

defence against invasion in a war between the United States and Great Britain is for the time being a matter of impossibility. (Marks of dissent.) In saying this, I do not wish to be misunderstood. In the case of a war with the United States, the Western Peninsula would in the first instance be swept by the American forces. But no one who knows the resources of Great Britain and the United States, can doubt what would be the ultimate result of a contest between them. The battle would be mainly fought on the ocean, and there is no question that ultimately the Government of the United States would be compelled to leave us in possession of our liberties and of our territory. But for the time being—and, Mr. Speaker, there is no sense in our attempting to conceal from ourselves the hard logic of facts—there can be no doubt that the Western Peninsula would be swept by the American forces in spite of all the fortifications that can be erected with five millions of dollars. I do not believe that this state of things could exist for any length of time. Although we should be the sufferers in the meantime, ultimately there can be no doubt that the position of the British Empire, and of ourselves as a portion of it, would be vindicated. But there is no use in concealing from ourselves obvious facts, nor deceiving ourselves by ignoring in our calculations the real strength of our neighbours or our own means of defence, and I say it is utterly futile to undertake such works of fortification as are proposed by the Minister of Militia; with the idea that they would prevent the successful invasion of the Western frontier of the Peninsula. They would only, as the honourable member for Lambton (Mr. Mackenzie) justly remarked, afford way-stations by which the British troops might be gradually withdrawn from the front in case of want of success. The question then arises, if the fortifications proposed by the Minister of Militia would be insufficient, what fortifications would be sufficient? I apprehend the resources of this country would not warrant us in undertaking a system of fortifications that would secure us against a temporarily successful invasion in the contingency of war. I apprehend the true defence of this country consists in the loyalty and devotion of the people to its best interests; and it would be, I think, injudicious in the extreme for us to undertake such a system of defence as would cripple the energies of this young country. If we want a happy, contented and loyal people we must make them so by the kind of

legislation introduced into and carried through this Parliament, by the wise development of the resources of the country, and by building up such institutions, and having such a prudent system of Government, as will contribute to the prosperity, progress and contentment of the people. (Hear, hear.) If all this is well attended to, I apprehend no difficulty in securing our country against any enemy that might be induced to assail us—for a people devoted to the institutions of their country, loyal in heart, and strong in arm, are not to be subdued by any enemy. (Hear, hear.) But if you go into a system of defence and fortifications, the expense of which will sap the very life-blood out of the people—if you burden them with a system of taxation that is oppressive beyond bearing—you make them discontented and unhappy, and what then will your fortifications amount to? I venture the opinion, Sir, that there is a danger in the proposition of the Minister of Militia, of bringing about the very thing which he seeks to avoid. The object of a system of defence against a possible invasion on the part of the people of the United States, is to prevent the possibility of our being brought under the control of the American Government. But, if you adopt such a system as will cripple the development of the country, check the flow of immigration, and crush the people down under a burden of taxation which they are not able to bear, you will cause the people to consider very gravely the other alternative, of falling into the arms of the United States, and you precipitate the very state of things voluntarily on the part of the people, which you seek to avoid by the erection of fortifications. I yield to no man in devotion to the interests of the country of my birth, and of the empire to which we belong, and there is nothing I would wish more to avoid than anything like a disruption of the component parts of that empire—and with that view what I would seek to accomplish is the building up of this country, the development of its resources, and the establishment of institutions which will secure the well-being of its people, that we may have in our institutions and in our nationality something to be proud of as a people, something for which we are ready to spill the last drop of our blood in its defense. (Cheers.) But this will not be realized, if we undertake more than we are able to accomplish. I think it is high time for the representatives of the people in this Parliament to consider whither we are drifting at the present moment. I ask you