

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 1, 1868

The Speaker took the Chair at 3 o'clock.

REPORT ON SHIP BUILDING

Mr. Desaulnier presented a report from the Select Committee on ship building, recommending that a drawback be granted of all duties on iron used in the construction of composite ships.

FORTIFICATIONS

Sir G. E. Cartier moved that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions:

1st. That it is expedient to provide that a sum not exceeding 1,000,000 pounds sterling, be applied to defray the expense of constructing works of fortifications for the defence of Montreal and other cities and places west of Montreal, and also for the defence of the city of Saint John, N.B.

2nd. That it is expedient that sums required for the purpose mentioned in the preceding resolution be raised from time to time by loan under guarantee of the Imperial Government, and that the sum so raised with the interest thereon, be a charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Canada, next after the appropriation for the construction of the Intercolonial Railway; as shall also such further sums as may be necessary to repay the said loan either by way of a sinking fund not exceeding one per centum per annum on the principal sum so raised for the purpose of paying off the same, or in such other way as the Governor-in-Council may determine.

The honourable gentleman spoke at some length on the resolutions. He said the subject contained in these resolutions was not new. It was proposed to raise 1,000,000 pounds sterling on the guarantee of the Imperial Government for works of fortifications for the defence of Montreal, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, Paris, London; and also Saint John, New Brunswick. When this subject was mooted some time ago, the cry was raised that the money would be applied to the fortification of Montreal alone. It was now his happiness to give a contradiction to this statement by submitting these resolutions. It was well

known that the Imperial Government had undertaken the fortification of Quebec. They would also do what was necessary for the defence of Halifax as the principal British naval station on this continent. The Imperial Government had always declared that the whole resources of the empire were pledged to the defence of Canada; but that at the same time Canada must do something for herself. The despatches showing the views of the Imperial Government had been laid before the House. They required us to provide for the defence of Montreal. It had been represented that it would not do to leave Ontario undefended. The Imperial Government did not wish to leave us in a false position. They stated that with Montreal and Quebec fortified, they would undertake the defence of Canada. This had given rise to the impression that all the money would be spent at Quebec and Montreal, and that Ontario would be left defenceless. Conferences followed between the Canadian and Imperial Governments, and it was agreed that there should also be fortifications at various strategic points in Upper Canada—Toronto, Kingston, Hamilton, and other places. The Imperial Government with that view agreed to extend the guarantee to the amount required to be raised for fortifying those places, as well as Montreal. It was not in his power to submit any confidential report as to the precise nature of these fortifications. It would not be right for him to do so. To break secrecy with regard to these reports would be to defeat to some extent, the object aimed at. The sum required for the fortification of Montreal, though the principal point to be fortified, would not exceed 430,000 pounds sterling or 440,000 pounds sterling. An entrenched camp would be constructed there in order to provide for an invasion from our neighbours, whether by Lake Champlain or from Ogdensburg. This camp and the fortifications would extend from opposite Montreal, and would reach the County of Vaudreuil. This 440,000 pounds sterling would provide fortifications that would meet the views of the British Government. The expenditure for the land and sea defence of Saint John, N.B. would be 190,000 pounds sterling