

HON. EDWARD BLAKE, M. P.

Reply to Mr. T. W. Russell's Arguments.

The *Globe's* London correspondent makes the following reference to Mr. Blake's speech, in reply to Mr. Russell, who was lately in Canada in the interest of the Irish landlords:

Mr. Blake, rising at 10.35, followed Admiral Field, but made scant allusion to his remarks. For Mr. Blake's object in addressing the House was to rebut the extravagant argument against Home Rule which Mr. T. W. Russell had worked out in a speech made earlier in the debate, as the result of his recent four week's visit to Canada. Mr. Russell is a very useful and successful platform orator of the firebrand class, but it goes without saying that in breadth and power of mind, as well, of course, as in knowledge of Canadian affairs he compares to Mr. Blake as a pigmy to a giant. There can be no two opinions as to who would triumph in the combat, but the ease, the thoroughness and the unforced eloquence with which Mr. Blake demolished and pulverised Mr. Russell's contentions were greatly appreciated by the House, and afforded to the English legislators further evidence of the justice of the reputation which Mr. Blake has brought with him from Canada. The House was tolerably filled when Mr. Blake began, and it got fuller as time went on. Point after point of his speech was endorsed with cheers by both the Nationalist and Liberal members, the former especially particularly enjoying the "drubbing" Mr. Russell received. The ministerialists as a whole heartily welcomed the arguments Mr. Blake adduced in support of the bill from a Canadian experience. This was especially the case with regard to those passages in which the speaker declared that the history of Quebec showed how utterly illusory were the fears entertained by the Ulster Protestants that they would suffer injustice in consequence of Catholic ascendancy. "Myself a Protestant and kin with the minority in Quebec, I have anxiously watched the progress of events there," said Mr. Blake, "and as far as I can judge, the minority has always had its share, and generally it has had more than its proportionate share, in the government of the country." Later on, in an eloquent passage, Mr. Blake said: "I agree that the Protestants and English-speaking minority in Quebec are not in quite so comfortable a position in some respects as they would be in if all who are around them were of the same extraction, of the same race and of the same faith, but there is no ground for alleging that the situation of the Protestants is made uncomfortable by the majority that surrounds them." "On the contrary," Mr. Blake added in a passage which was much applauded, "I believe that one of the most creditable parts of a creditable history is the degree of tolerance, of liberality, breadth of spirit and recognition of the rights of the minority which distinguishes the Roman Catholic province of Quebec." Here and there throughout the speech there were references to the broader considerations of statesmanship which underlie the whole Home Rule scheme. Mr. Blake, for instance, argued that, as in the case of Canada twenty-five years ago, so in the case of Ireland now, the remedy of admitted evils is the substitution of a union for things really common with separate institutions, for things really local, and the peroration of his speech was a forcible reminder that the essence and substance of the whole controversy turned on the question whether parliament was going to adopt the policy of trust and belief or the policy of incredulity and despair. It was just upon midnight when Mr. Blake resumed his seat amid very

hearty cheers and the debate was forthwith adjourned.

Earlier incidents in the evening to which I have briefly alluded, absorbed so much attention, and the hour at which Mr. Blake spoke was so late, that his speech necessarily receives slight comment from the press to-day. On the whole, however, the verdict pronounced is distinctly favorable. The *Daily News*, in the following editorial passage, pays a high tribute to the Canadian statesman:—"Lord George Hamilton, whom the leaders of the intellectual party judiciously put up to follow Mr. Asquith, protested against handing over the government of Ireland to such men as the Nationalist members of the House of Commons. There are few, indeed, of those members who are not better fitted to govern their own country than Lord George is to govern the United Kingdom. No minister was ever dearer at the price, and no pensioner ever less deserved his pension. It is a little unfortunate for an otherwise much too fortunate man that, having followed Mr. Asquith, he should have been himself followed at a later period of the evening by Mr. Blake. A comparison, or even a contrast, between the two men would be so ridiculous as to incur the charge of ineptitude. Mr. Blake is inferior to no man in the House of Commons, as he showed again last night, in vigor of mind, in power of expression or in knowledge of constitutional statesmanship." The *Daily Chronicle*, too, is very eulogistic. It says: "Mr. Blake's review of the Canadian situation and of the Ulster arguments was really a remarkable piece of reasoning—eagerly drunk in by Mr. Gladstone—and worthy of a much earlier hour. But my space is gone."

