at London
this 30th. December 1837
T. H. Park, J.P.

APPENDIX K

Deposition of James C. Little, of London:—

London District, To Wit, The deposition of James C. Little, in the said District, carpenter, before Harry Cook, Esquire, one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the London District, who being sworn saith that a meeting was held at Flanagan's Tavern in London aforesaid over the barroom. Mr. Niles was chairman and Charles Latimer was Secretary. A paper was drawn up pledging each other to defend themselves and their property from any aggression that might be made against them, which Deponent signed. There was a report that there were six hundred stand of arms that had been received in the town of London which it was intended to distribute among the Orangemen for the purpose of attacking and destroying any person who called himself a Reformer. Believed this at the time. The report did not say who was to send them or distribute them but that they were to be distributed to the Orangemen. Meant to do the best they could against persons with these arms.

Wm. Hale recommended that the Treasurer's office should be protected from attack. There were two guns to be fired as a signal of distress and they were to assemble upon the discharge of these guns at the Presbyterian Church. Mr. Latimer said that it was necessary for people to prepare to defend themselves and their properties.

JAMES C. LITTLE

Taken and acknowledged
before me at London this
16th. day of January, 1838.
Harry Cook, J.P.

APPENDIX L

Deposition of William Niles, of London:—

London District, To Wit, The deposition of William Niles, of London in the said District, yeoman, before me, Lawrence Lawrason, Esquire, one of Her Majesty's Justices of Peace in and for the said District, who being sworn saith

that there was a meeting in Flanagan's tavern in London aforesaid about the time the news reached London of Mackenzie's attack on Toronto. Deponent was requested to take the chair which he did unwillingly. Dept. saw there William Putnam, John O'Neil, Joshua Putnam, Charles Latimer, James Little, John Talbot, Edward Talbot, John Carre, William Hale, David O. Marsh, Thomas Gibbins.

States that the meeting was held in consequence of a report that had been circulated that if Mackenzie succeeded in the attack on Toronto to any extent the Orangemen would be so incensed that they would rise and attack every Reformer in the town and its neighborhood. It was agreed that in case such should happen they should assemble and resist them as well as they could. Deponent was opposed to taking arms. Deponent does not recollect anything said about ammunition at the meeting. A number of signals were proposed but one was adopted, as follows, that in case a gun was fired followed by a cry of Murder that two other guns should be fired successively when they were to assemble at the Scotch Presbyterian church, those who chose to bring arms might do so. They all signed a pledge promising to stand by each other in case they were attacked. Either Latimer or Talbot kept the pledge, he thinks, but he seems to think that Latimer was the one.

WILLIAM NILES

Taken and acknowledged before
me at London this 16th. day of
January 1838.

L. Lawrason, J.P.

APPENDIX M

Deposition of William L. Harrison, of London:—

London District, To Wit, William L. Harrison of the town of London in the said District, waggon-maker, doth depose and say that he was present at Flanagan's on or about Friday the 8th. instant in the evening. Wm. Flanagan requested Deponent to walk upstairs, said there was a meeting, deponent went up, there was about 14 persons present. Amongst them was John Talbot, Hugh O'Beirne, Charles Latimer, William Niles, David O. Marsh, William Putnam, William Hale, James C. Little, O'Beirne and Latimer spoke at the meeting and a paper was offered for signature which was generally signed and agreed upon by those present. Deponent did not read the paper nor hear it read but understood that its purport was to support the Queen and Constitution. Deponent signed it supposing that was its meaning, would not have signed it had he thought it contained anything against the Government. Deponent heard

some person mention that Mr. Mackenzie had attacked Toronto but did not understand whether his movement was approved of or not. Understood that they were to defend the town. On Monday night following deponent went to bed about ½ past 7 o'clock. Before deponent left town, heard a stir about the town and understood they were preparing to defend the Court House, heard the firing of guns but did not get out of bed. Thinks McLean or Armstrong asked deponent if he was going to stand guard in the court house that night.

