

## Letter with reference to the Defence of Canada.

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MY LORD,

War Office, January 1865.

1. HAVING in accordance with your Lordship's desire visited the British North American Possessions during the autumn of 1863, to ascertain the condition of their defences, I pointed out to your Lordship in my report dated February 1864, as the result of my inspection in Canada, that the construction of certain works of fortification at Montreal and Quebec was essential to enable the British troops and local forces to resist an invasion by the Americans with any prospect of success. In obedience to your Lordship's further directions, I again proceeded to Canada in the beginning of September last, for the purpose of affording to Lord Monck and to the Provincial Government of Canada every information in my power as to the measures which it is desirable to adopt for the defence of that colony. I have now the honour to report as follows:—

2. I embarked at Liverpool for North America on the 3rd September last, and after visiting Halifax, Nova Scotia, and travelling through New Brunswick *en route* to Canada, I arrived at Quebec on the 23rd of the same month. I then communicated with Lord Monck with reference to the object of my mission. I also proceeded to Montreal to confer with Lieutenant-General Sir W. F. Williams, the General commanding the troops in British North America. Subsequently I had interviews with several members of the Government of Canada, who met at Quebec in October to take part in the Conference with the Delegates from the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward's Island, and Newfoundland, with reference to the proposed confederation of the provinces of British North America.

3. On the 12th October I had a formal interview with the whole of the Executive Council, who then requested me to state my views with respect to the defence of Canada. A long conversation with the Council took place in consequence of my statement, which led to a paper of question being addressed to me by the Provincial Government. These questions rendered it necessary for me to make a detailed examination of several positions in Upper Canada. I accordingly reconnoitred the country about Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, London, Paris, and other places. I then prepared a report on the defence of the whole of Canada, embodying my answers to those questions, which report I submitted to the Lieutenant-General commanding, who signified his approval in writing of the measures recommended therein. On my return to Quebec I placed my report in the hands of the Canadian Government. After interviews with the Governor General and some of the members of the Council, I left Quebec for New York and returned to England at the end of last November.

4. Although the proposals which resulted from my communication with the Canadian Government are stated in my report to the Council it may be convenient that I should state briefly in this place the views which I expressed at my interview with the Council.

5. I observed, that although, owing to the length and nature of the frontier of Canada, it was impossible to protect it throughout its whole extent, an enemy must nevertheless acquire possession of certain vital points before he could obtain any decided military advantage;—that there are only a few such points,—and that if proper arrangements were made for the defence of those places by the construction of fortifications, the provision of gun-boats, and the improvement of communications;—the militia and volunteer forces of the country, if properly organized, and aided by British troops, would be enabled to hold them during the period, (only about six months in the year), when military operations on a *large* scale could be carried on against them, and thus those forces could resist an attack with the best possible chance of success. I pointed out