EXTRACTS FROM THE SPEECH.

The following are extracts from Mr. Blake's speech, as reported in the *Times*. Alluding to Admiral Field's speech, he pointed out that he had not made it apparent why "the powers of offence and defence of the empire would be weakened by the passage of this bill. That was to be taken as a matter of faith from the honorable and gallant admiral. This country would want more ships, more guns and more admirals, he supposed. (Admiral Field: "No, no; there are too many already," and laughter.) Yes there was one too many. (Nationalist cheers.) How making Ireland contented and loyal could produce a state of things in which one more admiral, one more ship or one more gun would be required it was impossible to understand." Turning his attention to Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Blake said:—"The hon. member for South Tyrone and others had asked how he, a Canadian representing an Irish county, could stand up here and upon platforms in this country advocate the cause of home rule without the knowledge to be acquired by long residence in Ireland. He admitted the justice of some of those remarks; but the history of Ireland was writ large in the book of the world in pages that were filled with tears and stained with blood, and that might be read by those who ran, and he had read them, not running, but for twenty years. (Hear, hear.) The hon. member for South Tyrone could not have had that advantage in regard to Canada, because it was the good fortune of that country not to have for a great many years occurrences which had dimmed and stained the pages of the history of Ireland. Canada, large in extent, but occupying rather an obscure corner of the world, had settled its own difficulties without troubling England, and therefore, had not given this country an opportunity of learning much about it."

FALLEN AMONG ORANGEMEN.

The hon. member had spent three or four weeks in Canada and had fallen among Orangemen—(Nationalist cheers)—and persons of that kidney.

They did not beat or wound or rob him, or despitely use him—(laughter)—but, on the contrary, they received hospitably and crammed him with things which he was only too anxious to swallow, and which were difficult of retention. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) He did not deny that there was in that country a large and powerful body of Puritans who entertained hostile feeling with reference to Home Rule for Ireland, but it was mainly composed of Orangemen as fanatical as the Orangemen on this side of the water. Mr. Blake showed that Mr. Russell had totally misapprehended both the settlement affected by the Union Act of 1840 and that affected by the Act of Confederation. The settlement favored by Lord Durham had really in view the denationalizing of the French portion of the inhabitants of the country and their absorption by the English portion. The attempt after 25 years' trial failed. In the end a deadlock ensued, and after a long period of government with weak and inadequate majorities the statement of both sides set themselves to see whether some remedy could not be applied. The hon. member said that the remedy which was applied was one of a different character from that which he understood it to be. It had been suggested that it was a remedy by means of the creation of an incorporating union of those two with the other provinces. It was not so. Such a remedy would have been rejected. It was felt at last that the true remedy was to leave to each of those communities which had formerly been separate provinces, and which had never been welded together by the force applied to them in the settlement of 1841, the control by each of its own local affairs—(cheers)—to find a common ground with reference to affairs in which their interests were really cognate, to create a true union of feeling and interest by limiting that union to those subjects on which the people felt that a common parliament ought to act, and by granting to each of the countries a separate institution for their own local management of such affairs as were special to themselves.

Mr. T. W. Russell did not think that he had referred to the settlement of 1867.

MR. RUSSELL'S ERROR.

Mr. Blake said that this was the cogent part of the whole argument. The hon. member's friends had given him an account of the Durham settlement, and for all the hon. member appeared to know that settlement was continuing apparently to this day.

