

"It may no doubt be argued on the other hand, that the increased charge of a Militia would diminish rather than enlarge the credit of the colony. I am convinced that such would not be the case if steps were taken for securing a basis of taxation sounder in itself than the almost exclusive reliance on Customs duties. It is my belief that a step in this direction would not only supply funds for the Militia but would remove all apprehension which exists as to the resources of the Colony.

"Whatever other steps may be taken for the improved organization of the Militia, it appears to Her Majesty's Government to be of essential importance that its administration and the supply of funds for its support, should be exempt from the disturbing action of ordinary politics. Unless this be done, there can be no confidence that in the appointment of officers and in other matters of a purely military character, no other object than the efficiency of the force is kept in view. Were it not that it might fairly be considered too great an interference with the privileges of the representatives of the people, I should be inclined to suggest that the charge for the militia, or a certain fixed portion of it, should be defrayed from the Consolidated Fund of Canada, or voted for a period of three or five years.

"It has further occurred to me that the whole of the British Provinces on the continent of North America, have in this matter of defence common interests and common duties. Is it impossible that with the free consent of each of these Colonies, one uniform system of militia training and organization should be introduced into all of them? The numbers of men to be raised and trained in each would have to be fixed, and the expenses of the whole would be defrayed from a common fund, contributed in fair proportion by each of the Colonies. If the Governor General of Canada were Commander-in-Chief of the whole, the Lieutenant Governors of the other Colonies would act as Generals of Division under him, but it would be essential that an Adjutant General of the whole force, approved by Her Majesty's Government, should move to and fro, as occasion might require, so as to give uniformity to the training of the whole, and cohesion to the force itself.

"As such a scheme would affect more than one Colony, it must, of course, emanate from the Secretary of State, but Her Majesty's Government would not entertain it unless they were convinced that it would be acceptable both to the people of Canada and to the other Colonies, and they desire to know in the first instance, in what light any such plan would be viewed by the members of your Executive Council. I understand that the Lieutenant Governors of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, availing themselves of the leave of absence lately accorded to them, intend to meet you in Quebec in the course of the ensuing month. This visit will afford you a good opportunity for consulting them upon this important question.

"The political union of the North American Colonies has often been discussed. The merits of that measure, and the difficulties in the way of its accomplishment have been well considered, but none of the objections which oppose it seem to impede a union for defence. This matter is one in which all the Colonies have interests common with each other and identical with the policy of England.

"I conclude by again urging upon you the necessity for an early decision upon this most important question. I should hear with very great satisfaction that your Government had decided upon advising you to summon the Parliament of Canada to meet at an