

pression from the Treasury benches as to the course the Government intended to take. Will the hon. the leader of the Government kindly enlighten us as to the course he proposes to take, as I may be led into error for want of that light? I am sorry that those who are charged by the majority of the House with the conduct of affairs, should not have thought fit to give to the House any expression of opinion as to the course they think fit to take on this occasion. I make this appeal in no hostile spirit, but in recognition of the duties of hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches, and I think I might better be answered than by the scornful nod of negation with which the First Minister chooses to honor me, in reply. I do not intend to embarrass or accentuate any of the phases of this discussion with anything which approaches to censure, or incrimination, or misrepresentation of motive. I was not insensible to the even-handed justice which the hon. member for North Bruce (Mr. McNeill) dealt out to the hon. member for Montreal Centre (Mr. Curran) and myself. To the hon. member for Montreal Centre he paid a well-deserved compliment; against myself he levelled an ill-deserved insinuation. I suppose the hon. member for Montreal was very much elated by the compliment; I can assure the hon. gentleman that I was not very much depressed by the insinuation, and I pass it by. I am sorry that we should resume at this time this discussion under the circumstances in which the question stands. I very well remember last Session when we were told, as the hon. member for South Grey (Mr. Landerkin) has said, by the Minister of Justice that, in the hour of distress and of difficulty, we had not been anxious to assist in securing relief, but that in the day of triumph, when light had dawned, when the full sun was about to appear, when the battle had been fought, when the victory was almost won, we were indeed ardent and active. I took a different, and I am sorry to say a truer view of the situation as it stood. I felt that the battle had not been fought, I felt that the victory had not been won, I felt that the situation was an extremely critical one. My earnest desire was, not that the measure in its precise terms and in all its details which, at that time, was hanging in the balance in the Imperial Parliament should pass—no, I declared then, as I now repeat, that I regarded that measure in more than one detail, and notably with reference to some of the distributions of power, as defective—but my desire was that, in the view which Mr. Gladstone had at that time put forward, that the vote upon the second reading of that Bill should be taken only as an affirmation by the House of Commons of their adoption of the principle of a measure of Home Rule for Ireland, every thing that we could do should be done, in order to further an affirmative result upon that division; knowing that, according to the pledge of the First Minister, the Bill would proceed no further; knowing that the interval would be devoted to further discussion and to familiarisation of the mind of the country with the whole question; knowing that, in the fall Session which he proposed in that event to hold, the Bill, with such alterations as further discussion and further consideration would produce, would be re-submitted; knowing that at that time, with all that advantage, there would be that further discussion in the House, and that then perhaps, after all—and I should not have at all regretted it—then, after that period of preparation for dealing with the measure, an appeal would be made to the people. But the consequences which I dreaded were that the First Minister's Bill might not even receive, in the sense in which he asked it should receive, a second reading, and that the result of that would be a precipitate and premature dissolution and a submission of that great question to the judgment of the people of the United Kingdom before there was that opportunity of enlightening and instructing them, and while the measure was in a position, as it obviously was in a position, less favorable than

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a few months of time might have made it for a judgment in favor of the views of the Minister. Those provisions of mine, which made me so anxious that our voice should speak in support of the principle of the Bill, have been unhappily verified, and, instead of being able to-day to congratulate ourselves upon that bright sunshine which the hon. the Minister of Justice told us we were to see over Ireland, we find ourselves face to face with a situation much more deplorable than existed upon the former occasion, and we find now that all that we could do, all that we could say, to promote the second reading of that Bill would have been things done and things said which not merely might be, but most certainly would have been, essential and important to the attainment of the end which to the great majority of us was held dear. Now, in this new Parliament, I think it quite fitting that we should ascertain, coming as we do fresh from the people, the sense of the representatives of the Canadian people upon the question—not only upon the question accentuated as it is by the measure now before the Imperial Parliament, but upon the question of the remedy and relief to which we have directed our attention in the year 1882 and in the year 1886. The Parliament which acted in the year 1882 was a moribund Parliament; the Parliament which acted in the year 1886 was a moribund Parliament; the Parliament which is now called to speak is a Parliament fresh from the constituencies of Canada, and I hope that, fresh as it comes from the constituencies of Canada, just fresh from contact with the people and somewhat freer than in four years hence it may be in some quarters from apprehensions of a resumption of that contact, that voice will be as clear and as decided and as nearly approaching unanimity as on former occasions, in the direction of relief to the people of Ireland and to the Empire of which Ireland and Canada form part. I do not disguise from you that nothing which has occurred has in the slightest degree altered my own opinion that the Parliament of Canada took the appropriate course in the year 1882, when, with the advice and assent of the gentlemen on the Treasury benches, we assumed and acted upon our right respectfully to address the Executive head of the Empire upon this subject. You may say this is a question of form. It is not a question of form only. *La forme c'est la forme*. If it be a form, there is in it a large measure of substance. I regard it as a respectful but firm assertion on our side, in the imperfect condition of the organisation of the Empire, of our right respectfully to tender to the supreme and central authorities our opinions upon those questions which are connected with the well-being of the Empire in which we may be said to have a direct and an indirect interest sufficiently important and material to justify such intervention; and for my part I very much prefer the language of representation, the language of hope, the language of request, to the language of resolution, of remonstrance, and of protest. I prefer the recognition that we are, according as we may choose to call ourselves, children of the same family addressing the parent, members of the same family addressing our connections, subjects of the same Empire communicating in that more intimate, direct course in which such a relation entitles us to communicate with the Executive head upon the affairs of the Empire, occupying towards the central authority and the Executive head of that Empire a closer relation, a director power, a responsibility as well as a right extremely different from those which are occupied by any foreign community, from the position of the State of Maine or the State of Massachusetts, for example. I do not think that, in so far as the vindication of such our right is concerned, it depends in the slightest degree upon my word or my opinion. It was the solemn, and apparently the unanimous, determination of this House and of the Senate of Canada, that we had that right and that we should act upon it. But what I say is, that it is to be deplored that the judgment of a Col-