

TRUTH FOR THE PEOPLE

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MR. BLAKE'S HOME RULE RESOLUTION.

We do not agree with those who declare that Mr. Blake has no heart in the resolution that he has moved, any more than with the assertion that Mr. Costigan has become faithless to the cause of constitutional freedom for Ireland. We are painfully aware that our public men, as a rule, are but too ready to adopt any sort of cry, or take any manner of step, to achieve a party gain; but we do not believe that Mr. Blake's motive in moving a resolution endorsing the principle enunciated in Mr. Gladstone's Bill with respect to Ireland, was insincere. We must before attempting a criticism of his act remember that the Premier of Great Britain has asked the Empire at large for an expression of opinion upon this point. This is the justification for the motion made in Parliament; the fact that Mr. Blake is himself an Irishman is the proof that his heart as much as his head is concerned in the resolution. Moreover a man with the views upon constitutional liberty held by Mr. Blake, and advocated with such passionate eloquence by his father, is not likely after being invited to participate to stand mute when any portion of humanity is engaged in a struggle for liberty. The Parliament of Canada is the fitting place whence an opinion of the proposed Imperial legislation should go forth; and since the change proposed by the British premier affects the empire, it is proper that from any portion of that empire criticism or opinion upon the change proposed should come.

It will be remembered that in 1882 Mr. Costigan moved a series of resolutions in much the same strain as that presented by Mr. Blake. But Mr. Costigan went farther than the leader of the Opposition. He did not content himself with pointing out how successful provincial Government under a central authority had proven in the Dominion of Canada; but the House of Commons was made to express the wish that the Home Government might deal leniently with persons then in prison for political offenses. With a portion of Mr. Costigan's resolutions no fair minded man could conscientiously disagree; but we think it was going too far when we undertook to advise the Imperial Government as to how it ought to deal with persons who had broken the laws. The Colonial Secretary rose to the full height of his stature, and gave us a chill and haughty snub. He pointed out that when Her Majesty desired advice upon matters coming under her immediate jurisdiction she would seek counsel of her properly constituted advisers. The London Times found an opportunity to become insolent, and made the most of its chance. But Mr. Huntington, who happened to be at London at the time, wrote a letter which cut the ground very completely from under the feet of the Times.

However, when Mr. Blake introduced his resolution the other day, the Hon. Mr. Costigan begged him to withdraw it, pointing

out that if it went through in its present form it must be on "division" which would be unfortunate for the object that the mover had in view. The following is the text of the resolution moved by Mr. Blake.—"That a humble address be presented to Her Majesty to respectfully assure Her Majesty that the interest and concern felt by the Commons of Canada and the people whom they represent, in the condition of Ireland, and desire that some means may be found of meeting the expressed wishes of so many of Her Majesty's Irish subjects for the granting to Ireland of a measure of local self-government, still continue as warm and earnest as in the year 1882, when they were humbly signified to Her Majesty by an address, to the terms of which this House affirms its abiding adhesion, humbly to inform Her Majesty that this House hails with joy the submission by Her Majesty's Government to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, of a measure recognizing the principle of local self government for Ireland, and humbly to express to Her Majesty the earnest hopes of this House that the principle of the said measure may be affirmed, and that it may form a basis for such a settlement of this great question as shall conduce to the peace, happiness, and prosperity of the Empire." The spirit of this resolution is well enough; but there is a lack of tact shown in its construction, as there is in so many of Mr. Blake's speeches. The resolution has an extra judicial appearance about it, which feature would not have been visible had Mr. Blake said, that "in view of the success of the principle of local government as applied in our confederated colonies, and the invitation for an expression of opinion by the British Premier, the Parliament of Canada ventured to offer such and such prayers and suggestions;" and so on.

Inasmuch as these resolutions are giving rise to a considerable deal of comment we make no apology for reproducing the substitute resolution moved by the Hon. the Minister of Inland Revenue. It is as follows:

"The Commons of Canada desire to express their deep and abiding interest in the prosperity and happiness of their fellow subjects in Ireland and their adhesion to the sentiment expressed in the joint address to Her Majesty of both Houses of the Canadian Parliament passed in the session of 1882. That in such address the Parliament suggested that Canada and her inhabitants had prospered exceedingly under a Federal system allowing to each Province of the Dominion considerable powers of self-government and expressed a hope that if consistent with the integrity and well being of the Empire, and if the rights and status of the minority are protected and secured, some means may be found of meeting the expressed desire of so many of your Irish subjects in that regard;

"That in answer to the said address the then Secretary of State for the Colonies was commanded to state that Her Majesty will always gladly receive the advice of the Parliament of Canada on all matters relating to the Dominion and the administration of its affairs, but with respect to the questions referred to in the address, Her Majesty will, in accordance with the constitution of this country, have regard to the advice of

the Imperial Parliament and Ministers to whom all matters relating to the affairs of the United Kingdom exclusively appertain.

