

CANADA

*Mr. Boulton* (Norfolk) hoped the honorable member would consent to withdraw his motion for the present, to enable him to move certain resolutions with reference to the unfortunate circumstances which had occurred during the last few days. He thought it was the duty of every man who had any regard for the institutions of his country not to remain silent, but to express his opinions freely and openly. He (*Mr. Boulton*) felt sure that there was not a man who heard him speak that did not deeply deplore one, at all events, of the circumstances to which he alluded, viz., the destruction of the Parliament buildings, and those splendid libraries that never could be replaced. But he, for one, did not look upon the destruction of the libraries and the Parliament House with the same degree of deep regret that he did the destruction of that sacred feeling that ought to imbue the heart of every British subject—he meant the feeling of respect to the constituted authorities: it was the destruction of the ark of the covenant; it was the destruction of that prestige, that strong feeling, which, up to the period of these unfortunate occurrences, he had hoped and believed actually pervaded the heart, the soul, and mind of every member of the British nation, and the people connected with it in the remotest degree—the sanctity of the law. What did the attack on the Parliament House mean? Did it mean a mere attack upon the sticks and stones—the destruction of mute property? If it were but the destruction of mute property, the very walls might cry out against such conduct; but the greatest evil that has been done to the country was the example set to British subjects all over the world, and the lie that had been given to our proud boast, that of all the colonies planted on the face of the earth the British colonies alone know the value and importance of constitutional self-government. He looked upon the disaster which had occurred—the violation of the sanctity of British law and constitutional rights, and the appeal through the constitution to brute force, giving the lie to the proud boast which was to be found in the historical records of our whole colonial empire—as the greatest misfortune which could have befallen the country. An attempt to intimidate the Legislature, to prevent it from expressing its opinions fearlessly and openly, and carrying out those opinions in a constitutional manner, was a grievous harm to the body politic, and one that it would take years, aye, ages, to cure. It must be a matter of the deepest affliction to every man who stood upon the floor of the House as a constitutional representative of his country, to feel that the assault that had been made upon the sanctity of Parliament had destroyed to a certain extent, that prestige of public opinion which ought to rest on the head of all those who were authorized by their country to represent their wishes. It mattered not whether the conduct of Parliament be right or wrong, he cared not how wrong the proceedings of Parliament might appear to any portion of the people, but the question was—Was this the way in which British subjects should show their displeasure, even if a large portion of those people were disgusted with the proceedings of Parliament? He did not deny that people so situated had a perfect right to disapprove of the proceedings of Parliament in a proper, legal, and constitutional manner, and use every constitutional means in their power to defeat the end which Parliament might have in view; but was this a constitutional manner? Would any member justify such conduct, to mob the Legislature, break it open, and sacrilegiously destroy the Parliament buildings, and endeavour to intimidate the representatives of the people from expressing fearlessly and honestly what they believed to be their duty to their country? He (*Mr. Boulton*) would, as long as he stood upon the floor of the House, express his opinion fearlessly and openly, through evil report and through good report, whatever might be the consequence. No intimidation had ever frightened him out of the expression of his opinion during half a century of his life; and he would not disgrace himself or his family by the few years he had yet to live by yielding to what might be called public opinion. He stood on the floor of the House as an independent member, and as such he would honestly and fearlessly express his opinion, whatever might be the consequences. The only way in which the House could relieve itself from its being apprehended that any honourable member on either side could countenance, excuse, or in the smallest degree palliate the acts they deplored, was by unanimously giving the stamp of their disapprobation to an act so disgraceful, so injurious to our constitution, and so destructive of the best rights of Englishmen. In using the word Englishmen, he applied it to all his fellow-subjects, without distinction of race or origin. It was, therefore, their duty to express freely, distinctly, and without equivocation, what their feelings and sentiments were upon this very momentous and important subject—a subject of more importance than ten Rebellion Losses Bills, or any other Bill that ever had or could be brought before Parliament, as an attack had been made upon the very constitution under which they lived. For what purpose had the attack been made upon the Legislature? Was it not done for the express and undoubted object of intimidating the members and the Government, and causing an abdication of the power which the constitution of the country had selected them to carry out? It was an attempt to compel the Government to abdicate its power. Such an event as this had never occurred in Europe, even during the last 18 months. He had himself seen the Legislature of France guarded by soldiers, but he never before saw such a thing in Great Britain, or in any part of the British colonies. It was the first time he had ever seen a necessity for a British Legislature to be guarded by a regiment of Her Majesty's troops against aggressions made in the name of loyalty. It was grievous to think that under any circumstances the prestige, the moral influence of a Legislature could not be sustained—could not be respected—unless it was sustained by the physical force of the bayonet. What was it that enabled the officer to control the movements of those under his command? It was not the physical power which he possessed of directing them, but it was the moral power which authority, properly constituted, gave him; and so it was with the House. It was dastardly mean, and beneath the dignity of any man to have it supposed that, because they had been driven from their posts, and compelled to retire from the halls of their deliberation, there was any