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CANADA: THE FENIAN RAID AND THE COLONIAL OFFICE.

[From Blackwood's Magazine for October.]

[CONTINUED.]

The strength and tenacity developed by the Northern States of America during the progress of the civil war, appear to have impressed many public men in England with the belief that it would be quite hopeless to oppose the vigorous Anglo-Saxon republic on its own continent; and utterances found expression in Parliament etc elsewhere which almost went so far as to imply that in the event of the United States resolving to take Canada by force, we must submit with the best grace we might command.

The feeling, in short, seemed to gain ground, that if we could divest ourselves of the obligations entailed by our connection with Canada without absolute dishonor, it would be a great relief. All, or nearly all, admitted the abstract obligation, but there were not a few who appeared to be seeking for some ground or other on which to satisfy their consciences that they were acquitted of it.

For instance, Mr. Lowe justified his opposition to the "Canadian Fortifications" Bill on the ground that the *Defence of Canada against the power of the United States was an impossibility; and that, as it could never be the duty of an individual or a nation to do that which it is impossible to do, we were absolved logically from the attempt.*

To argue thus was palpably to beg the whole question at issue: people easily bring themselves to believe what they wish to believe; and it is evident that the desire to be quit of a troublesome obligation was father to the belief so flippantly expressed.

Another member opposed any expenditure on Canadian fortifications because *his instinct revolted against the possibility of defending Canada*; precisely the argument a man holds with his manhood before he runs away—his instinct revolts against the idea of being shot!

Without entering minutely into the question, let it suffice here to say that in the opinion of some of the most able and experienced officers the army could produce, the successful defence of Canada, even when the termination of the civil war left the United States at the flood-tide of their military power, was not only possible, but presented no very extraordinary difficulties.

This opinion—held vehemently by the late General Shaw Kennedy, representing the school of Wellington, and no less confidently by the late lamented Major Generals Sir W. Gordon, and Sir E. Weatherall—was based always on the presumption that the North American colonists were not only desirous to maintain their connection with England, but that they were prepared to make for its preservation all the sacrifices that would be implied by that connection in the event of war between England and America.

The presumption was not unfounded. The colonists were not only united in their wish to maintain the connection, but were prepared to see their country become the battle-field whereon any quarrel between the two nations must be fought out, and to bear, in consequence, an infinitely larger share of the real burdens of the war, in devastated farms and ruined homesteads, than the English people would be called to endure. England would suffer principally in pocket; but the blood spilt would be for the most part Canadian blood, and the ravages and ruin occasioned by the war would fall exclusively on Canadians.

It is surely no small proof of attachment to England, and one meriting a generous return, that Canada should choose deliberately to perpetuate a connection involving risks of such magnitude.

Has that generous return been made by England?

Here is the way in which it is regarded by Canadians, as expressed by the *Toronto Globe*, a newspaper whose circulation in Upper Canada is almost universal, and which has always been a strenuous advocate for British connection. Referring to Lord Northbrook's speech in the House of Lords on the 20th June last, it remarks:

"Canada, far more than any other colony, requires to have it distinctly understood what are colonial duties, and what imperial obligations. It is quite true that the population of the Dominion, as Lords Granville and Northbrook say, is over four millions, and that our country is prosperous and progressing. But there are 754,000 square miles in British America, and only 121,000 in the British Isles. Is it expected that on this handful of people shall be thrown the defence and development of this half continent? Has Lord Northbrook no shame, that he ventured to cast up that the British Treasury had guaranteed the debentures of Canada for the construction of the intercolonial railroads? His father knew, if he does not, that Canada bonds are as good and as promptly protected as the consols of

Great Britain—that the guarantee was tendered by successive English Administrations to the Canadian Government on the plea that the road was necessary for imperial military purposes—and that this wonderful act of generosity for imperial purposes will never cost the people of England one shilling. Had Lord Northbrook no feeling of shame when he cast up the British expenditure on fortifications at Quebec, and the surrender to Canada of certain military buildings and munitions of war that could not possibly be transported to Woolwich?

"What Canadian cares one straw about the defences of Quebec? Who does not know that Canada will be gone, indeed, indeed, before Quebec could be profitable for defence, and that the main object of the new works at that place was to keep open a safe mode of escape for British soldiers, should they unhappily be beaten? And what could be more monstrous than the boasting that every soldier is to be withdrawn from the Red River enterprise in the month of October coming? Is it for imperial or for local purposes that those great north-western territories are to be opened to settlement? Who are to settle those magnificent plains of the Saskatchewan but the redundant population of the British Isles? The people of Canada proper have land enough and to spare, and more business to do than they can now well manage. They don't want to emigrate; they are not to have one iota more benefit from the settlement of the north-west than their fellow subjects in England. And was it not enough that they agreed to pay \$1,500,000 to extinguish the unjust claims of the Hudson Bay Company, and \$1,500,000 more to open up a route to Red River: and no one can tell how much more to survey the lands, establish civilised government, and protect and foster the English emigrants who will pour in? Yes, we are four millions, but our country is six times the size of the British Isles with nearly eight times our population; and a British Minister thought it not disgraceful to chuckle over the petty thought that after October the Canadians were to have thrown on them the whole burden of the Red River expedition. Thank God the British people are not of the spirit of Lord Northbrook! and assuredly it is full time the whole subject were fully and fairly placed before the British people."

Although the foregoing extract is more remarkable for vigor than for elegance, the writer, easily to be recognised by his impulsive style, is at once the leader and exponent of public opinion in Western Canada.

The necessity or the policy of maintaining a small force of regular troops in Canada