

By the 72d clause of the Act above referred to, your Lordship will find the form directed for holding councils of war, and that no council shall consist of less than twenty-one members, on this occasion thirty-six persons were present. I communicated to them such information as I possessed, and laid before them the letters I had before transmitted by Captain Ramsey to Sir Willoughby Cotton, copies of which (Nos. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. and 14.) are inclosed; and in conformity with the unanimous opinion of this numerous council, on the 30th instant martial law was forthwith proclaimed. No time was then lost in issuing general orders, directing the Saint Ann's Western regiment to assemble at Rio Bueno, the Clarendon regiment on the confines of Trelawny, the Westmorland and Hanover regiments on the confines of Saint James, whereby I endeavoured to cut off all communication between the disturbed districts and other parts of the island with a force ready to act under Sir Willoughby Cotton on his arrival at Montego Bay. At the same time I addressed a private communication to Sir Willoughby Cotton, a copy of which (No. 15.) is herewith annexed.

Accounts arrived on the 31st December from Maurice Jones, Esq., Custos of the parish of Portland, the northeast extremity of the island, stating that the negroes on three estates had refused to work, and had betaken themselves to the woods. It is somewhat remarkable, that this same Gentleman, a few days previous, on learning that a man-of-war, as I have before informed your Lordship, had sailed for Port Antonio, appeared to consider the application of the magistrates had proceeded from ill founded apprehension of the hostile disposition of the negroes in that quarter, although he was not ignorant that some excitement remained in the minds of the negroes about their being made free, expressed his regret that such a precaution had been adopted, stating, that he never considered the negroes in that neighbourhood to be more peaceable and contented.

In the course of the night a despatch arrived from General Robertson, by which it appeared that the depredations committed by the negroes in the parish of Saint James had extended along the great river towards the parish of Saint Elizabeth, and that the estate of Ipswich had been threatened. The Officer commanding the Westmorland Regiment had posted two companies at an estate called Haddo, and orders were given for the Saint Elizabeth's regiment to hold themselves in immediate readiness. Further accounts from General Robertson informed me that "the rebels were proceeding in the direction of Ipswich and New Savanna, and that he had moved a large body of men to oppose them." The following day he communicated to me the destruction of Ipswich Estate, with several others, and thus concludes:—"I am of opinion that all the force in my district is unequal to suppress the incendiarism and destruction, without the co-operation of regular troops." At this time General Robertson was not aware that Sir Willoughby Cotton had proceeded with a force of troops of the line to Montego Bay. Fifty men of the 77th regiment, under the command of Major Wilson, with a supply of arms and ammunition, were embarked on board His Majesty's

ship *Rosé*, and proceeded, on the 3d instant, to Black River. On the 3d January I received another despatch from General Robertson, inclosing the deposition of an overseer, who had been eight days a prisoner of the rebels. A copy of this document and of General Robertson's dispatches (Nos. 16. 17. and 18.) are also inclosed. The loss which the rebel negroes sustained at Ginger-hill, I have every reason to hope may check the depredations committed in that district. But I thought it proper to issue the accompanying proclamation (No. 19.)

On the 3d instant, I received a despatch from Sir Willoughby Cotton, informing me of his arrival at Montego Bay, as well as the troops embarked on board His Majesty's ship *Blanche*. I shall not curtail the impression the Major-General has transmitted to me by making extracts from his despatch, I therefore inclose it. (Nos. 20. 21. 22. and 23.)

On the morning of the 4th, I received unfavourable accounts from Portland, especially from Mr. Panton, a magistrate and proprietor in that parish, whose letter (No. 24.) I inclose. Mr. Panton appears to have laboured under feelings of much alarm. I had, however, anticipated the necessity of checking any insubordination which might appear in that quarter, having assembled the Portland, St. George, and St. Thomas in the East regiments of militia before his letter arrived. Forty men also of the 77th had been conveyed in the boats of the *Champion* from Port Antonio to Manchioneal, under the command of Captain Buchan; and Colonel MacLeod, also in the absence of Sir Willoughby Cotton, commanding at Kingston, had ordered Captain Tathwell, with thirty men of the 33d regiment, embarked on board of His Majesty's ship *Hyacinth*, to proceed to Morant Bay, and from thence to march through a populous, and as yet tranquil, district, where, however, the Saint Thomas in the East regiment were assembled, to Manchioneal.

The appearance of this force will, I trust, be sufficient to check any disposition to revolt in that quarter. It is obvious, however, from all the information that has been received, that the negroes have been impressed with a general and firm belief that after Christmas they were to be free. They will have much to answer for who have deluded these unfortunate people into expectations which have led to such scenes of devastation and ruin, and which now recoiling on themselves, numbers must expiate by their death. My chief attention, therefore, is directed to maintain good order where quiet still remains, to protect the well-disposed, and to be always prepared to assemble a strong disposable force, ready to act on the first appearance of insubordination.

To give greater efficiency in the direction of all military affairs in this part of the island, I have given Colonel MacLeod, Deputy Adjutant-General on the Staff in this island, the rank of Lieutenant-General of Militia, whereby I obtained the assistance of an able and experienced officer, and extended his command over the militia, as well as over the troops of the line.

I also received dispatches from Montego Bay, dated 3d instant (No. 25.) I have the honour to inclose a copy of one from Sir Willoughby Cotton, whereby it appears, that the burnings still continued