

crowned heads, and that the cases cited by Mr. Cobden were insufficient to prove the plan practical. In conclusion he said :—

“I do not quarrel with the principle upon which the proposition is founded ; but I think its practical effect would be dangerous to this country, and that its practical adoption by other countries would be impossible. Indeed, I believe that no country would agree to such a proposal. No country would consent blindfold to submit its interests and rights on all future occasions to the decision of any third party, whether public or private, whether governments or men of science ; and I think, therefore, the proposition is one which would be attended with no possible result as regards foreign countries.”

He then showed that such treaties would be likely to be especially unjust and injurious to England. To avoid a direct negative on the proposition, the Foreign Secretary then moved the previous question, which, when lost, is by custom of the House of Commons equivalent to an indefinite postponement.

Before the question was put, Lord John Russell spoke in opposition to the proposition of Mr. Cobden ; and that we may compare his position then with that now taken in regard to the “Alabama” claims, we quote as follows :—

“I think there may be some questions intricate and difficult in themselves, in which neither party may be willing to give way, but in which either party may give way without any sacrifice of honour or of the vital interests of the country. On such a question it may be very fit that two powers should agree that arbitration should be resorted to. But, on the other hand, there are other questions that occur between nations, that cannot well or fitly be submitted to arbitrators,—questions involving the dearest interests, the honour or safety of a country, which, if a government proposed to submit to an arbitrator, the force of public opinion and popular feeling would render it impossible for the government to carry out such a purpose.”

In regard, however, to the difficulties which caused the war of 1812, he says :—“There were grave and serious questions, which, if ever they were to be brought into dispute again, might be arranged by arbitration.”

On the vote the previous question was lost by a vote of 79 to 176, and so the subject rested.

FRENCH MOVEMENT.

In France there was also a movement in favour of arbitration. A proposition was made in the National Assembly during this same year, 1849, that the French Republic should propose to the Governments of Europe and America to unite by their representatives in a congress which “should substitute an