

liberties. Well, Mr. SPEAKER, I believe the people know their interests as well as the honorable member for Hochelaga, and that they will not heap reproaches upon us for having given them a Constitution, the object of which is to protect their local and general rights in a much more effectual manner than they are protected under the present system. While thus attacking the Conservative party, the honorable member for Hochelaga did not neglect also to make a slight insinuation against the delegates to the Conference. In fact, he says :—

The Speaker of the Legislative Council will also be appointed by the Crown. This is another retrograde step, and a bit of patronage more for the Government. We have all heard talk of a speech delivered lately in the Island of Prince Edward or in New Brunswick—I forget which—in which the speaker enumerated the advantages which had been flashed in the eyes of the delegates, while they were here, in the shape of appointments which were to be looked for, as those of judges in the Court of Appeals, of Speaker of the Legislative Council, of local governorships, as one of the causes of the unanimity which prevailed among the members of the Conference.

The honorable member must have a very mean opinion of human nature, to suppose that public men, having such great interests entrusted to them, and their own and their country's honor to guard and to keep pure and unsullied in the eyes of the world, would agree to betray and deliver up their country for the love of a poor appointment, even if it were the post of lieutenant-governor or of chief justice. I am willing to believe that that insinuation was a slip of the tongue, and that he is already sorry that it ever escaped from his lips. Another point on which the honorable member for Hochelaga enlarged, is the militia question and the defence of the country. On this head, the honorable member declares that he cannot understand how the union of the provinces is to increase our strength. The experience of the honorable member for Hochelaga and the teachings of history ought, however, to have taught him that a disunited people, scattered over a vast extent of territory, must be an easier conquest than one which is united under a single strong and respected government. This brings me to speak of another observation made by the honorable member, who declared that our best policy, in order to avoid all difficulty with our neighbors, and escape the evils of a war, would be to remain quiet and sit with our arms across. The House will permit me to quote the very expressions of the honorable member on this subject :—

It would be a piece of folly for us to raise a standing army, by way of keeping off an invasion of our frontier. Our best plan is to remain quiet, and to give no pretext to our neighbors for making war on us. Let a healthy state of public opinion be our shield; let not the press violently assail the northern authorities; then if war comes without any fault of ours, it will be our duty to do our best to assist the Mother Country in the struggle which would ensue.

I think, as the honorable member does, that we ought not to give any just cause of dissatisfaction to our neighbors, and still less attack their frontier; and the present Government have given proof, on all occasions, that they are disposed to respect the rights and opinions of the American people. But, on the other hand, the honorable member is the first to inform us that the best means of defending ourselves is, not to be ready and accustomed to the use of arms, but to remain unarmed, with our arms across like men of peace—in plain terms, to give ourselves up, bound hand and foot. Now, I will ask him a plain question. If he were apprehensive of an attack from a neighbor of his, would he go to him and say, "Here I am, do what you please with me," or would he not rather be prepared to meet an attack? I rather think that the honorable member would not be long in making up his mind as to which course he would take. Now, that which is wise and politic in an individual is equally wise and politic in the case of a nation. We are not desirous of assuming a threatening attitude towards our neighbors. On the contrary, our wish is to live with them in peace and quietness. We are anxious not to do the least act which can be construed into a threat; but we should be lamentably blind if, with the enormous military armament of our neighbors before our eyes, we looked at this formidable military display with our arms across, and a careless disregard of its greatness in our hearts. Such an attitude would neither be patriotic nor worthy of a nation of free men. The most certain way to avoid an attack and subjugation by our neighbors, to have our independence and our privileges respected, is to shew them that we are prepared to defend them at any cost. The honorable member for Hochelaga has declared that he is prepared to make some sacrifices to defend the country, but he has not told us how much he is ready to do in that behalf. Perhaps he will let us know at a future time, if we are called upon to spend money for the purpose. However that may be, I must animadvert on the remarks which he has made with regard to the volunteers.