WM. L. HARRISON

Sworn before us at London
this 19th. day of December
1837

L. Lawrason, J.P.
Thos. Radcliff, J.P.

APPENDIX N

Deposition of Thomas Gibbins, of London:—

London District, To Wit, The examination of Thomas Gibbins of London in the said District, merchant, taken upon oath before Harry Cook, Esquire, one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the said District, who says that he was in O'Neil's barroom on the evening of the meeting at Flanagan's tavern when John Stuart, Esq, told him that there was a meeting at Flanagan's Tavern, he then went up for the express purpose of seeing what was going on, saw a paper and signed it, the object of the paper was that if any mob should attack them at any time they should defend themselves. He heard that Ed. Talbot was the person who drew up the paper.

THOMAS GIBBINS

Taken and acknowledged before me
at London this 17th. January 1838.

APPENDIX O

Deposition of Marcus Holmes, of London:—

London District, To Wit, Marcus Holmes of the Town of London in the said District, blacksmith, maketh oath and saith,

That on or about the 12th. instant William L. Harrison of London coach maker, told Deponent that the watchword of the Liberal party had been found out and that a new watchword had been given. From the circumstances Deponent was under the impression that the moving about mentioned by Mr.

Matthews the night before had been for the purpose of communicating the new watchword. Harrison further told deponent that they had had a meeting at Flanagan's for the purpose of preparing to defend themselves against any attack of the Orangemen or Tory party which he seemed to fear would take place, but said they had no intention of rising unless they were attacked.

M. HOLMES

Sworn before me at London
the 21st. Dec. 1837
L. Lawrason, J.P.

APPENDIX P

Deposition of David O. Marsh, of London:—

London District, To Wit. The information of David O. Marsh of London in the said District, tanner, before Lawrence Lawrason and Henry Cook, Esquires, two of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the said District, who deposeth and saith,

That on the evening of the meeting at Flanagan's he went there as he understood it (to) be the intention of the Reformers to form a Political Union, having heard it spoken of for two or three days past. He had conversed with Mr. Lattimer and others about it. He met at Flanagan's John Talbot, E. A. Talbot, Lattimer, Thomas Gibbins, Joshua Putnam, Wm. Putnam, Wm. Niles, J. C. Little. Mr. Carre, Wm. Hale. Mr. Harrison, Hugh O'Beirne. Whilst they were assembling and doing business, Flanagan came into the room but did not remain. Mr. Niles was appointed chairman and Mr. Lattimer was Secretary. It was mentioned that it was expected that the Orangemen from London would come down and avenge themselves upon the Reformers. Most of the Reformers seemed a good deal frightened. E. A. Talbot seemed to think there was no ground for apprehension and that it was best to remain quiet. It was recommended by all that they should neither say or do anything to excite the minds of the people. He heard Wm. Hale say that the first thing that should be done was to secure the Treasury. Does not recollect hearing anything said about Mr. Lawrason's house. It was mentioned at the meeting that those who had not arms ought to procure them. There was a conversation about ammunition. It was mentioned by someone that the only two places where they could get any was at Lattimer's and Farley's. Lattimer said that he had but a little and recommended those who wanted it to come and buy it soon lest it should be gone. He thinks he heard E. A. Talbot state that if Mackenzie was in possession of Toronto it was most likely that the matters would be settled without bloodshed here as the Tories would submit here. Deponent states that a

Resolution was entered into that in case any attack should be made that they should defend themselves and in case of any of their leaders being arrested that they should rescue them. Understood this to have reference to the leaders being arrested by the authorities here. There was a written paper to this effect which Deponent thinks all present signed. There was a signal mentioned in case an attack was made which was the firing of guns or the blowing of a bugle or both. Jones, a cabinet-maker, was named as a person who would blow the bugle if requested. Does not know that it was mentioned where. The meeting broke up. Deponent states that on Saturday or Monday Harrison told him that the signal had been found out, states that if the signal had not been found out it was the intention to have assembled somewhere near the Scotch church on hearing the signal. Deponent states that he bought from Mr. Lattimer two pounds of powder which was ready weighed up. It was understood at the meeting that powder was to be ready weighed at Mr. Lattimer's in parcels. It was proposed at the meeting by someone that Mr. Lattimer should keep his powder for the Reformers and not sell it to the Tories, but Lattimer objected as he had a partner that he must sell it to those who came first. Deponent states that he never attended the Political meetings, neither the one at Westminster nor that at Lobo.

