

truthful expression of their wish. We could obtain the views of the whole country in a short time—perhaps not within one month, but still in time enough to enable the measure to be adopted within the current year. The Legislature of New Brunswick is not to meet for some time yet; the question therefore cannot be soon settled there; and if it were, it has still to go home to England, there to be embodied in an Imperial enactment before being acted upon. The Imperial Parliament has assembled and will probably continue in session, as it generally does, some five or six months. Surely then there will be time to take the vote here. I should like to have some reason adduced to convince me that there is danger in delay. I have heard an indistinct allusion to such danger as being great in case war should suddenly come upon us. Now, hon. gentlemen, I hold this to be an objection which has no weight whatever. How long will it be, if we adopt the resolutions, before this scheme can be got into operation? I presume it will be twelve months, and if we can wait a twelvemonth, can we not wait two years without risk? For, what immediate strength is the measure to bring to us? The mere uniting together of these provinces will not give us one additional soldier; it will give us no more money; neither will it lessen the extent of frontier to be defended, nor give us any increase of military power. As for its placing all the provinces under the direction of one mind—the only argument which I have heard applying to this part of the question—if we were in a state of war to-day, the forces of the whole would be under the direction of one mind. Do we think for one moment, that if a hostile force set foot on the shores of Canada, New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, the heart of the Empire would not thrill with indignation, and the whole force of the Empire not be brought to bear against the foe who thus insulted and defied the British Crown, just as readily in our isolated as it would be in our united condition? I think the danger from war is one on which no argument against submitting this measure to the people can possibly be based. (Hear, hear.) An hon. gentleman has stated that the defences of the country must remain at a stand-still until Confederation is accomplished. I do not know the source from which that opinion came, or whether it was spoken by authority. If it were, it is certainly a startling announcement.

HON. MR. ROSS—We have certainly been given to understand so, in this House.

HON. MR. VIDAL—I do not, and cannot think the British Government is going to leave us unprotected and undefended, even if Confederation should not take place.

HON. MR. CAMPBELL—We may assume that the preparations the Imperial Government may make for the defence of these colonies may be materially affected by the result of our deliberations on this Confederation scheme—they may be influenced by our capacity for defence, and the willingness shown to exert ourselves.

HON. MR. VIDAL—They may be eventually, but I am speaking of to-day, and I am sure Her Majesty's Government will readily send us to-day every assistance we might need.

HON. MR. MACPIERSON—No progress is being made with our defences—the whole question of defence seems waiting for Confederation—nothing is being done. That fact must be patent to every honorable member of the House.

HON. MR. VIDAL—They may seem to be waiting, but why I cannot conceive, for every argument that can be brought to bear to show that our defences will progress under Confederation, can be equally available for that purpose now. (Hear.) It has been said by the Hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands, in reply to the member from Niagara, that the country has not been taken by surprise by these resolutions. In this I differ from him. It is quite true that as far as the question of union is concerned, it is not new—the thought of union has long occupied many minds—but I do contend, that with reference to many points comprised in the scheme, the country has been taken by surprise. No thought, no knowledge whatever of the character of many of the changes proposed to be introduced ever entered the minds of the people at large.

HON. MR. CAMPBELL—It is a satisfactory surprise. (Hear.)

HON. MR. VIDAL—It may be a satisfactory surprise; I have no doubt it is to many. It was a satisfactory surprise to find that gentlemen from all the provinces, of different political parties, could meet together in such an amicable way, and make such mutual concessions as to enable this scheme to be presented at all. (Hear, hear.) This is just what ought to have been done. To represent me as opposed to Confederation