

had during many years disturbed that Province and retarded its progress were finally and happily terminated in 1854 by an Act of the Provincial Legislature, bearing a close resemblance in its essential features to the measure now before the Imperial Parliament.

"3. That a royal and dutiful address, founded on the foregoing resolutions, be presented to Her Majesty the Queen, and that a Special Committee of Members be appointed to prepare an Address and report the same."

To this the hon. gentleman moved, seconded by Sir George Cartier, the previous question, and the previous question was upon that occasion carried by the hon. gentleman with the assistance of his supporters, against the vote of the Liberal party. The hon. gentleman supported his motion for the previous question by a speech. He said:

"Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD replied that he did not doubt that the hon. gentleman was influenced by patriotic motives, but it was quite certain that his object was just as mischievous as his mode of bringing it up. The hon. member appeared to give up the whole case when he admitted that, as a matter of legislation, we had no right to deal with it. The Parliament of the Dominion, he acknowledged, was only authorized to pass laws for the good order and peace of Canada. Therefore, the hon. member said that all we could do was to give a simple expression of opinion—nay, more, that we should not do so ordinarily, except on important occasions, or in respect to a matter of supreme necessity. Now, the question immediately suggested itself—Where was the necessity for the present motion? The measure has been approved by the public opinion of Great Britain—it had been sanctioned by an overwhelming majority of the House of Commons, and the hon. gentleman himself had been certain that the House of Lords, in due submission to the popular sentiment, would agree to its passage. Now, surely, it was an extraordinary course on the part of the hon. member to ask the House to deal with a matter with which it had no concern, and render itself amenable to the answers that 'it should mind its own business.' The hon. member acknowledges that our Parliament should not deal with such a matter except in a case of supreme necessity.

"Hon. Mr. HOLTON. I said on a question of supreme importance to the Empire.

"Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. There was no supreme necessity for the motion—it was not of supreme importance to the Empire what our opinions on such a question might be—whether we were favorable or opposed to the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland. The hon. member had asserted that we were in the habit of passing addresses to the Sovereign on matters of interest, affecting herself or family. Now, the Queen of England was the Sovereign of Canada, every one had an interest in herself and family. In the very Act of Confederation, the first clause (sanctioned by the British Parliament), declared that the Sovereign of Great Britain and Ireland shall be our own Sovereign for all time to come; and, therefore, it was quite within the limits of our jurisdiction and propriety to refer to matters connected with the propriety and happiness of Her family. The hon. member had also said that we had expressed an opinion respecting peace and war; but every one would see that the moment such a state of things arose, every section of the Empire was virtually affected. Therefore, as loyal and devoted subjects, it was our duty and interest to sympathize with the heart of the Empire. But in the case of the present question, neither our loyalty nor our interest was at stake. He for one would not go into the discussion of the merits of the measure—he would not say whether it was good or not, for it was not the place to debate it. The hon. member had no right to force an expression of opinion in the Canadian Parliament, and he must have known that there was a very considerable and respectable minority in the country immediately affected, who received the Bill with heartburning and the deepest dissatisfaction. The people of Canada lived in harmony and peace—or had no religious or other antipathies to excite us; and yet the hon. gentlemen wished to transfer to the Dominion the heart-burnings and animosities of the Old World. If the policy of the hon. member were sanctioned, then we should see the sad spectacle of different religious sects in this country coming forward, embodying their respective feelings on this vexed question. The hon. member had not even assumed to discuss even the merits of the question—to go into details, and show that it was worthy of the support of the House. Yes, he was calling upon the House to express a decided opinion on a question respecting which it had only a general idea. There could only be one object in such a motion, and that was, to create an ill-feeling between the Protestants and Catholics, to bring discord into this now happy country. It was quite obvious, that if the cause of the course of the hon. member was legitimate, then it would be within the province of the Legislature to deal with the Reform Bill, and other questions of equal importance affecting Great Britain. On the same principle, the House would be found interfering in the affairs of Spain, and referring to her ecclesiastical establishments. Nay more, the Parliament of the Dominion, with equal justice, might be called upon to give a strong expression of sentiment respecting separate schools, or church endowing, or other matter of interest to the people of Lower Canada. In whatsoever light he viewed the question, he could not avoid seeing the impropriety of the motion brought forward by the hon. member for Chateaugay, and was convinced that the House would deal with it promptly and effectually, so as to prevent the introduction of similar resolutions in the future. In conclusion, he would move the previous question in amendment to the motion before the House."

Mr. BLAKE.

Now, Sir, I maintain that the hon. gentleman was on that occasion mistaken as to the real feelings and sentiments of the great majority of the Canadian people. I believe that, so far from that motion being, as the hon. gentleman said, calculated to excite discord, heart-burnings and religious difficulties, we would have all agreed—had he but seen the question in another light—in favor of that solution of that question, just as we had, in the old Province of Canada, lively though were the feelings of religious difference in that old Province, when we settled a somewhat similar question. I refer, Sir, to this statement, because I wish to express the hope that in the interval between 1869 and 1882, the hon. gentleman has advanced in his views, has observed the current of events, and will now be disposed to take a different line, and instead of arguing on the precedent which he himself created by moving the previous question on that occasion, as he stated there would be an effectual barrier to similar resolutions in the future, he may be disposed to admit our right to tender some advice on this occasion, and give his support to the motion before the House. I say we have an interest, as a part of the great Empire—as sharers in its prosperity, as sharers in its shame; we have an interest in everything which will tend to develop the strength and the unity of that Empire; we have an interest in every great and important question affecting the general constitution and organization of the Empire at large. Nobody can doubt that, through chaos and without any formal system, the gradual tendency of the constitution of the Empire has been more and more—perhaps through drifting, perhaps otherwise—towards the adoption of the federative form. We ourselves are the out-crop of that idea. Our present position is due to its partial, unsymmetrical, unreasoned, but practical development; and I say, Sir, we must consider that, without power effectually to interfere, without power of legislation, we yet have a right, as members of the Empire, to express an opinion upon this subject. As a part of the Empire largely peopled by old country men—by Englishmen, Irishmen, and Scotchmen—we have a deep interest in a question which must materially affect the prosperity and happiness of our countrymen in the old land. As a country wanting immigrants, as the hon. gentleman has said, we have a material interest of a very great degree. We all know where the Irish immigration goes; we all know that those who cross the sea and land upon the shores of America, go almost wholly, particularly those of the Roman Catholic faith, to the United States instead of to Canada; we know that our share of the Irish immigration is insignificant, and that our share of Irish Roman Catholic immigration is but a very small proportion in these latter days of even our share of Irish immigration. We know, on the other hand, that enormous numbers of that people have gone to the United States. When I said two years ago that that was due largely to the difficulties to which I referred, and hoped that a better feeling might be engendered by remedial measures applied to the state of Ireland, hon. gentlemen opposite did not seem to sympathize with that remark. I was glad to hear the hon. gentleman repeat it to-day, and I hope it has become, to a large extent, the accepted sentiment of the people of this country. We are interested materially in another sense in this question. We and our neighbors have a common frontier of 3,000 miles long. That country is, and must always be, a country in our cordial and friendly relations with which, must lie a great part of our own prosperity; and no man can doubt that the existence of the Irish question is a main feature of the difficulties between the United Kingdom and the United States, and cannot but react most unfavorably upon us. We recollect what has happened in former days; we recollect when our peace was broken, our territory invaded more than once, expense was incurred and blood shed; we recollect that such a state of things existed in the United States,