DAVID O. MARSH

Sworn before us at London
in said District this 15th.
day of January 1838

L. Lawrason, J.P.
Harry Cook, J.P.

APPENDIX Q

Two letters from Charles Latimer to John Talbot:—

London, 22nd. Oct, 1837

Dear Sir,

I am informed you have sent me a letter but by some carelessness it has not yet come to hand. I suppose you want some news—well, I guess Hall and McKenzie were heard at a camp meeting the other day talking about taking up the subscribers to The Liberal under the summary punishment act.

The Tory and Orange meeting yesterday was a signal failure—65 or 70 are the most that were counted, and several of those were persons who seeing a waggon in the middle of the square or market place with some persons around it might have supposed that some sheriff's sale or auction was going on. I am told that the signers of the requisition expected this to be the largest meeting

there had ever been in the District, they calculated on an assemblage of 3000 or 4000 (three or four thousand) souls. Six or seven hundred would have been a failure. Then what could we say of 60 or 70 being all that cd. be mustered from the whole county of Middlesex to maintain their unjust, illegal and unconstitutional proceedings. When the show of hands was called for not half of those assembled displayed any token of their being interested in the proceedings. The speakers and movers of Resolutions were as follows—the Sheriff first, then three lawyers, Stuart, Cornish and Givens, then two magistrates, Lawrason and Robinson, and Mr. Cummins. Col. Fitzgerald was there but did not address the meeting. Mr. Lewis was not there. It is supposed that had the meeting taken place on other than market day the 60 or 70 would have been reduced to 6 or 7. The resolutions are not yet out, nor can any one give any acct. of what was said as they could not even gather the substance of it. The orators did not speak out. The whole proceedings lasted about half an hour—or so. The Gazette, it is said, is at a loss what to say about the numbers but its ingenuity has at length decided on giving it that the numbers were so great that the Court House wd. not contain them and they were obliged to adjourn to the square. I think myself the lie looks as well that way as any other.

There were some Tories who went there with the view of putting down armed meetings but the Resolutions proposed were of so irritating and haranguing a character that they came away without taking any part in the business. The Tories here are evidently splitting, they denounce the violence of some of their party and strongly condemn their attempt at interrupting the people at their last Reform meeting. If these men would join the Constitutional Reformers in obtaining those organic changes which alone can give satisfaction and diffuse amongst us the blessings of peace, happiness and prosperity, they might yet save this country from evils which it is a more easy thing for a thinking man to predict with certainty than depict with truth. I see the Gazette has made a motion that Capt. O'Dell shd. be cashiered because he advised the Reformers to trust in God. If that is a crime I suppose the Tories' code of morality would have us put our confidence in the Devil—what next?

I suppose you will be over early in the week, I have got into a rumpus over my resolutions.

Yours truly (in haste)
C. LATIMER

Your letter went to the wrong person
but I hope to get it yet.

London, 5th. Nov. 1837

My Dear Sir,

In reply to your's of the 3rd. I believe that nothing has transpired hereabout worth notice. The Tories are very quiet and seem to have left off flogging the Radicals, for true to their monopolizing principle the moment they found it was a game two cd. play at they gave it up as a losing concern.

I am now fixed in new apartments at Mr. Morrill's where I can be to myself and when once settled shall be very comfortable. Our business goes on, considering all things, very fairly, but I hope to do better soon. You have been so long coming that I have about given you up. However, I shall look for you on Thursday.

Shall you send any strength over to the Oxford meeting? I have had an invitation to attend. I think I must avail myself of it although it will be at some inconvenience. When you come we will talk it over. The Lobo meeting I shall not attend.

With respect to the members of Parliament I shd. hope that no Liberal member wd. come forward again until an organic change has been effected. What is the use of a majority of Liberals in the House of Assembly, it only serves to show the sense of the country, that Sir Fran. Head may have the pleasure of dividing the fools who believe that the people's House has the slightest authority while the other corrupt branches of the Legislature exist as they are. And what is the use of a minority in that House, it only subjects the people's best friends to the insults of a despot's willing tools. I hope the Reformers will depend upon no such broken reed. At a contested election the Liberals are always sure of getting broken heads in a struggle where a thousand-fold more might be gained than the sending of one man to Parliament where a parcel of rogues might expel (him) from the House as soon as he took his seat. Still a broken head is all that wd. be wished.

