

May 6, 1872

resolution was not responsible for the discussion having taken the direction it had.

The question really was, whether this House, as representatives of the people of Canada, had any right to express an opinion on a matter of Imperial policy. Upon that point, he thought the argument was wholly with his hon. friend the member for Lennox (Mr. Cartwright). As had been stated by the member for Lambton (Hon. Mr. Mackenzie), the Government had assumed the right to criticize the Imperial Government, and surely this House, which was the author of their power, had an equal right to criticise it.

In truth the House was constantly expressing opinions on Imperial matters by passing addresses of congratulations and otherwise, and if it could congratulate in one case it must certainly have a right to censure in another, especially when it had reason to believe that Canadian interests had been neglected. Besides if the House did not express its opinions with regard to the withdrawal of these claims, the Imperial Government might assume that this country was satisfied; but so far from being the case, a very strong feeling existed throughout the country that this was a matter which should have been urged strongly by the Home Government. That was the feeling when these outrages were committed, and however time might affect the popular sentiment there was still a strong conviction that Canada had claims which could not be overlooked.

The action of the Commission was to forbear to press them, but he thought they had exceeded their duty when in addition to this they had given as a reason that they were of an indirect and inferential character. He presumed the reason they did that was to avoid establishing a precedent for consequential damages in the Alabama case; but he did not think the cases were analogous, and at any rate the American Government had put in, and the British Government had allowed them to put in claims to cover the expenditure caused by fitting out cruisers to pursue the Alabama.

If the Canadian claims, therefore, had not been admitted, we had a right to expect that consequential claims arising from the Alabama would have been declared equally inadmissible. (*Hear, hear.*)

His own opinion was that the House should go into committee on the resolution of the hon. member for Lennox. He (Hon. Sir A.T. Galt) was not prepared to go to the full length of the resolution, but he was prepared to say that he regretted that the claims had been withdrawn, and was further prepared to say perhaps that some of those words might be modified, but he thought as an expression of opinion that the resolution was only what was in the minds of every one in this country less than two years ago. He did not wish to go into any of the questions that might suggest themselves in connection with the subject. Perhaps they would come up more properly when the Treaty itself was under discussion. He did think when the country felt so deeply with regard to the Fenian claims, and when there was no assurance as to what would be done in the future if these raids were repeated, it would be a subject of regret to

the country, if not to the House, if the matter were left in the position in which it now stood.

Hon. Mr. GRAY would not have risen had it not been for the remarks of his hon. friend from Sherbrooke (Hon. Sir A.T. Galt). He had never read the history of Canada or of any public man with greater interest than he had heard the utterances of the hon. gentleman.

When he was a member of the Government it was proposed to the Imperial Government to interfere in the course which the Government of Canada thought it best to pursue in the interests of this country; the hon. gentleman said that they would not adopt any course unless they were allowed to manage this country with reference to the interests of its people. If it was sound in us to adopt as principle that the Imperial Government could not interfere in any matter in which the interests of this country were solely concerned, he thought the same rule applied to us, when the Imperial Government decides upon a policy for the Empire. The hon. member for Lanark North (Hon. Mr. McDougall) had put the question to the House in a clear and able manner.

He then quoted the first resolution, to which he said the Imperial Government would reply that we had no right to pass it unless we were prepared to represent the empire. The member for Lennox (Mr. Cartwright) had said that it was not the opinion of the British people, but of the Government; but the Government represented the people, and whether we agree with Mr. Gladstone or not, so long as he commands a majority of the House of Commons, he must be taken to represent the people, and to speak for them. He thought that this Parliament had a perfect right to make representations to England, and there was no question which affected the interests of this country more than a general desire to have an understanding in reference to the Fenian raids in the past and assurances of their prevention in the future; but he doubted if the resolution of the hon. member for Lennox was the correct mode of expressing the opinion of Canada.

He thought the motion, which he seconded, was a substantial motion to come up on this occasion. He agreed with the member for Lambton (Hon. Mr. Mackenzie) that the proper time for discussion on the matter was when the Bill was under discussion. He could not agree with the hon. member for Terrebonne (Mr. Masson) as to the error of the Imperial Government in withdrawing the troops. He thought they were bound to consider the Imperial interests, and so long as Canada had the assurance that by maintaining a good and active militia, she will, should necessity arise, be supported by the whole force of the Empire, surely she ought to be satisfied.

When the Fenian raids occurred the Imperial troops in the country assisted to drive the marauders back at the expense of the Empire and would do so again should necessity arise. Pecuniary compensation being now the mode of settling all disputes and claims, he thought the Government were justified in the course they had taken.