"That the House, having reference to the tenor of the said answer, does not deem it expedient again to address Her Majesty on the subject, but earnestly hopes that such measure, of such measures, may be adopted by the Imperial Parliament as will, while preserving the integrity and well-being of the Empire and the rights and status of the minority, be satisfactory to the people of Ireland and permanently remove the discontent so long unhappily prevailing in that country."

We regret that the substituted motion should have taken this non-committal form; but we believe it was dictated by a misapprehension of the situation. Mr. Costigan would seem to fear that if he allowed Mr. Blake's motion, in spirit, to pass, the Colonial Office would once more tender a rebuke; but it is not at all likely that the Colonial Office would have done anything of the kind. The case now is quite different from the case of 1882. At that time there was no such bill as the present one before the House; there was no legislation of any kind intended to touch the constitution before it; and the idea of affecting such legislation had not entered into the head of any British statesman. But now there is a bill aiming to change the constitution, before the House; the bill provides a form of local Government greater than that conferred upon one of our Provinces, and less than that given to the Dominion. It is purely an experiment. No man knows how it may succeed; and Mr. Gladstone appeals to men in all parts of the empire to give their opinion upon it. We may be sure that he appeals especially to us who have lived and thriven under a system somewhat resembling that which he proposes to give to Ireland.

Therefore an expression of opinion squarely upon the value of the measure before the Imperial Commons, by our Canadian Legislature, would be timely and proper; and not at all resembling the act of the Parliament in 1882.

The closing clause in Mr. Costigan's resolution it will be perceived is non-committal. This may be due to more than one cause. It may be that Mr. Costigan foresees that the programme of Mr. Gladstone is an utterly impracticable one; as we really believe it to be. It may be that it seems as plain to him as it does to us that there should be "no taxation without representation;" and that a scheme which violates the prime axiom of responsible government cannot be productive of harmony. The measure introduced by Mr. Gladstone is quite a different one from that proposed by Mr. Costigan; and it may be that an abiding faith in the merits of his own proposals now withholds his tongue from approving a scheme that has in its very vitals the seeds of disaster. If this be the case we consider the wording of the resolution to be extremely judicious; on the other hand if the Government believe that Mr. Gladstone's chart is a good one they have no excuse for withholding ap-

proval on the grounds which Mr. Costigan cites in his motion. In a technical sense the executive adopted a good way to get rid of the Blake resolution; but when the matter is looked into from another stand point the complexion of their case is altered; and the change is not for the better.

Of course it was out of the question that the Canadian Parliament should enter into a discussion of the merits of Mr. Gladstone's scheme; and if they believed that it was not a good one, they took a wise course in introducing their non-committal resolution.

It is true that ministers have always to give way to their chief; and this no doubt is the reason why the fossilized stuff about "the rights and status of the minority" is allowed to creep once again into the phraseology. Of course the "rights" of the minority will be preserved; but what on earth is meant by that word "status"? We suppose that whatever clouded brain suggested it—we are quite certain that Mr. Costigan never put it there—had the word privileges in his mind. But a privilege is either a right or an unjustifiable assumption;—wherefore then drag it into a thrice watered expression of opinion like this? Even the stupidest gentleman sitting in the Ottawa Cabinet knows that by Mr. Gladstone's scheme the Imperial Government reserves the right of veto; and that no measure trampling upon the rights, or abrogating the privileges or the "status" of the minority, would be allowed to pass. How ridiculous then do we not seem in showing such caution and anxiety in our little colorless Canadian resolution. Our opinion is that if you want to make a Canadian statesman thoroughly useless, and a genuine fool, give him a title, and cover his breast with a few stars and ribbons. He will first become over loyal, and in this cause say and do a number of childish things; then the loyalty will settle upon his brain and make him stupid and ridiculous at the same time.

On the whole, the resolution of Mr. Blake, affirming as it does the "principle" laid down in Mr. Gladstone's motion, is the better one of the two. The government's resolution will have no effect in Imperial quarters; Mr. Blake's resolution would have strengthened the hands of Mr. Gladstone. Whether such strengthening would have been for good or evil, let time decide.

FEDERATING THE EMPIRE.

We have several fairly clever men in public life in this country, and we have a number of very foolish ones. By "foolish ones" we mean those men who are ignorant of those events in past history which have lessons for the future; those who do not study questions for themselves, but rely upon the judgment and the dicta of others. It may be that this class take the conclusions of others for their own because they lack comprehension of the problems arising. If this be the case come under the category, for

Now men who will at this nineteenth century, with the our colonial form of Govern-