

discuss this particular observation of the hon. member for North Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy). I readily admit that our constitution is a limited one; I admit that the powers we exercise are defined in the British North America Act; I admit that we have no authority to administer Irish affairs or to legislate for the Irish people; but I deny altogether that because we have not such power it is improper on our part to express any opinion with regard to the government of that country. Why, one sovereign State has no authority to administer the affairs or control the act on of another. If it had, the State over which it exercised such control would not be sovereign, but there is no fact better established than the fact that one State often does undertake to advise, does criticise, in its representative Assembly, the conduct of another State, and does, sometimes, go so far as to exercise active interference, when the manner in which the government of that other State is conducted is such as to disturb mutual relations, or create difficulties, or give rise to any danger. The principle we recognise in this matter is exactly the same as that which we recognise when one of us undertakes to deal with his own property as he thinks proper. No one claims the right to interfere with him unless he undertakes to manage his property in such a way that he endangers the rights of the owners of other property. My neighbor has the right to destroy his own house, provided in so doing he does not endanger the safety of mine. It is clear as noon-day that one State has the same right to express an opinion upon the actions of another as one man has, under certain circumstances, to remonstrate against the conduct of his neighbor. It is not necessary that a State should be independent to possess this right. In expressing an opinion on this Irish question we are not exceeding our authority a whit more than is a sovereign State when it expresses an opinion upon the action and conduct of another sovereign State. Now, when the hon. member for North Simcoe assumes that, because we have not the power to legislate, we have, therefore, no right to speak, I utterly dissent from that proposition. Were that doctrine to be acted upon, what would be our position with regard to the Fishery question. We have no immediate connection with the United States, we have no sovereign authority to deal with them with the view of settling the difficulty; but upon what grounds do we claim to possess the right to express an opinion? We do so because our interests are concerned, because we feel that we have a practical interest in the question; and in proportion as our interests are at stake, in the same proportion do we claim the moral right to impress our views upon that sovereign authority which acts on our behalf with regard to whatever negotiations may be had. The hon. gentleman thinks we ought to express no opinion; that whatever our views may be we ought to conceal them. We had better leave this question to those who are authorised to deal with it. We have twice spoken upon this subject before. The hon. member says we only expressed an opinion upon a general principle, but now we are called upon to pronounce upon a specific measure. The hon. member is mistaken. We were quite as specific in 1882 as we are asked to be on this occasion. Does the hon. gentleman forget that we expressed then an opinion on the Kilmainham imprisonment? I agree with the hon. gentleman when he says that we had better proceed by Address, but I do not agree with him when he thinks that it would be better still not to proceed at all. The hon. gentleman, both in his speech and in his motion, assumes that this House has no right to express to the Crown an opinion upon any subject upon which it has not the power to legislate; and that we are, in reason and in the fitness of things, as completely excluded from interfering with all Imperial concerns as the Governments and Legislatures of the Provinces are from interfering with the work which we here undertake. I

deny that proposition. We are here as representatives from the same people who return members to the different Provincial Legislatures. These members sit in the Provincial Parliaments for the purpose of discharging certain defined duties within the limits of the constitution. They may exercise the ordinary powers of rational beings upon the general policy and conduct of their own affairs, and if our course in this Parliament were outrageous, if it encroached on the rights of the Provinces, they would equally have a right to remonstrate with regard to our conduct. But we speak here for the same population, we act on behalf of the same people as do the legislators of the Provinces, while in the Imperial Parliament we have not such representation as they have in the Dominion Parliament. The Imperial Parliament holds in this respect a position different altogether in relation to the outlying portions of the Empire from that which we hold towards the Legislatures of the Provinces within the limits of the Dominion. As we speak on the subject of Fisheries, so we may speak upon every other subject of Imperial concern that may in any way affect us, or in which humanity may prompt us to speak. Take, for instance, the case of the slave trade. The Imperial Parliament and Government sent a large force to the African coast for the purpose of suppressing the slave trade, and they entered into negotiations with other States for that purpose. What interest had the people of the United Kingdom in that particular question? What right had they to interfere with those of other States engaged in piratical enterprises of that kind, any more than we have the right to engage in the discussion of the Irish question? There is no difference between the two in principle. We know that their conduct in that matter is justified on the grounds of humanity, and upon those grounds, as well as upon the grounds of our political and material interest, we may justify our expressing an opinion on the Irish question. There are Imperial interests concerned. There is a large Irish population in Canada, and there is also a large Irish population in the United States. We know how hostile the latter are to the United Kingdom; we know how a portion of them were armed, drilled and organised, and how this country was by them hostilely invaded. We know to what expense this country was put by that invasion. Well, responsibility and authority are commensurate in the nature of things. Where we have duties imposed upon us, we have also the right of expressing our opinion. We have the right to say to the Imperial Parliament that, in consequence of your misgovernment of Ireland, you have imposed upon us larger burdens than we would otherwise have been called upon to bear, you have affected our material prosperity by affecting our relations with the neighboring Republic, and we call on you to remove the difficulty by dealing with this Irish question in the way the people demand. Give to the people of Ireland that local self-government which they seek; you will conciliate not only the Irish people residing in Ireland, but you will conciliate the people of that greater Ireland, to whom the hon. member referred, who has his bright home in the setting sun. That being the case, we are exercising the ordinary right of a legislative body in expressing an opinion upon this Irish question, and in pressing the Imperial Government to settle it in such a way as to conciliate the Irish population, so as to minimise our difficulties and increase our opportunities of establishing more intimate and more favorable commercial relations with the neighboring Republic. We all remember, those of us who have read something of mental pathology, the inhuman manner in which the insane were treated fifty years ago. At that day nothing was thought of but strait-jackets, manacles and the lash. Men whom we would suppose to be rational beings, capable of exercising sound judgment in regard to affairs, seemed to think it was the proper thing to subject to severe