

proposition set forth by the hon. gentleman in his Motion :—
"That this House insists on the principle of the Sovereignty and Independence of Parliament as the basis of British Institutions and the safeguard of the civil and political liberties of British citizens, and refuses consequently to consider the action of the Government in relation to the South African war as a precedent which should commit this country to any action in the future."

Sir, when we determined to send the first military contingent to Africa we passed an Order in Council, in which we stated that we did not intend our action to be construed as a precedent. We were in so doing abundantly cautious. We were not bound to make any such declaration, because I contend against the argument of my hon. friend that in the action which we took we did not violate the Independence of Parliament, we did not violate any principle of the British Constitution. The whole argument upon which he has based his motion and the principle which he has there laid down, that by our act and by our conduct we have violated the principles of the British Constitution, is founded on the basis of his theory that we incurred this expenditure before we had obtained the sanction of Parliament. Now, sir, I am prepared to state now that this course, to which we add "and as to which we declared we would not take it as a precedent," was a course well within the well-understood term of the British Constitution. Let me call the attention of the House and of my hon. friend to the standard authority upon these matters. I am proud to say that that standard authority is a Canadian, the late Mr. Alpheus Todd. His work is acknowledged as being the work par excellence which truly lays down the doctrine of Parliamentary government in England. I call attention to page fifteen of the last edition of Todd. After having laid down the well-known elementary principle that no expenditure is to be incurred unless with the previous sanction of Parliament, he goes on to say that there are several exceptions, and this is the language to which I call the attention of the hon. gentleman. Here is the point, however: "It is, therefore, erroneous to suppose that the Government can be absolutely prevented from any misapplication or expenditure in excess of the Parliamentary grants. Even were it possible to do so, it would not be politic to restrain the Government from expending money, under any circumstances, without the previous authority of Parliament."