

which most of them have become famous. (Hear, hear.) The resolution I have referred to, and which embodies the policy of the Government of Newfoundland on this question, is as follows :—

*Resolved*,—That having had under their most serious and deliberate consideration the proposal for the formation of a Federal union of the British North American Provinces, upon the terms contained in the report of the Convention of delegates, held at Quebec, on the 10th of October last—the despatch of the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, dated December 3rd, 1864—the observations of His Excellency the Governor in relation to this subject in his opening Speech of the present session—and the report of the Newfoundland delegates—this committee are of opinion, that having regard to the comparative novelty and very great importance of this project, it is desirable that before a vote of the Legislature is taken upon it, it should be submitted to the consideration of the people at large, particularly as the action of the other provinces does not appear to require that it should be hastily disposed of, and as (the present being the last session of this Assembly) no unreasonable delay can be occasioned by this course; and they, therefore, recommend that a final determination upon this important subject be deferred to the next meeting of the Legislature.

(Hear, hear.)

AN HON. MEMBER—That is the report of a committee.

MR. O'HALLORAN—Yes, it is the report of a committee; but it was submitted to the Legislature by the Hon. Attorney General as the policy of the Government. Of course, if the resolution is not carried in the Legislature, then the scheme is doubly defeated. In this little, petty province, whose interests, as compared with ours, are of trifling importance in relation to the scheme, the Government considers that the question is one of sufficient moment to demand that before the slightest action is taken upon it by the Legislature, the people should be consulted; but in this large province, with its comparatively large population, and with important interests to be affected, the scheme is to be hurried through without allowing the people to have a voice in the matter, or even to have time for its consideration. (Hear, hear.) They are to have no voice in determining what kind of government they and their children are to live under for years to come. MR. SPEAKER, I know very well that it is a bold declaration for me to make, that this Parliament has no right to deal with this question; but, sir, I

make it not hastily nor unadvisedly, because I defy honorable gentlemen to find a precedent for their proposed action in any free country under similar circumstances. We are not living to-day in a time of revolution or of great emergency; but, even if our circumstances were different, I doubt very much if any of the precedents that have been referred to, as having occurred many years ago and in troublous times, could again be practised or adopted, even in England, from which country we draw all our precedents. The precedents which have been invoked in approval of the course that has been adopted by the Government prove too much. If they form a justification for the course we are pursuing, then you might prove by the same means that this House had the power to perpetuate its existence beyond the limit fixed for the termination of the present Parliament, or vote ourselves members for life. We might just as well constitute ourselves life members of the Federal Legislature of the proposed Confederacy, as to take the action that is contemplated. I know that it is represented as very important that the measure should be carried into immediate operation; but that is a matter of mere expediency, and has nothing to do with constitutional principles. (Hear, hear.) The Irish union has been triumphantly referred to as a precedent for this measure. To my mind it is a most unfortunate one, and little deserving of our imitation. Let me show you how this matter has been regarded by one, whose authority will not be disputed. I read from MAY'S *Constitutional History of England*, page 505 of the 2nd volume. Speaking of the union of Ireland with England, he says :—

A great end was compassed by means the most base and shameless. GRATTAN, Lord CHARLEMONT, PONSONBY, PLUNKETT, and a few patriots, continued to protest against the sale of the liberties and free Constitution of Ireland. Their eloquence and public virtue command the respect of posterity; but the wretched history of their country denies them its sympathy.

This, sir, is the judgment of the impartial English historian upon the means by which this great national crime was consummated, and it is the just eulogium on the noble few whose patriotic efforts failed to prevent it. I read it, in anticipation, as the future history of the wrong now about to be perpetrated on the people of this country; and while it implies, on the one hand, in no doubtful terms, the well-merited praise of