Mr. T. W. Russell said he was replying solely to a statement regarding Lord Durham's settlement. He was perfectly aware of the settlement of 1867, but inasmuch as it did not come within the province of his reply he did not make use of it. The hon. gentleman had referred to his sources of information. He might tell the hon. gentleman that the information had not come from Orange sources, but from a gentleman who happened to be a partner in the business of the hon. gentleman. (Laughter.)

Mr. Blake said that the important point of the Canadian parallel was the point which the hon. member had omitted. The incorporating union produced the evil results of the incorporating union between Great Britain and Ireland, and twenty-five years of experience convinced them that it was necessary to apply a remedy. The remedy adopted was the substituting of a union for things really common and separate institutions, for things really local. (Cheers.) The hon. member said that this proved his case as to Ulster, because Upper and Lower Canada were separate. But that was not the Ulster of Quebec. The Ulster of Quebec, according to the views of the hon. member, was to be found in that loyal and Protestant minority whose attitude in the earlier years he

had sketched a few moments ago. The loyal and Protestant minority accepted the proposal that was made for a federation that was made with legal safeguards. Therein they showed their wisdom. But there had never been a time in the early or in the later days in which they viewed the Roman Catholic majority with that degree of detestation and abhorrence which the House now learnt regulated the sentiments of the loyal Irish minority towards their countrymen. (Hear, hear.) Certain precautions being taken—and the present bill abounded with precautions—"Oh," and cheers—the situation in Quebec was willingly accepted.

THE MAJORITY MUST RULE.

No doubt some were still dissatisfied, for there was nothing more difficult in the world than for a minority of that race, and having the predominant position which it had occupied, to reconcile themselves to the view that the majority should rule. (Cheers.) They did not like it, and it was but human nature that they should not, though not the highest part of human nature. (Hear, hear.) Himself a Protestant and kin with the minority in Quebec, he had anxiously watched the progress of events there, and as far as he could judge the minority had always had its share, and generally more in the government of the country. (Cheers.) There was always one or more English and Protestant minister among the provincial governors. There had been an extraordinary degree of liberality with reference to the representation in parliament of those who were, not merely of an absolutely different race, but of another town and another creed. (Hear, hear.) The measure of 1867 was a proposal to change the constitution of several autonomous provinces.

Hon. members had told him that if this measure became law Ulster would separate from the rest of Ireland, and would go in for complete independence. There was, however, a variety of opinion on that point. (Hear, hear.) He did not know which character that resistance was to assume. It was said that Ulster was to become an armed camp, and that she was to win against all Ireland. Well, if Ulster could win against all Ireland in arms she could certainly win against all Ireland without arms. (Hear, hear.) There was no proposition more settled than that if Ulster was the superior province, possessed of all those high qualities which went to make up a people, she would command the situation in Ireland under all circumstances. (Hear, hear.) It was said that the Irish legislature would consist of two parties—the Roman Catholic Nationalists and the Protestant Loyalists, and that the former would outnumber the latter by three to one. But could anyone suppose that when all the representatives of Ireland were met together in the national legislature that that demarcation of parties would be preserved? It was one of the good qualities of Irish Nationalists that there was a considerable divergence of opinion among them, which sometimes manifested itself at inconvenient times, and if it was feared that the presence in the Imperial parliament of 80 Irish representatives would dominate 500 or 600 British representatives, why should not the Protestant minority of one-fourth in the Irish legislature acquire an equally powerful position? (Hear, hear.)

PROTESTANTS IN QUEBEC.

He had repeatedly asked Protestants in the province of Quebec whether they had anything to complain of in connection with educational matters, and he had never yet discovered that they had any serious grievance. It was, in fact, acknowledged that more had been given to the Protestants by the free will of the assembly than it was constrained to give. Then, the hon. member said that the Roman Catholic church took the tithes from the land. Yes; but whose legacy was that? Who established this tithe? (Hear, hear.)