

Address, can, without stultifying itself, still pass a resolution which embodies so moderately all the sentiments and nothing more expressed in that Address. I do not see, for my part, how we can accept the amendment to the amendment of the hon. member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Davin), and I do not see how that hon. gentleman can consistently vote for his own amendment. The hon. gentleman has assured the House, by his vote, that he thinks this is a subject on which we have no right to interfere. Having satisfied himself on that point, I do not think we are to be led in this matter by him, and I trust the hon. members who acted with us in this matter, and voted down the amendment, will continue to support the resolution of the hon. member for Montreal Centre, as modified according to the suggestions of the hon. member for West Durham.

Mr. DAVIN. The remarks of the hon. member for Essex call for a few observations.

Mr. SPEAKER. The hon. member has already spoken.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I understand that in my absence considerable interest was shown in the fact that my seat was vacant. I was more pleasantly and quite as profitably engaged elsewhere.

Mr. MILLS. Hear, hear.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Yes, as profitably as this debate will result. It has been said that we are bound by our previous resolutions of 1882 and 1886 to follow in the same course and to support the resolution of the hon. member for Montreal Centre. I do not think so. And, moreover, I think considering the fact that the resolution of 1882 has caused a recurrence of the discussion of the subject in 1886, and again in 1887, that it is almost unfortunate that that resolution—or that Address—was carried in 1882. I would have been well pleased if in 1832 that Address had not been moved; but moved as it was by my hon. friend and present colleague, the Minister of Inland Revenue (Mr. Costigan), it was one I could not refuse my assent to. It was expressed in the most loyal terms. It said—and said truly—that under our system of Home Rule in Canada we had been prosperous and happy, and the statement that the Irish population who were unhappy and discontented when they remained in Ireland, under the changed circumstances in which they found themselves when they came to Canada had become happy and contented was a truism so true that one could not refuse to vote for it. It was guarded and loyally guarded. It said we hope that circumstances would allow the Imperial Parliament to pass such a measure as would convey the same content, the same prosperity, to the people in Ireland as was enjoyed by their countrymen who came to Canada, provided always that it was consistent with the integrity of the Empire. That resolution, I believe, we had a right to pass. I quite agree with all those hon. gentlemen who said it was within our competence to express our opinion on that subject, or on any subject really of public interest. However, that was denied by Her Majesty's Government. The hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills) entered into an elaborate argument to show that we had the right to do so as we did in 1882. It was not necessary, it seems to me, to have addressed that argument to this House. The country had received with approbation our course in 1882, and therefore, there was no necessity, I think, for that argument having been gone into. Who raised the point that we had no right? It was not the people of Canada; it was not the Parliament of Canada; it was Mr. Gladstone—Mr. Gladstone's Government. One hon. member stated—I do not know whether it was in the present debate or not—that it was merely a letter from the Colonial Secretary. It was much more than that. It was a solemn answer by Her Majesty's Government to the respectful and loyal Address the contents of which I have just spoken of;

and we were told that while any representations which were made concerning the interests of Canada would be listened to with great interest and respect, so far as regarded the subject of our Address in 1882 it was the exclusive province of Her Majesty's Government to deal with, and Her Majesty would only listen to her Imperial advisers. That statement was one that I do not at all concur in. But it was not the mere statement of Lord Kimberley, because if you look in the English *Hansard* you will find that, in answer to a question, Mr. Gladstone used language literally so nearly approaching the language of that despatch that it is quite clear he dictated the despatch and was personally responsible for it. He had then a different line of policy, and therefore he snubbed Canada for pursuing a course which to-day he will, perhaps, thank us for and be very grateful for. Mr. Speaker, the recurrence of subjects of this kind is greatly to be regretted. It is greatly to be regretted that we do not confine ourselves to matters which are strictly within our competence and within the interests of the people of Canada, and we should as seldom as possible stray away from that course into subjects so foreign or so far from being of direct interest, or direct subjects of consideration, for the Canadian Parliament. If we could suppose that this resolution which has been moved by the hon. member for Centre Montreal (Mr. Curran), and pressed upon the consideration of this House with so much ability and so much moderation and courtesy, would do any good to the people of Ireland I would for one, strain a great point to go with it. But it can be of not the slightest service to the people of Ireland. It cannot have the slightest effect on the measure before the Parliament of England. We know that the second reading of that Bill—after the measure with all its details was before the people of England; we know it was discussed in the public press of England; we know it was of burning interest in England, Scotland and Ireland; we know that every possible argument was used in the press of one side and the other—and yet at the end of the discussion the second reading was carried by a majority of one hundred and one. So it is quite certain that this Bill—be it good or be it bad, be its results unfortunate or beneficial—is to become the law of that land and, therefore, if this resolution is introduced and voted for in this House with the idea that it will be of any benefit in amending that Bill, in obstructing its passage or preventing its being the law of that land, then you might go beyond our legitimate sphere and vote for it in the hope that it would be of service to Ireland. But that measure is going to be the law of the land in a few days; it will be passed by the House of Commons in a few days; afterwards it will be passed by the House of Lords, and I have no doubt the Royal Assent will be given almost immediately afterwards. So, then, it can be of no benefit to the people of Ireland in any way whatever. It cannot prevent the evils which have been so strongly pressed in England and Ireland and reiterated here. The people of Ireland will be under that law for good or for evil; it will be put in force for good or for evil, and our resolution will be of no benefit or advantage in relieving or alleviating any of the unfavorable or disastrous consequences which are prophesied to result from that Bill. But while it can be of no good to the people of Ireland, is it not of great mischief to the people of Canada that this subject of discord should be introduced here? We have people here of different opinions. We have people in Canada who are as strongly in favor of this Bill, as the majority in this House are as opposed to it. It is setting neighbor against neighbor in Canada; it is making this a matter of political difference, whereas we should be joined together, when we can be joined together, in developing this young country. We should all apply our minds, and, without respect to party, should endeavor to elevate our country, to promote its interests, and remove from it as far as we can every element of social, religious or