

British

Precedents. Here is the law well recognized in England, here is the principle laid down, together with a series of precedents to that effect. Todd quotes several precedents, but I will content myself with two. The first one is: "At the commencement of the French revolutionary war Mr. Pitt advanced enormous sums, amounting to upwards of £1,200,000 to the Emperor of Germany, to aid in the defence of the general interests of Europe, without the previous sanction of Parliament. Upon the attention of the House of Commons being directed to this affair it was proposed to pass a vote of censure on the Minister, but his friends interposed and induced the House to agree to an amendment, declaring that the proceeding in question, though not to be drawn into precedent, but upon occasion of special necessity, was under the peculiar circumstances of the case a justifiable and proper exercise of the discretion vested in His Majesty's Ministers by a former vote of credit.

But Mr. Bourassa may say that there had been a vote of credit to carry on the war, and that the vote had only been exhausted. Well, the principle is the same. Let me call attention to another case which occurred in 1867, and which is quoted by Todd: "On February 18th, 1867, the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed a vote of £45,721 to defray the cost of buying Blaca's collection of coins and antiquities for the British Museum. Ministers had in the previous autumn assumed the responsibility of this purchase in order to secure this unique and valuable collection for the nation. Under the circumstances the vote was agreed to without opposition."

I could also call attention to another very remarkable precedent. I could point to the Government of Disraeli purchasing the whole stock of the Government of the Khedive in the Suez Canal, and doing this without the authority or the vote of Parliament. Disraeli's action was approved by the British Parliament later on. Now, sir, there were British Liberals in those days just as there are to-day in this Parliament also. There were Liberals who had not the label on their breasts and the badge on their necks, but the principles in their hearts, just as much as any Liberals have them to-day. There was Fox in the time of Pitt, and Gladstone and Bright in the time of Disraeli, and there the Authority of Parliament was sanctioned by those Liberals, who held that Parliament could sanction the expenditure of money in certain emergencies. It is true that in circumstances of that kind the Government has