I think it wd. be well if some Liberal journalist wd. fill two sides of a paper for about three successive weeks with a list of all the officials in the Province, with amt. of their salary, fees, perquisites, etc. including Pastors, Parsons and Priests, and all who touch our money. The three next weeks I wd. like to see two sides of a paper filled with the minutest item of receipts forming the Government revenue and also every item of expenditure as far as cd. be ascertained including an acct. of money borrowed and monies loaned to monopolists and other government partisans, also amount of public debt. I wd. have an appendix for the above published quarterly so that every one would be interested in taking in the paper which wd. furnish him with such valuable information, to file it for reference.

While you were bespeaking for me, it is a pity you did not look nearer home, for these purposes the fittest men would be found, tried men, men well known, men who have been diffusing light and truth around them. If you cannot find him out, there are plenty of others, I shd. hope, that would lead him forth, and make him, however (——?) instantly respond to their call.

I remain,
My Dear Sir,
Yours Faithfully,
C. LATIMER

John Talbot, Esq.

APPENDIX R

Letter from Col. Mahlon Burwell, Port Talbot, to Hon. Robert S. Jameson, Attorney-General of Upper Canada:

Port Talbot, 26th. December, 1837

Sir,

On the 22nd. Instant I made oath before Benjamin Willson, Edward Ermatinger, James C. Crysler and Henry Warren, Justices of the Peace for the District of London “that I had lately seen it stated in The Liberal News Paper, published at St. Thomas, that the Press and Types of that establishment belonged to one man, whom I verily believed to be Bela Shaw, of St. Thomas, that the said Liberal News Paper had for some time past in a most undisguised manner recommended Treasonable practices to its readers, by which means I verily believed that many persons who would otherwise have remained peaceably at their homes had been induced to join in the late Rebellion. And that although the said Bela Shaw had not been publickly announced as its Editor, I verily believed that the said Paper had been managed by servants of his who had been guided by him in the matter it had contained”.

The Magistrates summoned Shaw before them who admitted that the Press and Types of The Liberal were his property, that he had let the Press and Types and the House in St. Thomas which contained them to one John Talbot, who had done as he pleased in the management of The Liberal, and said that he, as owner of the property, was not accountable for what the Tenant had done. Shaw called on John Kent, formerly Editor of The Liberal, as a witness in his favor, but Mr. Kent did not seem to know much of the matter. He stated that John Talbot had told him that Shaw let the House, Press and Types to Talbot for £13 currency or \$52 a year. Shaw then admitted that this was all the rent he received, and on being told it was too low a rent for the House, Press and Types, said it might be but he was now willing to sell the Press and Types for

£100 currency.

I have no doubt but that the renting to Talbot is all a humbug and am satisfied it will turn out on examination that Shaw furnished everything and paid the mechanics employed in The Liberal Office. I am convinced that John Talbot was never worth any property.

I stated to the Magistrates that if the same affidavit which I had made before them were made before me, I would not admit Shaw to bail but commit him; they, however, seemed to have some doubts as to the law. I am not aware whether they have committed Shaw or not, but feel it my duty to acquaint you with the matter.

Shaw has done more to promote the rebellion in this District than any other individual, but being a scheming Yankee continues to keep himself in the shade as much as possible.

I have been, and am now quite unwell, or I should have endeavored to sift the business of The Liberal thoroughly.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obdt. Servt,
M. BURWELL.

APPENDIX S

Letter from Bela Shaw, St. Thomas, to John Talbot, London:

St. Thomas, January 2, 1836

Dear Sir,

In the event of your not succeeding in establishing a paper at London I beg of you and Murphy to sharpen your pens and give us something on the subject of the Alliance Society—the public must be prepared for the formation of branch societies in every township in the province. The Tories in Lower Canada are pushing the exclusive system and the same will be done in Upper Canada. Prudent measures must be taken to meet them.

Your friend,

BELA SHAW.

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected (except in original letters and quotes). Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Footnotes are number sequentially throughout the ebook.

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