

To His Excellency the Right Honorable Viscount MONCK,
Governor General of British North America, &c., &c.

May it please Your Excellency—

The undersigned having, by Order in Council of 24th March, 1865, been appointed a Committee of the Executive Council of Canada to proceed to England and confer with Her Majesty's Government on certain subjects of importance to the Province, sailed for England in April last; and having discharged the duty entrusted to them and returned to Canada, we now beg to submit for Your Excellency's information, a statement of our proceedings while in London.

The circumstances under which this mission became necessary, are doubtless fresh in Your Excellency's recollection. For a considerable time past, in view of the Civil War going on in the United States, and the impossibility of anticipating what international questions might at any moment arise, Her Majesty's Government felt it their duty from time to time to direct the attention of the Government of Canada to the insecure position of the Province in the event of disturbed relations unhappily resulting, and to urge the adoption of protective measures. In these communications it was not concealed that Her Majesty's Government expected the people of Canada to assume more onerous military duties than they had previously borne. Your Excellency's Advisers were always prepared frankly to consider these proposals, and to submit for the approval of Parliament such measures as might be found just and reasonable. But they felt at the same time that to secure the hearty assent of Parliament and the country for any important changes in the military relations between the Parent State and the Colony, an explanation on the whole subject should first be had, so that a clear understanding as to the share of defence to be borne by each might be arrived at, and all ground of irritating and hurtful reproach for alleged neglect of duty by the Colony, entirely removed. In view also of the anticipated early union of all the British North American Colonies—so well calculated to simplify the system of defence—the Government of Canada deemed it highly desirable that the settlement of this important question should be reserved for the action of the Government and Legislature of the new Confederation. Her Majesty's Government concurred in these views.

In the early part of this year, however, events occurred that changed the situation of affairs. The conference at Fortress Monroe for the cessation of hostilities, the disturbances on the Canadian frontier, the imposition of the Passport system, the notice given by the American Government for a termination of the convention restricting the Naval Armament on the Lakes and other events tended to revive and deepen the feeling of insecurity; and Her Majesty's Government urged the immediate erection of permanent works of defence at Quebec and Montreal—the cost of the former to be borne by the Imperial Treasury, and of the latter by the people of Canada. Your Excellency's Advisers were most anxious to meet the wishes of Her Majesty's Government, but they could not feel it