

May 6, 1872

such a course of action is likely to operate as a direct incentive to renewed outrages, inasmuch as it is notorious that the above-mentioned raids have arisen rather from feelings of hostility to the Imperial Government as a whole, than from any special animosity to the inhabitants of this Dominion.

3. That taking into consideration the circumstances under which these inroads were committed, this House is apprehensive that the refusal of the British Government to press these claims is calculated to encourage the people and Government of the United States in the belief that the due discharge of their international obligations towards the Dominion of Canada, is a matter of comparative indifference to Her Majesty's Imperial Cabinet.

He regretted the necessity for calling attention to the subject. He referred to the steps taken before the initiation of the Conference at Washington, and stated that there were very many hon. members who, although they felt that the British Government had acted with very great precipitancy, and had, perhaps shown less consideration and courtesy to the Dominion than we were entitled to, still felt that there might have been urgent circumstances to justify that precipitancy and that departure from the courtesy which should have regulated the intercourse between the two Governments.

When the resolutions of the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Hon. Sir A.T. Galt) were under discussion, it was felt that a very delicate crisis had arrived which called for forbearance on the part of the House. He thought the House had perhaps taken an overgenerous view of that subject, but he would not criticize it now.

He had listened with great attention to the remarks of the Minister of Justice (Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald) and he might say, as regards the Treaty, that he most fully recognized the importance of the reservations which he (Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald) had made. We could not be blind to the result of recent events in Europe which had rendered the position of Great Britain somewhat critical, nor could we disguise from ourselves the deep interest we had in the settlement of all questions between England and the United States, especially seeing the large undertakings entered upon and proposed by Canada, and he was willing to make large concessions for the sake of peace, but these must not be such as would affect the honor of the country.

He did not intend to discuss, however, the merits or demerits of the Treaty, but would confine his remarks to the matter indicated in his resolutions. He frankly admitted that up to a certain point the conduct of the Government in respect to the Fenian claims was such as commended itself to his judgment. He had no fault to find with the language used by the Canadian Government in their despatches to the British Government, and was bound to say that it would be difficult to use plainer language than that the Privy Council had seen fit, and justly, to use.

He believed that all would acknowledge that the Government had called attention to these demands in good time. He found that the

correspondence had been commenced as early as 1868 and the papers brought down showed that it had been kept up, and after perusing it he thought the Government were not to blame for want of plain speaking.

He could not forbear calling attention to the remarkable language in the Minutes of the Privy Council of 28th, July, 1871, with reference to those claims, to the effect that the Fenian organization was in full force, and there did not seem to be any prospect of the United States Government taking steps to suppress it; that although this Fenian organization had been in existence for nearly seven years, it did not appear that Her Majesty's Government had made any vigorous effort to induce the Government of the United States to perform its duty to a people who desired to live with them on terms of amity and who during the Civil War performed all the duties of neutrals to the expressed satisfaction of the Government of the United States, but that, on the contrary, while it was the general opinion of the people of Canada that the Government of the United States neglected until much too late, to take measures to prevent the raid of 1870, Her Majesty's Government hastened to acknowledge the prompt action of the President and to thank him for it.

He (Mr. Cartwright) did not know that we could ask for much stronger language than that, and regretted that the Government should have seen fit to change their ground afterwards, and should have concurred in the withdrawal of the Fenian claims, not in the general interests of the Empire, but solely for the sake of a small pecuniary advantage to assist them in building the Pacific Railway. He would be the last man to encourage extravagance, but he would say that he would rather see the country deluged with irredeemable paper currency ten times over than that they should have had recourse to such measures.

He did not blame the Canadian Government altogether for this, but contended that the present Government in England in making the English people pay for damages done by American citizens was humiliating to the English nation, and unless the feeling had changed in England there would be such an expression of feeling as would startle the Government of Mr. Gladstone from the indifference with which they have regarded these matters hitherto. He did not believe that a firm expression of our claims would have exasperated the minds of the American Commissioners, but was convinced that the step that had been taken would be an incentive of the Fenian organization to renew their murderous work.

Up to the present he admitted that we had been tolerably well protected against these incursions owing however more to the incompetence and cowardness of the Fenian leaders than to the competence of those who were sent to oppose them.

He regretted the course the Government had taken in obtaining the guarantee as one of a sordid and humiliating character. He thought an Imperial guarantee might reasonably be given for the Pacific Railway. He mentioned that the British Commissioners threw away their whole case when they allowed their more crafty