

has not been questioned there. The case in England is a strong case, but the precedent in our own Legislature is a stronger one. There the legislation proposed is in the line of extending the power of the people. How was it here? The members of the last Parliament came here elected by the people under an almost universal franchise. Yet without any appeal to the people we cut off one-fourth of the entire constituency of the country. Now whether it was right or not, is not the point. The question now is the power a Legislature possessed with reference to any change in the constitution. The moment the power is conceded in that case, it is conceded in this. If we can abridge the authority and power of those who elect us, we can deal in the same way with ourselves and with the power of the Legislature. I am free to admit that it is a power which should be exercised only in cases of emergency, and where prompt action is demanded. We have been told, and I am astonished to hear the statement, that we are proceeding to strike down the principles of responsibility which have given free government to the people of this country.—Now, what is stamped on the very forefront of the Quebec scheme? That the General Government shall be conducted on the principles of responsibility to the entire people, just as our own now is at this moment, so that the principles of the Federal Government are precisely those which we possess in this country.—Our Legislature is left to be moulded as we choose; our local administration, unless we wish otherwise, will be the same as at present, so that every principle of responsibility to the people is retained as it is now. In the local administration the responsibility lies to this people,—in the general administration, to the people of the entire group. The old altars remain—the worshippers have still the same faith; but in the metropolitan cathedral, or to borrow a figure from the Presbyterian church, in the National Assembly, will be those who have the care of all the churches. Therefore, while we leave intact the government of the country, all we do is to have these matters, which are of common and general concern, transferred to the General Legislature. We are told that the time for changing institutions is the time of peace and prosperity, that the only time for union is when we can calmly and deliberately consider all the arguments and objections. Such a doctrine falsifies the entire current of history. When was ever a union effected between independent communities with jealousies and rivalries which independence begets, except under the pressure of the most cogent necessities? What gave birth to the union over our border? Was the proposition submitted to the different States in time of peace? Not so. The union, such as it was at first, was cemented only under the pressure of a war, with the mother country. If the people of the States had waited for union till that pressure had ceased to exist, they would have been destroyed peace-meal, and would have had no union at all. From 1774 till the time of peace the government had been carried on under a Congress which arose at the promptings of necessity, and assumed a centralized power, but when peace came the centralization ended, the States pulled apart, prejudice and passion denuded them, and it

was not until ruin stared them in the face that they were again forced to unite with closer hands and in a more solid union. The same has been the case with the other unions of the world. The merest tyro in history knows that the United Provinces of the Old World combined only under the iron heel of Spanish despotism. It was the hostile legions of Alva that created a union which peace and prosperity would never have produced. All the other unions of independent States, that have had any permanence, are those which have been cemented under the pressure of urgent necessities. The Prov. Sec. has referred to a letter which has recently appeared, and which will have great influence. I will not undertake to say that I consider the picture of our dangers from Fenian invasion rather overdrawn, but this I do say that if I were addressing this house, and desired to make the strongest appeal on behalf of Union, I would have rested it on the very premises which that letter contains. I should have drawn conclusions from it the very opposite of those of the very able and eloquent author. There are certain considerations connected with the dangers so powerfully descanted on in that letter, which should press upon us with great force. Our position is this: We stand alongside a country which has suddenly developed itself into the greatest military power in the world. It contains large numbers of armed and trained men, at this moment hordes of them are threatening an invasion upon our territory. We have opposed to us not merely the irradicable hatred of British power which distinguishes the descendants of Ireland who have emigrated to the United States, and who compose the Fenian element, but we have that hatred sympathized in by the great body of the American people, and no man can tell at what moment our soil may be invaded. Let us, then, look at England, and see how she stands. England fought for seven years to subjugate the rebellious States, and yet with only three millions to fight with, she was obliged to retire unsuccessful. Now thirty millions of people occupy the place of the three. They have been baptized in the blood of civil war, and acquired the skill and the daring which experience alone can give. Then look at the responsibilities which England has now thrown upon her. The entire Colonial Empire at the Revolution consisted of the American and West India Islands. For five years after the peace of 1783 Australia, a continent larger than the United States and now divided into six separate governments with the dimensions and revenues of principalities, remained undiscovered; New Zealand was unknown. The 140 millions of India were governed by native princes, with the exception of a few thousands who owned the sway of a commercial company; Canada East was in the power of the French, Western Canada was a wilderness. Now the myriads of India are direct subjects of the British crown, and on her Majesty's government devolve the responsibility of ruling this enormous population, itself fourfold greater than that of the United States. They have the care and protection of the vast continent of Australia; they have still to defend the Islands of the West and of the East Indies. So long as she retains her ascendancy at sea she can protect