

alized by the constitution of this country, to take into consideration every variety of subjects, not merely those relative to the business of the province, but all matters connected with the public defence. In fact as we are at present situated I regard the defence of this country as resting with very great weight upon the Legislature and Government. Therefore I consider this House is the proper tribunal, responsible as it is to the people, for the discussion and consideration of such subjects. My object in rising is to put an enquiry to the Government upon the following points:—"As to the appointment, composition and functions of the Militia Convention or Court now in session in this city, the probable expense of the same, and from what funds payable." If upon a subject like this it is deemed advisable to authorise the holding of a Convention, why not also consider that other material interests of this country demand protection? There are the fisheries and agriculture, which are at this moment in great jeopardy, as I regard it, from the action of the United States in reference to the Reciprocity Treaty. If, sir, it be competent upon matters relative to the defences of the country to hold a Convention like this, why we can say that the people representing the agricultural and fishing interests have a right also to their Convention, and that it should be maintained as the one in question at the public expense. However, looking at the powers entrusted to this House, I am disposed to resist the course taken in the present case.

Hon. PROV. SECY. replied—The subject which the hon. member for Guysboro has brought prominently under the notice of this House is one that will be regarded, I am satisfied, by all the members of this Legislature as one of great importance, and I am a little surprised, I confess, at the tone which the hon. gentleman has seen fit to take in relation to it. That hon. gentleman is well acquainted with the past management of the department to which this question relates—the defence, the militia organization of this country—and must know that up to the present time a great portion of the responsibility has devolved upon the Commander-in-Chief, and not so directly upon the Ministry of the day. Now I do not intend to discuss at this moment how far in my judgment it is wise that the Government of the day should step in and take a prominent position in relation to the militia, or how far it is judicious that this Legislature, in the exercise of its undoubted functions, should take such a course as would devolve the responsibility of this branch of the public business upon the Government of the day more directly than has hitherto been the case. I am frank to say, that whilst I think there is a great deal of force in the observations which have fallen from the hon. member for Guysboro'—whilst I think that the Government of the day is, necessarily to a large extent, responsible for every step that involves the expenditure of public money, yet I have hitherto felt, and do now feel a great deal of hesitation in regard to that branch of the public service which does not influence me in respect to any other. All governments up to the present day have shown the utmost delicacy in taking any course of action that might possibly lead to the impression that political influences or party objects were mix-

ed up with the militia organization of this province. The hon. member for Guysborough is well aware that the appointments in the militia, from the highest to the lowest, have taken place up to the present upon the authority of the Commander-in-Chief, and have been made upon a basis totally different from the other appointments connected with the Civil Service of the country. Whether it is wise or not to continue that policy—whether it would be advisable for the Government to come in and assume a greater responsibility, it is for the House to consider. I am aware that in New Brunswick the local Government is much more closely connected with the Militia than we are in this province. In Canada the same thing prevails to a still larger extent. Sir Etienne Tache, for instance, is not only Premier but Minister of Militia. As respects the information asked for, I have no doubt it will be granted.

DISPATCHES

Hon. PROV. SEC. laid on the table copies of correspondence between Downing Street and the War Office relative to the matter of supplying clothing. Also copies of a circular relative to the supply of stores from the War Department.

Mr. COLIN CAMPBELL suggested that these papers be referred to the Convention now sitting. The President of that body, he understood, was also Chairman of the Militia Committee.

Mr. LEVESCONTE would ask hon. gentlemen, if they were Colonels of regiments of militia, and were called upon by the Commander-in-Chief to perform certain duties, would they refuse to obey the orders?

Mr. ROSS regretted that the Inspecting Field Officer for Cape Breton (Col. Reade) was not present at the convention. The services of a gentleman so well able to give opinions on the subjects under consideration, would be invaluable.

PETITION.

Mr. MILLER presented a petition from Mr. J. Fuller of Arichat, Clerk of Schools, in relation to certain money alleged to be due him in connection with the services of Education.

The petition was referred to the Committee on Education.

THE SCHOOL BILL.

Mr. COWIE presented a petition from the South District of Queen's praying the repeal of the School Law of last Session.

Mr. P. SMYTH presented a petition from the county of Inverness on the same subject.

BREAKWATER.

Mr. JNO. CAMPBELL presented a petition from inhabitants of Brooklynn, in the county of Queens', asking for aid towards the construction of a breakwater. It was handed to the Financial Secretary, as it asked for a money grant.

AGED TEACHERS.

Mr. WHITMAN presented a petition from Mrs. A. Starrit, an aged school teacher, in Annapolis, asking for a free grant of land.

RECIPROCITY TREATY.

The PROV. SECY., by command of His Excellency, laid on the table of the House despatches from Lord Lyons to the Governor General, Lord Monck, on the subject of the