

COPY of a DESPATCH from His Grace the DUKE OF NEWCASTLE, K.G., to
VISCOUNT MONCK.

(No. 197.)

MY LORD, Downing Street, December 20, 1862.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge your Despatch of the 30th October,* forwarding * Page 42.
a Report of your Executive Council upon my Despatch of August 21st,† accompanied by † Page 40.
observations of your own upon that Report, and especially upon the plan which it contains
for the further organization of the Canadian Militia.

I greatly regret to find that that plan, while effecting some improvements in the present system, will yet, as regards the systematic organization of the force of the colony for defensive purposes, prove, as you observe, "completely illusory."

You also lay before me heads of another plan for the formation of a Militia Force of 50,000 men, which I concur with you in regarding as a measure of a more substantial character, and more worthy of the great Province of Canada than that proposed by your Executive Council. I shall not attempt to discuss the details of either of these schemes. I will only express an earnest hope that the patriotic spirit which animates the volunteers of Canada may be turned to the best account for the defence of the country, an object which, I conceive, would be most effectually attained by forming them into battalions of the Active Militia force within defined divisions of the Province, not indeed to the exclusion * of other volunteer associations, but with an eye in the first place to the completion of that territorial organization, which is, as you justly term it, "the cardinal necessity of the time."

I turn for a moment to the comments made by the Executive Council in their Report upon my Despatch of 21st August last,‡ one or two of which call for some observation ‡ Page 40.
from me.

The Report asserts that "in the opinion of your advisers no Government could exist that would attempt to carry out my suggestions" for the raising of a force of at least 50,000 "partially trained" militia. A sufficient answer to such an opinion is contained in the document with which you have furnished me, showing how the number mentioned could be provided at a cost which, if spread over five years, would scarcely exceed in any one year the small amount voted for militia purposes in the last session. Nor can I believe that the Canadian people would condemn a Government which should effectually provide for the defence of their country, even if the necessary expense should exceed the sum of 50,000*l.* per annum.

The Report expresses great surprise at a suggestion made by me, that the charge for the militia, or for a fixed portion of it, should be voted for a period of three or five years. Such a measure, they say, "will never and ought never to be entertained by a people inheriting the freedom guaranteed by British institutions." If there are any reasons in its favour they think that they are "in every sense as applicable in England as in Canada;" and they conclude with the sentiment, that "popular liberties are safe against military despotism, wielded by a corrupt government, only when they (the people) have in their hands the means of controlling the supplies required for the maintenance of a military organization."

I beg you will point out to your ministers, in reply to these observations, some material circumstances which have escaped their notice. The terms of my Despatch show that I was well aware that the course in question, if adopted by the legislature, would be, to a certain degree, a surrender of the strict constitutional rights of the representatives of the people. It would probably, however, occur to them, that popular liberties would be in little danger from a body of citizen soldiers; while there remained within the Province, not only without exciting any such fears, but with the hearty approval of its people and government, a force of regular troops whose number would be fixed at the discretion of the Imperial Government, and whose cost would be defrayed by the Imperial Parliament. Again, if the number of Imperial troops were made to depend, by agreement with the Canadian Government, upon the number of militia maintained by the Province, there would be nothing unreasonable in such an arrangement, and the Home Government might fairly (I do not say would necessarily) require that the funds for the purpose should be somewhat more permanently secured than by an annual vote. It is far from my wish (as seems to be suggested by the Report) to diminish the controul of the Canadian Parliament over their own affairs, but on the other hand the amount of exertion which England could make with any advantage must depend very much on the manner in which that controul is exercised; that is to say, on the disposition to protect the Colony which is shown by