

Not Needed for Defence.

"Now, sir, I am not prepared to believe, and I do not wish to express an opinion hastily, that section 117 of the British North America Act authorizes or excuses any such taking over forcibly and without notice the property of this or any other Province. Let me read that section:—'The several Provinces shall retain all their respective public property not otherwise disposed of in this act, subject to the right of Canada to assume any lands or public property required for fortifications or the defence of the country.' This land," the Premier continued, "is situated where it will not need to be defended. It is located hundreds of miles from the border of the only country that could ever become hostile, so that it would be safe, and would not need defence. Consequently this land does not, in my opinion, come under the operation of the section I have read. I have received no reply except a formal acknowledgment.

Blames Sir Frederick Borden.

"I regret this occurrence, first of all, because I am bound to say here, as leader of this Government, that all intercourse and communication between us and the Government of Canada have been of the most pleasant nature. This Government have nothing but good words with reference to their treatment when in the course of duty it has been necessary to communicate with the Government at Ottawa. I do not believe the principal members of the Dominion Government have anything to do with this attempt at the forcible taking away of our property. I do not believe the leader of that Government or the principal members of that Government knew anything about this action of the Department of Militia and Defence. I do not propose to take any hasty action. My first intention was to present a resolution to the House on the matter, but I refrained from that because of animadversions with reference to the motives which might have been charged as actuating this Government. But I say to the people of Ontario, and to the members of this House, that while this Government remain in power they will leave no stone unturned in the effort to stop this outrageous attempt on the part of a Minister at Ottawa to take over this property of the people of Ontario without compensation. (Applause.) If necessary we will go to the foot of the throne with our claim, and we may well feel certain that when the time comes for final decision this man, happy perhaps from his point of view in the possession of a little brief authority, will find that under the aegis of the British Empire the property not only of individuals, but of communities and Provinces, will be considered safe." (Prolonged applause.)

The Premier then laid the papers on the table, and they will become part of the records of the House.
