

BLAKE ON HOME RULE.

A GRAND OVATION MONDAY NIGHT.

A Lucid Description of the Present Position of the Question of Ireland's Right to a Local Legislature. The Young Irishmen's L. & B. Association Present Him with an Address—Banquetted at the Hall.

Hon. Edward Blake, Q.C., M.P. for South Longford, in the Imperial House of Commons, arrived in Montreal on Monday, and at once drove to the St. Lawrence hall preparatory to addressing a meeting called by the Young Irishmen's Literary and Benefit association in the Windsor hall at eight o'clock.

At 7.30 the members of the Young Irishmen's Literary and Benefit association, under the presidency of Mr. Jas. A. Flood, and headed by a band, marched to the St. Lawrence hall and thence escorted the guest of the day to the Windsor hall. The procession from the hotel was composed of the band, then the standard bearer of the society bearing its green and gold banner, a carriage and four containing Hon. Edward Blake, Hon. John Costigan, Hon. J. J. Curran and Mr. Flood, followed by the members of the association marching two and two and wearing their badges. Having formed, the procession passed down St. James street, across Victoria square and via Beaver hall and Dorchester street and Dominion square to Windsor hall, to the inspiring strains of "Garry Owen."

Long before eight o'clock the floor of Windsor Hall was well occupied, and as the distant but approaching notes of the band were heard, the seats which had so far remained vacant were rapidly filled. Shortly before the hour was sounded Hon. Peter Mitchell passed down the hall and crossed the platform, his appearance on which was the signal for a hearty round of applause from the audience, which was rapidly growing slightly impatient.

A few minutes later the curtains at the rear of the platform were opened and, heralded by President Flood, Hon. Edward Blake entered the hall, receiving an ovation from the immense audience. He was accompanied on the platform by Hon. John Costigan, Hon. J. J. Curran, Hon. Senator Murphy, Hon. Peter Mitchell, Mr. James McShane, Ald. Villeneuve, Ald. Jeannotte, Messrs. P. P. Flynn, L. O. David, Dr. Hington, Davis, Ald. Nolan, F. B. Hayes, Ald. Tansey, Father O'Donnell, Messrs. Slatery, Butler, Loe, Burke, St. Louis, H. Cavanagh, J. P. Whelan, P. Wright and several other gentlemen. As soon as silence could be restored, and the gentlemen on the platform had taken their seats, Mr. Flood proceeded to read the address to Hon. Edward Blake, as follows:

WINDSOR HALL, JANUARY 29, 1894.

TO THE HON. EDWARD BLAKE, Q.C., M.P.

HONORED SIR,—We, the Young Irishmen's Literary and Benefit Association and our friends assembled with us, deem it a great privilege to be allowed to approach you and tender you a heartfelt welcome to the city of Montreal.

At any time we should greet you as one of Canada's noblest sons, one of the most distinguished of the descendants of Ireland on this continent. The high position you attained in every walk of life you undertook to follow in this Dominion, the unwavering devotion you have always manifested for the cause of dear old Ireland, entitle you to the love, confidence and esteem of all classes in our community, but more especially to those who, like yourself, look to Ireland as the land of their forefathers. Now, however, as you come amongst us, after having made the heroic sacrifice of abandoning all that is dear to your Canadian home, to enlist your splendid abilities in the British House of Commons to the advocacy of the cause of Home Rule for Ireland, you are doubly welcome. We greet you with a genuine "Cead Mille Failte" and are anxious to hear from your lips the progress of the struggle in which you are so valiant a champion.

May Divine Providence spare you to continue the work you have so generously undertaken. May we all witness your final triumph in the constitutional battle now being waged, and a long day of peace, prosperity and vigorous national life soon have its dawn for the dear old land.

We feel that the citizens of Montreal here assembled will not allow you to go from amongst us without substantial evidence of their appreciation of your efforts, and on their behalf as well as for ourselves we ask you to accept the assurance of the highest consideration.

THE YOUNG IRISHMEN'S LITERARY AND BENEFIT ASSOCIATION.

JAMES A. FLOOD, President.

MR. BLAKE'S ADDRESS.

