

statement, in 1719 not fewer than five million people died of starvation. So they had there almost the same state of things, produced by the same causes, that you have had in Ireland since 1840. Well, Sir, we have, as the hon. member for West Durham has said, and as other hon. gentlemen have said in the observations they have addressed to the House this evening, the fact that this country is very detrimentally affected by this state of things in Ireland in consequence of the disaffection which exists there; and the Irishmen who leave that country do not come to this country, do not go to other portions of the British Empire, but they go to a foreign country and contribute to increase its wealth and become useful and important citizens of that country. Now, Sir, when we find that a people thrive in every country except their own, are prosperous, contented and law-abiding in every country except their own, it shows the evil is not with the race or the religion that race professes, but it is with the Government which produces that state of things—that poverty and discontent which we find existing in Ireland at the present time. It seems to me, therefore, that in the resolution which has been submitted to the House the opinion is not expressed in sufficiently pointed terms that, on account of Home Rule having been tried and found beneficial here, it would in our opinion be found to be beneficial in Ireland. We know what is the result of a Legislative Union here. There are some who think that a Government having a large amount of power is necessarily a strong Government, but that is not our experience. Our experience was that the attempt to establish a Legislative Union here and to weld dissimilar populations into one people had the effect to produce a conflict of races between one section of the Dominion and the other. Under a form of Legislative Union we had practically two Governments. We had an Attorney-General for Quebec and one for Ontario; we had two sets of Ministers, two systems of legislation and jurisprudence, we had one set of laws for Quebec and another for Ontario, one municipal system for Quebec and one for Ontario, one assessment of property for Quebec and a different system in Ontario, so that all those things which a Federal system exists to give effect to we had, in fact, under a Legislative Union. What was more we had the mischief that arises out of having measures distasteful in one Province forced upon it by the representatives of another Province of a different race and a different way of thinking. Now, Sir, it is a common notion among Englishmen that a system of government that is good for England must be good for all the world, and Ireland has been largely governed on this principle. The dissatisfaction existing in Ireland under English rule may be in a large degree a matter of prejudice, but it is necessary to the well-being and progress of a nation that some respect should be had to its prejudices as well as to its intelligent convictions. As far as Ireland is concerned, not only its prejudices have been disregarded, but its sentiments have been almost wholly overlooked. In fact, no important remedial measure, as the hon. member for West Durham has said, has been carried out for Ireland, unless it has been secured by threatened civil war or by a revolution. I know that a Government who will undertake to do justice has a very formidable task because its difficulty is that it has to overcome the prejudices of 25,000,000 of people who reside outside of Ireland, and whose opinions and prejudices in the Government of Ireland have to be consulted. Now let me call the attention of the House to the address that was issued by the late Lord Beaconsfield, when he went to the country in 1879. When he dissolved Parliament he knew that a large section of the Irish people were demanding Home Rule, and that the question would be made a very important issue in the elections in Ireland. Let me call the attention of the House to the view which he entertained of this question of Home Rule:

“Nevertheless, a danger, in its ultimate results scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine, and which now engages Your Excel-

lency's anxious attention, distract that country. A portion of its population is attempting to sever the Constitutional tie which unites it to Great Britain in that bond which has favored the power and prosperity of both.

“It is to be hoped that all men of light and leading will resist this destructive doctrine. The strength of this nation depends on the unity of feeling which should pervade the United Kingdom and its widespread dependencies. The first duty of an English Minister should be to consolidate that cooperation which renders irresistible a community educated as our own, in an equal love of liberty and law.

“And yet there are some who challenge the expediency of the Imperial character of this realm. Having attempted, and failed, to enfeeble our colonies by their policy of decomposition, they may perhaps now recognize in the desintegration of the United Kingdom a mode which will not only accomplish, but precipitate their purpose.

“The immediate dissolution of Parliament will afford an opportunity to the nation to decide upon a course which will materially influence its future fortunes and shape its destiny.

“Rarely in this century has there been an occasion more critical. The power of England and the peace of Europe will largely depend on the verdict of the country.”

It is perfectly obvious from this letter which Lord Beaconsfield addressed to the Viceroy of Ireland, that he held that any demand for Home Rule meant disintegration, that you cannot confer on the people of Ireland the right of local self-government, without seriously weakening the bonds by which the Empire is held together. We know in this country that has not been our experience. The Legislative Union which existed between Upper and Lower Canada, instead of consolidating them into one people had the tendency of arraying or antagonizing the people of one section of the Province against the people of another section. It is well known that no such feeling exists at this moment between Ontario and Quebec. From the very moment each Province took charge of its own local affairs, the Union became stronger. So soon as certain portions of the executive power passed into the United Parliament, and other powers were vested in the Local Legislatures, it strengthened, and did not weaken the Union. The same effect will be produced by a federation of the United Kingdom. We believe that our experiment shows this fact, that if you give to a united body power to deal with questions in which only a portion of the community are interested, and geographical sections of the community are alone interested, you weaken instead of strengthening the bond between the people so united. This has been the case with the United Kingdom. If the people of Ireland had been allowed a measure of local self-government, and had been permitted to manage their local affairs in their own way, there would have been no standing ground for Fenianism—for those who advocated the disintegration of the Empire or the entire separation of Ireland from the United Kingdom. In my opinion this House would have been justified in going very much further in the expression of its opinion than it has done in the Address proposed by the hon. member for Victoria. We on this side of the House have no doubt that a Federal system of Government is the only one suited to a large country. We believe a Federal system would prove a great improvement if it were tried in the United Kingdom; we believe it would give contentment to Ireland; that in giving the people control of their own local affairs and the right to manage them in their own way, the sense of justice would save the minority from being dominated over by the majority. Holding these views and opinions, that men ought not to be incarcerated for political opinions expressed in a constitutional way, as many of the Home Rulers were doing, we were prepared to vote for resolutions in which those views are expressed in a much more clear and decided tone than that in which they are enunciated in the resolutions before the House.

Mr. BUNSTER. As the resolution asks for a simple act of justice to be done by Her Majesty's Government in the interest of Ireland, I do not understand why so much time has been occupied in the discussion. It should have been