

years. If the disturbing action "of ordinary politics" is a reason for removing the final direction of military preparations from Parliament, it is in every sense as applicable in England as in Canada. What the House of Commons would not under any circumstances of danger entertain, is not likely to be entertained by the Legislature of Canada. Whatever evils are incident to representative institutions, the people of a British province will not forget that they are trivial in comparison with those which are inseparable from arbitrary authority. Popular liberties are only safe when the action of the people retains and guides the policy of those who are invested with the power of directing the affairs of the country. They are safe against military despotism, wielded by a corrupt government, only when they have in their hands the means of controlling the supplies required for the maintenance of a military organization.

I will now quote one more extract from the same report, which will exhibit the opinion entertained at that time by us in relation to the political union of the provinces. What I am now about to read was written in answer to a proposition made from the Colonial Office that a fund should be raised by the British North American Colonies, and which should be expended under the direction of the Secretary of State for the common defence of the whole country. The extract here cited will place the House in a position to understand what was then intended to be done :—

A union for defence is proposed by His Grace the Secretary of State for the Colonies—a union of the British North American Provinces, for the formation and maintenance of one uniform system of military organization and training, having a common defensive fund, and approved by Her Majesty's Government—a union, whose details would emanate from the Secretary of State, and whose management would be entirely independent of the several local legislatures. Your Excellency's advisers have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that any alliance of this character cannot at present be entertained. An Intercolonial Railway seems to be the first step towards any more intimate relations between the British North American Provinces than those which now exist. The construction even of this work is by no means certain; although this Government, looking at it mainly as a means of defence, has entertained the preliminaries, in common with delegates from the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. It is premature, just now, to speculate upon the possible political consequences which may never be consummated. Certain it is, however, that there can be no closer intercolonial union of any kind until increased facilities for intercommunication are provided; and equally certain that the provinces, supposing them to be hereafter united, will never contribute to an expensive system of defence unless it be subject

to their own control. Speaking for Canada, Your Excellency's advisers are sure that this province will continue to claim the exclusive right of directing the expenditure of the public moneys.

Sir, these were the replies to the various propositions submitted by His Grace in relation to our contributions towards the defence of this country, and to the means for supplying the same. If different ground is now taken by honorable gentlemen on the Treasury benches, it seems to me that they abandon the rights which belong to a free people—the right of controlling the expenditure of our own money, the denial of which caused the revolt of the American colonies in 1776. In the observations I have made on the question of defence, and the willingness of the people of this country to contribute their share, I wish to be understood that the proportion asked of us shall be according to our ability. What I say is that in the condition in which the country is at this moment, it would be idle for us to undertake an outlay which would hopelessly embarrass our exchequer. To organize a large force in connection with the outlay for fortifications, would require a large number of men, who would be withdrawn from the industry of the country—and, that industry being heavily taxed, without any return being expected;—and the soil refusing perhaps to be as prolific as in other years, most serious embarrassments would overtake us in the attempt to defend ourselves in a war which we had done nothing to provoke. And, having no knowledge of the Imperial policy which might bring about such a war, I say it becomes the people of this country, before they undertake a large outlay for defence or military organisation, to consider what portion we can bear of the burdens sought to be imposed upon us. (Hear, hear.) I say nothing of the sensational style of speaking which the Attorney General West gets up about other topics, in order to get away from the point raised by my honorable friend from Chateauguay, who stated the case in a way that any one who desired might have met it fairly. When a plain answer is wanted to a pointed question, honorable gentlemen opposite invariably fly off to something else. I will not allude to the debate which incidentally followed after the recess this evening, and before I resumed my observations a little while ago, farther than to make a remark on the statement of the Attorney General West, that I sneered at the question