

a free country like Canada would tolerate such legislation? Yet we are informed that is the legislation intended to be imposed by means of the Coercion Bill. Can it be wondered at that Irishmen and their descendants throughout the British territories, and in foreign lands, should attempt to prevent legislation of that kind being forced upon their friends and relations and co-nationalists at home? I am not surprised that they should, but I am surprised that as much toleration has been shown as has been in the discussion of the question. I am not going to take up the time of the House further, for I feel this subject has, at this stage of the debate, passed beyond the period of discussion, the House having already declared by nearly three to one that this House has the power and the right to address the Throne upon the subject of legislation, which they consider likely to lead to great trouble and to the disturbance of the peace of the Empire. Therefore, I think we are quite justified in the course we have pursued, and I shall be happy to support the resolution of the hon. member for Montreal Centre (Mr. Curran).

Sir DONALD SMITH. I do not desire to detain the House beyond a few moments. The hon. member for Durham (Mr. Blake), the other evening, twitted the Right Hon. the First Minister with contemptuous indifference with regard to this momentous question, and this evening the hon. member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright), as well as my friend from Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell), complained that several members of the Government were not present. I certainly am not the apologist of these gentlemen; but I do think that rather than find fault with them for not taking control of the House on this question, we have cause for congratulation that it has been left an open one. While outside this House, as Englishmen, as Irishmen, Scotchmen or Frenchmen, as men of any nationality, we have the right to give our opinion with regard to what is passing on the other side, in the Imperial Parliament, yet since we are here in this House as Canadians, since it is only as such we are here forming this portion of the Parliament of Canada, it is far better for us that we should leave those who know all the circumstances intimately to deal with the Irish question in the Parliament of Great Britain. Will the hon. gentlemen who voted for this resolution of my hon. friend from Montreal Centre (Mr. Curran), assume that with them alone rests sympathy and feeling for the oppressed, whether in Ireland or in any other part of the Empire? Do we not feel equally with them for those who may be oppressed and for those who are certainly suffering great misery in Ireland as well as in Scotland and England? For do we not know that the condition of affairs is such, in the United Kingdom as well, that at present many who were in comfortable, aye, and affluent circumstances a short time ago, are now suffering very much. No, I am sure that those hon. gentlemen who will vote against the measure of the hon. member for Montreal Centre will feel as deeply for our Irish fellow-subjects as those who may express themselves averse to his measure in this House. What we all wish is I am sure that there should be a measure of Local Legislature given Ireland, that, call it Home Rule or anything you will, there should be given to them, so soon as, in the opinion of those who are responsible for the government of the Empire, it can be properly conceded, some measure of local government or Home Rule which will enable them to conduct their local affairs and leave the Imperial Parliament all its vitality and all its power, and we must believe that the only guarantee we have for the unity of the Empire is that the Central Government should remain with all its dignity. I desired to say these few words to justify the vote I have given and the vote I may give this evening.

Mr. BRIEN. This question has been so fully discussed, not only in this House, but in the public press and on the
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public platform, and has been especially so ably and eloquently treated by the leader of the Opposition, that it would seem very little more remained to be said. However, I think I would be derelict in my duty, as a descendant of the people of that Emerald Isle, as a member of this House, and as a citizen of the country in which Home Rule has had such a happy result, if I did not, by my voice as well as by my vote, support the resolution of the hon. member for Montreal Centre (Mr. Curran), as it has for its object the strengthening of the hands of those noble statesmen who are trying to relieve Ireland from that state of bondage from which she has long, and I may say so patiently, suffered. Neither would I be acting in accordance with the policy of the Liberal party, or as a true Liberal, if I did not support any measure, and add whatever strength I could to any measure which would have the effect of relieving suffering humanity, which would have for its effect the relief of the oppressed and the aid of the needy. For a long time past, in centuries past, the great difficulty seems to have been the same as it is now. It is the democracy against the aristocracy, the weak against the strong, the poor against the rich. The prayer of the Liberal party has ever been: "God bless the poor and the rich can help themselves." It is true that the Imperial Government have intimated, through Her Majesty's Colonial Secretary, that she will be guided by Imperial advice alone, but this should not deter us from doing our duty in this matter. With all due deference to the wisdom of the Imperial Parliament, we are aware that the institution is a human one, and therefore liable to err. Surely it cannot be successfully denied, that while we remain part and parcel of this great Empire, we have a right to tender our advice in this case. I say it is clear that we have in an advisory, though I would not say in a dictatorial, manner. You cannot affect one part of the Empire without in one way or the other affecting the whole, and I assure you that this is already affecting Canada as far as immigration is concerned. The hon. member for North Bruce (Mr. McNeill) said we had not the papers or the necessary information before us. I think we do not require much information in relation to this matter. It is simply a question of principle, and the main question is whether Ireland shall be governed by military rule, by force, or by the freely expressed will of her people through her own representatives by a large majority. It may be perhaps a delicate question, but it is one that should be approached in a calm and judicial spirit, free from any religious or political prejudice. It has been fairly and truly said, by previous speakers, that the land question is the great trouble, but we believe there are other contributing causes to this trouble, and it had its origin at the Union, at the unhallowed and unholy Union in 1800. Rather than give merely an opinion of my own, I will give the opinion of statesmen who were, at the time, conversant with the whole affair. Mr. Fox, in 1806, characterised the Union as "atrocious in its principle and abominable in its means." "It was," he said, "a measure, the most disgraceful to the Government of the country that was ever carried or proposed." Mr. Gladstone is of a similar opinion. "I know," he says, "no blacker or fouler transaction in the history of man, than the making of the Union between England and Ireland." The view of the historian coincides, in this matter, with the view of the statesman. "There are," says Mr. Lecky, "indeed, few things more discreditable to English political literature, than the tone of palliation or even of eulogy that is usually adopted towards the authors of this transaction. Scarcely any element or aggravation of political immorality was wanting; and the term honor, if it be applied to such men as Castlereagh or Pitt, ceases to have any real meaning in politics. Whatever may be thought of the abstract merits of the arrangement, the Union as it was carried was a crime of the deepest turpitude, a crime which, by imposing with every circumstance of