

and secures a settlement of the difficulties between tenants and landlords, it will be a bright day for the British Crown. I am sure the granting of Home Rule in this year of Her Majesty's Jubilee would be a monument remembered by the world more than all the public and charitable institutions that would be founded. It would be the greatest event of the reign of our glorious Queen, and I hope it will be accomplished in order that Queen Victoria may be able to say she has freed a people who have been oppressed for so many years.

Mr. McCARTHY. The discussion has taken so wide a range, it may be well, perhaps, to recall the attention of the House to the matter upon which we shall by-and-bye, and before very long I trust, have to vote. I desire, in the statement I am about to make, to be as free as possible from making any imputation upon the motives of any hon. gentleman who has addressed the House. I desire to treat this matter in as calm and judicial a spirit as under the circumstances it can be dealt with, and I ask that the House shall be recalled to the position in which we stand here, and the powers with which we are invested and the rights we possess here as representatives of the Canadian people. We have been on other occasions invited to vote, and on one occasion we almost unanimously did vote, in favor of the general principle of the establishment of Home Rule for Ireland, and on a more recent occasion, though perhaps not with such unanimity, we also recorded and reaffirmed our former opinion in favor of that general principle. But it has always been to me a matter of some doubt, and that doubt was not lessened by the rebuke with which our first resolutions were received, whether we had not stepped beyond our sphere, whether we had not gone beyond our right and function as a Parliament or as an Assembly to advise Her Majesty as to how this question between Great Britain and Ireland should be dealt with. Now, we sit here as a Parliament it is true—as I believe, the greatest Parliament under the British Empire, except the Imperial Parliament itself, and with larger and wider powers, with that exception, than any other legislative body under the Crown of England. But after all we hold here but a delegated power. We have but the right which is conferred upon us under the charter enabling us as a Canadian people to govern ourselves, in the distribution of that power between the local legislative assemblies and this Parliament of Canada; and it is merely within that power and as far as that power goes, that, as it appears to me, we are sent here by the people of Canada to express their opinions. For my own part, I do not know and I do not feel that I have any right here to express the opinions of my constituents on this question of Home Rule—upon the question of how any particular measure should be decided or disposed of in the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland. I do not know that my constituents, in honoring me with the position which I hold in this House, gave me any mandate to express their opinions, to represent them or to bind their views with my own upon this question. I do not deny that we have all got the right of petition to the throne; that is a right belonging to every British subject. But it is one thing to meet in our public halls and exercise the right of petition, and it is quite another and a different thing to pretend, as representatives of the people, to express opinions which are not merely the opinions of the individual members who record their votes, but purport to be—and to have any value should be—a representation of the opinions of those who sent us here. Now I may be met, and properly met, by the answer that this opinion of mine is not in accordance with the votes which I have given on two occasions, in support of the general principle of Home Rule. But we see where we are now being led. In 1882, I do not suppose there was any member of this House—I do not suppose

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that to-day there is any member of this House, no matter upon what side of the Chair he may sit—who does not feel a desire that the difficulties which have occurred, and which are still unfortunately existing in Ireland, should be done away with by means of some measure of legislation or other, whatever means may be found of accomplishing that object. I do not suppose, therefore, that, in according to the general principle of Home Rule our hearty concurrence, as a means to that end, we went very far astray. But where are we now being led? One thing it was to express that general opinion; one thing it was to say that we believe, judging by the way in which we have found the measure of self-government which had been accorded to us had resulted in this country, and that it would probably produce a like result in Ireland—that, I say, was one thing, but we are now proposing to deal with a specific and particular measure submitted to the British Parliament and upon which that Parliament has the responsibility of deciding. That, I take it, is the point of the resolution moved by my hon. friend from Montreal Centre (Mr. Curran). It is not merely to reiterate our former opinion on Home Rule that this resolution is moved. The hon. gentleman has told us candidly—or rather, so I infer from his address—that the reason this matter was brought before this assembly was that the Coercion Bill, as it is called, had been introduced by the Government of England, and that large and important meetings had been held throughout this country petitioning—as their right was and is to petition against that or any other matter which they thought affected their individual interest—petitioning against this measure. In that view the hon. gentleman thought proper to bring the matter up in this House, and ask us as a legislative body to express by this constitutional means our opinion upon this important question. If you eliminate from these resolutions the important paragraph relating to the question of the Coercion Bill, I do not suppose that the other part of them would have occupied, to any great extent, the attention of this House as this matter has occupied it. To that, therefore, I desire to take exception—not from any feeling of hostility to the Irish race, of which I am proud to be a member; not from any desire to prevent that race getting such a measure of freedom or self-government, such constitutional redress as they may be able to get in a proper way; I take this position from no such feeling, and I trust that no word of mine can possibly be used in support of the supposition that I entertain any such feeling. It is not for any such reason as that, that I take this view, but because I believe that we had better leave with the proper constituted Imperial authorities the questions which belong to them, and we will find we have quite enough to do here in Canada with the management of our own affairs. We are proud, Sir, to know that since 1840 we have had what is called responsible government in this country. We have won the right from the British Crown to govern ourselves, according to the well understood rules of constitutional government, and we have found, as a whole, that we have prospered in that way. But while that is so, are we not pretending to go a little too far? Are we not pretending to do too much when, not content with the liberty which we enjoy ourselves, we propose to dictate to the Imperial Parliament which has delegated to us these powers, what they should do under circumstances where they have great responsibility and full knowledge, whereas we have neither the knowledge nor the responsibility which belongs to that great body? What is this Coercion Bill, so called, and why has it been introduced? I am not going to argue to-night in favor of that measure, nor am I going to argue against it. I humbly admit differing altogether from hon. gentlemen on the opposite side, for whom their leader spoke, that my acquaintance with the subject is not sufficient to enable me to discuss it in that way on my own account and form a competent opinion upon it, much less to bind those whom