

inary speech he made a short time ago, to admit that the question of self-government has become a practical question, but at the same time to demand from the Home Rulers that they should formulate their demands in such a shape as to be acceptable to the people of Great Britain, he certainly demanded what he had no right to ask, and by making that demand he seemed to wish to evade the responsibility which rested upon him as leader of the Government. If he believes the time has come when there must be a reconstruction of the parliamentary system of Great Britain, and when there must be a central and local Parliament, it was for him to frame such a system as would be applicable to the present state of things and which is best calculated to maintain intact the power and the interest of the Empire, and it was not for the forty or fifty gentlemen who represent the Home Rule party in Parliament, and who have no power to give effect to anything they may propose. I think the hon. member for West Durham offered no opposition to Mr. Gladstone in dissenting from his own views of what the duty in this particular is, and I think that Mr. Gladstone was mistaken as to what his duty is, and I think he was also mistaken when he argued as if he were not aware that there was in existence anywhere in the world a system which might form the model for the system he seemed to think was desirable. There was in the United States a Federal system which might have formed the groundwork of some such system. There is also here in Canada a Federal system which the Imperial Parliament itself has created and upon which he might have formed a scheme to suit the necessities of Great Britain. It is true that in our Federal system there is a considerable amount of friction which it is desirable to avoid, but even in that system he could find something worthy of imitation. It is not impossible to devise a system, and it was scarcely just to throw upon the Home Rulers the duty of formulating a scheme when, according to the English Constitution, it is the duty of the Imperial Parliament to provide for the proper legislation of every portion of the United Kingdom. We do not ask our Governor General to determine any question of the kind. There was a time in the history of the old Irish Parliament, when notwithstanding restrictive legislation that crippled it and really deprived it of all right of independent action, it certainly awakened to a sense of its own rights and without asking the sanction of the British Parliament, it simply declared its own power to renew and exercise its powers. But that was the case of an independent Parliament, having a separate existence, not one depending on the British Parliament, by its own right. To-day, however, there is nobody, certainly no one whose opinion possesses the slightest value or influence, who pretends to say that the Imperial Parliament is not absolutely sovereign and supreme in this matter and may pass just such laws regulating legislative action and creating new legislation or apportioning new legislative powers, as they see fit to pass. The Imperial Parliament has the right to pass such acts, and the Legislature passes such powers as the Act describes. There is therefore, no necessity of resorting to such a clumsy and unconstitutional manner to determine these matters, as Mr. Gladstone seems to think is the only course open for the Home Rulers to adopt. But while I believe all this, and while we are glad to see, notwithstanding our party differences, that we are in an eminent degree showing all the essential excellencies of the Federal system applied to a country grown too large for a single Legislature, we might have said very plainly that a similar system should be adopted in Ireland; that Ireland should be given the blessings of self-government of which we all cherish. Therefore, I do not like the words:

“We venture to express a hope that if consistent with the integrity and well being of the Empire, and if the rights and status of the minority are fully protected and secured, sure means may be found of

meeting the expressed desire of so many of your Irish subjects in that regard, so that Ireland may become a source of strength to Your Majesty's Empire.”

I regard that as seriously objectionable and to be contrary to the opinion expressed by many hon. members who addressed the House. We have all declared that we believe Home Rule should be extended to Ireland, and that such extension is not unpatriotic with the safety of the Empire. Some have declared that it has become absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the Empire in its integrity and power. In this resolution we are raising considerable doubt on that point. We are also expressing doubts as to the good faith of the Irish people, for the resolution says: “if the rights of the minority are fully protected and received then we hope” certain things will be done. If there is a country in the world where the rights of the minority, and more than their rights almost their privileges have at all times been respected and held sacred, it is in Ireland. It will be impossible to point to a single instance where the rights of the minority have been disregarded by any body of Irishmen. There have been times in the history of Ireland since those religious differences have occurred, when Catholics were in the ascendancy, when they had control of the Government of the country. They had it in the reign of Queen Mary, and during those years there were prosecutions or persecutions of Protestants in England. Many fled from England to Ireland; they were received in Dublin hospitably and were maintained at the expense of the city; there was again another time when what was known as the Confederation of Kilkenny had control of Ireland, and in no one instance did the minority suffer the slightest injustice or injury at the hands of the majority. To-day what is the state of things? For years and years the corporations of Ireland have been close boroughs, Protestants only being admitted to a share in the Civil Government, and in some cases, Protestants were only permitted to be burgesses. One of the measures obtained by O'Connell was a change of the municipal law in Ireland. The Catholics possessed a large majority in many of the cities and towns. How did they treat the minority? In Dublin, to this day, it has become the rule that the mayor shall be one year a Catholic and one year a Protestant, although the Catholics are three to one in the Common Council which appoints the mayor and six to one in the city. The same is true of other cities and towns in Ireland. With regard to parliamentary representation, one of the most Conservative counties elected, a few years ago, a Presbyterian Minister, and we have every day Catholic constituencies preferring Protestant candidates. I never heard of a case in Ireland where the fact that the candidate was a Protestant was considered objectionable; on the contrary it is rather in the candidate's favor that he belongs to the religion of the minority. To day the very leader of this great agitation, not the man to whom it owes its origin, but its parliamentary leader, Mr. Parnell, is himself a Protestant, as are many others of the same class, and they are not the less admired and esteemed because they happen to belong to the religion of the minority. Therefore I do not think it is desirable that the Canadian Parliament should, by adopting a resolution of this character, throw any doubt upon the liberality of the majority in Ireland. If I believed the results of Home Rule if obtained by the Irish people would be that the minority would be oppressed, wronged or aggrieved in any degree by the majority, I would never record my vote in its favor. And I believe, Sir, a very great number of Irish Catholics throughout the world are of the same belief. And then the extraordinary expression we find here, is “the rights and status of the minority protected.” What does he mean by status? One has to almost guess that. I am not aware, Sir, that legally the minority holds a different status from the majority, but as a matter of fact they hold a very different status indeed, inasmuch as the majority occupy all the