

40,000 troops in the country—there were one hundred and sixteen placemen in the House—and there may have been good reasons for the fact that a majority of some six or seven in the Irish Parliament against the union had dwindled down and disappeared next session, being swallowed up in a majority of thirty-five. In this country the same thing had occurred. The union was consummated when the embers of the rebellion of 1837–38 were still supposed to be slumbering in various parts of the land—and there were, therefore, strong reasons why, in the midst of disquiet and disturbance—when there might be a difficulty about elections being conducted with purity and freedom from Executive control—such a question should not be submitted to the people. But now we have no such cause. We are told that the people are happy, contented and prosperous, though desirous of some change—and there is, therefore, no exciting cause to prevent a free and full expression of the mind of the people by a general election—nothing to prevent the whole matter being placed on a proper footing before the people, and men being chosen with reference to their views on the subject of Confederation, and that alone. You have nothing to prevent this new system being inaugurated on the true and proper basis on which it ought to be inaugurated, namely, on the popular will, and receiving therefore, from the outset, that strength which the popular will alone could give to it, in its endorsement by those who have a right to send representatives to this House. (Hear, hear.) It has been said that a motion of this kind takes away, in point of fact, from the Legislature, the power which the Legislature has, by denying the right of the Legislature to make any such change. I do not say anything against the power of the Legislature. The Legislature has, within the limits that are assigned to it, all the rights which its charter gives it. But I cannot help feeling that when we are dealing with this question, we are dealing with it very differently from the manner in which it was dealt with, either by the independent Parliament of Scotland, or by the independent Parliament of Ireland. We are acting under a limited charter and constitution—having no right ourselves to deal with this matter finally by any act of our own—having only the right to deal with it by these resolutions, and not to enact it with the autho-

rity of law. (Hear, hear.) We, therefore, stand limited in our powers at the outset—so limited that it has been decided in Newfoundland, that the privileges which belong to the House of Commons and the House of Lords in England do not belong entirely to our legislative bodies—that these have grown with time, until they have become incorporated with the very existence of the Imperial Parliament—while we hold our privileges in a very different way, not having the same comprehensive grasp of them, as in the case of the House of Commons. It is clear that we have not the same power as the Imperial Parliament—otherwise we should not be obliged to go to that body for its sanction of these resolutions. And there are limitations of the power of the Imperial Parliament itself, to which we also are subject. We cannot make any act of ours permanent, any more than we can make ourselves permanent, because another Parliament has the right to repeal what we have done. We cannot of ourselves enact this measure into a law. We can offer these resolutions—we have the power to do that—and the Imperial Government and Parliament have, no doubt, the power to act upon them as they choose. But the question is—is it wise to give these resolutions the force of law; is it proper to do so; is it the most just course to take towards the people of this country, to declare that in a matter of this importance we will legislate for them, to the extent of introducing an entire change of the Constitution—of providing that the Upper Chamber, which they have declared to be elective, shall cease to be elective, and shall be nominated by the Crown, without consulting them? I do not mean to say, with regard to that change, that it is not a beneficial change. I was one of the few who stood on the floor of this Legislature battling against the change from nomination by the Crown to election by the people in the Upper House. I was one of those also who contended for resolutions, the effect of which would be to place the power of the people in the Lower House, by representation according to numbers in that body, with equal representation for the two sections of the province in the Upper House. And I recollect that some hon. gentlemen now on the Treasury benches—the Hon. President of the Council among others, through the columns of the influential paper he controls—declared that the idea embodied in those resolutions was absurd, and