Hon. Mr. Blake, on rising to speak, was greeted with loud and long continued applause. He accepted the address which had just been read as a testimony of

their kindness towards himself, and he thanked them for the words in which they had referred to his past course in Canada and his recent action elsewhere. He could claim that here and on the other side he always sought to be true to his convictions as to the right and the just. (Hear, hear.) With reference to the great question upon which he was to speak, he had been the champion, during his whole public life, of such a true Home Rule system as was applied to this country. He believed in the existence of provincial autonomy and of the fullest measures of local rights with an efficient State Government for common concerns. Whether his party was in power or not he had always advocated it as in the truest interests of the country. With reference to those differences which arose here as in Ireland and elsewhere from religious divergences, he advocated the fullest grant of civil and religious liberty. He might also claim that in reference to this question of Home Rule for Ireland he was an advocate for its being taken up in this country as a question upon which Canadians of every creed, religion, and party, should act together, and that it should not be considered as the property of one party, one race or one creed. (Applause.) He congratulated those interested in the question on its present condition. Reflecting on its state a few years ago it is a memorable fact that after a conflict which has raged for eight years the general election resulted in a majority which has passed a large and liberal measure of Home Rule. (Cheers.) True, it has not become the law of the land, which was not due to the representatives of the people, but to an irresponsible and hereditary chamber which thought it right to ignore for the time the popular chamber, deciding that this should not become law until a second election. But no one thinks the House of Lords will attempt, or would succeed if it attempted, in erecting a permanent barrier to the passing of this law. It will be disposed of by the people. (Applause.) Mr. Blake proceeded to enunciate his Home Rule policy, which was directed to the question how best, most securely, and most rapidly to obtain at the election to which the Lords have committed themselves a verdict favorable to the cause. The principle on which their tactics were based was this. Some years ago Mr. Parnell—(loud cheers)—whose great services to Ireland shall never be forgotten (renewed cheers), when he found within his reach the basis of an honorable alliance and a satisfactory national settlement offered to him by Mr. Gladstone (cheers), accepted the offer and entered into the alliance, and upon the basis of the policy so established it is that the Irish party have been ever since acting. They acted upon the policy because they believed it to be the wisest and surest means of accomplishing their end. To have secured the support of the greatest statesman of this or any other country (hear, hear), the devotion of the later years of his life to their cause; to obtain through his influence the Liberal and radical parties, to have his own unrivalled power of informing men's minds, awakening their hearts and rousing the British people to a sense of Ireland's needs was an inestimable gain. (Applause.) The Liberal party has shown itself absolutely true to its pledges. They have suffered disaster, loss of office and friends, in the struggle in the cause, and to-day, after six weary months spent in the task of pushing the bill through the House of Commons, they were prepared to go to the polls again upon that question. (Cheers.) It was at the polls that the battle was to be lost or won, and the Irish party must give assistance in the winning of the battle. As a preparation for the battle they had much to do. During 1894 they wanted to press forward such reforms as should help them forward with the Home Rule cause. Many of the reforms which were sought for Great Britain were in existence in Canada. They wanted a better system of registering the voters by which the large suffrage which existed in law might become a reality. They also wanted simultaneous polling, polling all over the country on the same day. Then they wanted what we have in most of the provinces of Canada in theory and in one province in fact, equal rights and privileges for all men in regard to the franchise—one man, one vote. (Applause.) The cost of election to the legislature should be borne by the state, and

not by the people who are being sent there. Here everything is so paid, and the candidates stood on an equal footing, but in Britain the costs of the election are borne between the candidates. This was putting a premium on the rich, as against the poor. The Liberal party also wanted a provision for the payment of members, as in Canada and in every part of the British colonies. In England the popular party believe that a fair payment to members would be in the public interest. (Hear, hear.) They wanted what would have turned the Salisbury Government out long before it was turned out, provision by which people might have a chance, after electing a government, of mending the machine, cutting out the rotten timber and getting rid of all that had not stood the test of time oftener than once in seven years. It was possible they might want some legislation to limit the obstructive power of the hereditary chamber (applause). Who could doubt that all these things were stepping stones toward the obtaining of Home Rule itself? In the interest of Home Rule not less even than as general justice and equity should these reforms be given. The Government wished to win these blessings for the people, and the Irish party were going to assist them (cheers). There were other things they wished to do, such as the disestablishment of the church in Scotland and Wales, and the establishment there of the principle of religious liberty. The very principle on which these reforms were advocated was Home Rule, since it was because the majority demanded disestablishment that the Government proposed to grant it. The same principle was recognized in the Parish Council's Bill. It was the policy of the party to give earnest and enthusiastic attendance in Parliament, and to obtain these stepping stones towards Irish Home Rule this year, by which course large advantages were gained. The speaker then dealt with the Home Rule bill, which was introduced last session, which he stated briefly and in its general features. The measure was based on the principle so familiar in Canada and the States, the principle that it is possible and convenient to create separate institutions with large political powers to be exercised by communities occupying large areas for common and local government purposes, existing along with a government of the whole for national purposes. This would not weaken, but strengthen, the elements of union; the national strength would be rather promoted than injured by the parts finding themselves free to manage local affairs of their own, and finding happiness and contentment among themselves. The Union has not yet received the real assent of the parties to the transaction. In law it does not yet exist, but morally it does. All of the men whose names shine bright in Irish history believe that a union for general purposes is a necessity to Ireland. What are these general purposes? The maintenance of the Crown and Constitution; the case of foreign and external affairs; military and naval matters; government of the colonies and dependencies; external trade with other countries and with Ireland; customs and excise; and some minor matters. On all these matters they wanted national union, not only in law, but by the assent of the two peoples. To manage these affairs there was to be a national parliament, in which Ireland would be represented. But all local affairs should be left undisposed of for Ireland. The question of the land, of property and civil rights, and education of the people, and judiciary, administration of justice, municipal laws and local development were not embraced in the subjects which the national parliament had power to deal with. These were to be regulated in an Irish Parliament and administered by an Irish Executive responsible to the Parliament. (Cheers.) It was true that in respects of some of these points there were postponements. The land question would not pass under Irish jurisdiction for three years; the police force was to gradually be transformed during a period of six years, and a corresponding delay existed in the case of the judiciary. "But," continued Mr. Blake, "if there are postponements, there are great compensations connected with the temporary postponements; who would reject the bill which gave so much at once, because it did not give all at once?" He then proceeded to speak of the permanent restrictions,

