

compliment the Government upon the wisdom it shows in not appealing to the people of Canada. Honorable gentlemen have shown far more foresight in this matter than the Government of New Brunswick, in refusing to let the people have an opportunity of pronouncing upon this scheme, for the petitions coming down daily against it show conclusively that the people, of Lower Canada at all events, are almost unanimously against it, and that an appeal to them would meet, as regards the members of the Lower Canada Administration, with the same fate which befel the members of the New Brunswick Government. (Hear.) I do not wish, sir, to prolong this debate more than necessary, but I must say that I am surprised to hear the Hon. Attorney General West say that the defences of the country require such immediate attention that the matter cannot be delayed for a moment. If I mistake not, the Government have had in their hands a report from Col. JERVOIS upon the defences, since the 12th of October last, and yet since that time not a single thing has been done towards defence. We are now told with startling emphasis that the country is about to be invaded, or is in most imminent danger; and all at once, now that the great scheme of Confederation is defeated, we learn that not an hour's delay can be allowed, and that we cannot even wait to vote the supplies, so urgent is the necessity of sending a mission to England about this matter. Between Friday last and this morning the Government has discovered that this imminent danger threatens us, and so anxious is it about it that we cannot even stop to vote the ordinary supplies, but must pass at once a vote of credit. (Hear, hear.) And, sir, while I am on the subject of the defences, I must say it is most astonishing that although we have repeatedly asked for information on the subject, in connection with this great scheme, we can not get it. (Hear, hear.) At the earliest moment after the commencement of the session, the honorable member for Drummond and Arthabaska (Mr. J. B. E. DORION) made a motion for any despatches, reports, or communications, or for extracts thereof, which might be in the possession of the Government on the question of the defences of the country, and the Hon. Attorney General West rose and replied that to give this information would endanger the safety of the province. The Ministry of Canada therefore refused us that which we now find in the report which comes from England.

HON. ATTY. GEN. MACDONALD—Not the report.

HON. MR. DORION—If not the report, at all events the substance of it. There they do not find that it will endanger the safety of the country by giving the House of Commons such information as will enable Parliament to take the necessary steps to provide for the defences of any part of the British Empire. I moved another Address at a later period, asking for such information on the subject of our defences as the Government might deem it proper to give; and although that Address was voted a full fortnight ago, I have been unable to obtain an answer to it up to the present time. Nor can we get information in regard to the finances—in fact every kind of information which is necessary to enable us to form proper and correct judgments is refused. But, sir, I must say that at the present moment I am unaware of any reason which could be urged for our being called upon to act with such precipitate haste as to grant a vote of credit to hon. gentlemen. (Hear, hear.) The session has been called at the usual time—rather earlier than the usual time for holding our meetings of Parliament—and I say it is a most extraordinary thing that we should be asked by the honorable gentlemen on the other side to give them a vote of credit. (Hear, hear.) Why, sir, is the whole business of the country to be thrown into a condition of derangement in order to allow the honorable gentlemen to get themselves out of a difficulty—not to get the country, but themselves, out of the difficulty which they have acknowledged to have overtaken them? (Hear, hear.) Are all the affairs of the province to be thrown over, for such a reason, until next session, which may not be held for six months or nine months, or until the honorable gentlemen choose to call us again together? Because “an early summer session” may be the month of August or the month of September, or it may mean even a later period than that. Do they expect a vote of credit of six millions of dollars to enable them to construct these defences which are spoken of by Col. JERVOIS?

HON. MR. GALT—No, no.

HON. MR. DORION—Then, if we do not pass a vote for that purpose, what is to become of the country in the meantime? (Hear, hear.) We are told that there is urgent necessity for expending money on our defences, and that the danger is imminent. Well, sir, I apprehend if there is imminent danger, we ought to be kept sitting here until provision