which were of more consequence, but speaking broadly the Irish had no objection to them. There was a provision that the Irish legislature should not endow any religion or favor any man on account of his religion. He wondered how the P. P. A. would like that. (Laughter.) The party believed these restrictions to be based on the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty. The less the state had to do with concerns of religion the better for the church and for the state. The Irish did not object to these restrictions, but told the British people, "You have burned into the hearts and brains of the Irish too deeply in the past the want and wish and desire for the establishment of religious liberty for us ever to forget the lessons you have taught us, or ever to be as intolerant as you have been in days gone by." Restrictions were provided that children attending schools should have the right to do so without attending any religious instruction contrary to their faith. It was provided that property should not be confiscated without compensation. The real property of the vast mass of the Irish people was in process of confiscation by the minority for a long time, but when the real interests of the landlords had been ascertained their rights would not be swept away. It was provided that the Irish legislature should not establish any university with different interests to those existing in Trinity College, Dublin, with which the Tories declared themselves satisfied. The restrictions safeguarding the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament were touched on, after which the speaker said: "The spirit and principle on which this great constitution is framed is the right of Irishmen to make laws in local matters, and so long as Ireland keeps true, as she will keep true, so long will she keep free from meddling British interference." (Cheers.)

The question of finance was briefly referred to. Mr. Blake said he rejoiced from the bottom of his heart that a measure like this, not without difficulties, giving large and liberal control of local affairs, has attained the stage it has. Every effort must be devoted to carry the measure into law. To this end their tactics would remain as they were so long as the Liberal party remained true to their pledges, as he had every reason to assert that they would. He quoted from a recent speech of Mr. Morley at Newcastle in which the Chief Secretary for Ireland said: "He is no true friend of Ireland who would suggest any course which would give to any one the chance to say that Ireland had broken her pledge. We will be true as they are true." (Cheers.) In this alliance with the English Liberals, the Irish party must give and take, but they would still maintain their independence, thus remaining safe from the entanglements which would otherwise arise. They were Irish Nationalists, not British Liberals. "We serve the Irish race at home and abroad; we serve no other master." (Cheers.) Mr. Blake then referred to the need for the funds, for payments of some of the Irish members, for registration purposes, and for the British propaganda. He indignantly denied that the party had personal interest in asking for help. All Irishmen were interested in the one cause; some aided it by speech, some by their pens, others by their purse. The Irish party did their duty in the place to which they were sent; let every other friend of Ireland do their duty. "So when the great cause ends, when Home Rule is established and the Irish legislature busy itself with the needs, the wants, and the wishes of the people, I am convinced we all can say: 'We were of the men who, early and late, stood staunchly by the cause, recognized its wisdom, and helped with heart, with tongue, with brain, with wealth, and so we shall live with a lighter heart and die with an easier conscience than if we had held aloof in the cause of the land we love so dearly and so well.'" (Loud and continued cheers)

All Canadians Interested.

Hon. J. J. Curran, who was greeted with loud cheers, proposed a vote of thanks to the Hon. Mr. Blake. He said all Canadians were interested in the success of Mr. Blake. His career in the British Parliament would be considered the gauge of the ability of our public men in Canada. He had fulfilled the most sanguine expectations. His career in Canada when he held the position of chancellor of the University of Toronto, head of the Bar of Ontario, and ex-