

THE IRISH RESOLUTIONS GREAT SPEECH OF THE Hon. EDWARD BLAKE ON THE RESOLUTIONS!

Mr. BLAKE—If no other hon. member proposes to address the House on this subject, I do not for my part feel disposed to give a silent vote upon it. It is now ten years ago since, in the course of a very important discussion here, I ventured to suggest in my place in Parliament that the accession to power, which had then recently taken place, of the Liberal Administration in England, would tend very shortly to the concession of some measure of Home Rule to the Irish people. I believed, as I said, that such a concession as could be obtained of the land question—such a solution as had been from time to time reached of other questions—would after all not settle the Irish question, and that unless the dictates of Providence and of justice alike were observed and fulfilled by the granting of some measure of control over their local affairs, we would see that what has been the disgrace and the humiliation of the British Empire for many years still continued. I also observed, as the hon. gentleman in his speech and in his motion has observed, that we had one amongst many material interests here in Canada in the solution of that question, and the change which might be expected from it in the attitude of the great bulk of the Irish people towards the Empire. That we had a material—although I regard that as a much lesser interest than the interest which has been mainly discussed—interest of a serious character with reference to the chances and the opportunity of immigration to our soil so long as the present state of feeling continued. Now I propose to justify the attitude which I took upon that occasion, and which did not meet with any very animated response in the House or in the country. I propose to justify it by a reference to

SOME OBVIOUS HISTORICAL FACTS which it appears to me can lead to only one suitable conclusion. In order that we may understand the grounds upon which, as I conceive, some action in this direction is demonstrably necessary, it is by no means needful to go further back than to the time of the Union. It is not needful here to recur in detail to the more ancient events in connection with Irish history—to the history of the conquest, to the history of the confederation, to the history of the proscriptions, to the history of the penal laws, directed at one time against Protestants and at another time against Catholics, to the history of these penal laws of the most serious and terrible description, laws and events to which I have briefly alluded, but which ought to make us all, when we recur to them, blush with shame, and which had left the marks of human error and of human crime almost indelible, and enhancing, there can be no doubt, even to-day, the difficulties of the situation. I say it is needless for the purposes of this discussion that we should revert to them in detail, for I am willing that this question should be tried out upon the history of the past eighty years—upon the history of the Government of Ireland under the present constitution of the United Kingdom, of the history of Ireland since the Union. We all know the means of the basest corruption by which the Act of Union was passed. However beneficial the public man who carried that measure may have believed it to be, I do not suppose it will be to-day urged that the ends justified the means, and I have myself a strong belief that the notorious means by which that measure was carried operated very largely to increase the difficulties of its working, and produced a state of feeling which gave, perhaps, a poor chance of being satisfactory to the people of the country which was by such means brought into more intimate connection

But, sir, since that period, for a little more than eighty years has Ireland been managed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom, and I do not hesitate to say that the result of that management has been a dreadful failure. There has been time enough to try the question out. Eighty years in the history of a country—and such eighty years as Ireland has experienced—is surely time enough to try the question out. Now, let us apply some obvious, plain, and plausible tests as to whether there has been a good and a successful administration of Irish affairs under the existing system. The population of Ireland in 1726 was 2,300,000; in 1805 it was 5,400,000, and that increase, nearly doubling, occurred during a time of difficulty, of religious proscription, and of emigration. In 1841 the population had abnormally increased under circumstances which it is not necessary to discuss, but which had increased to the number of 8,200,000. But since 1841 the history of Ireland has been a history of periodical distress, of famine, and of emigration, and the result is that the population, which at the time I have stated, stood 8,200,000, stands to-day at 5,150,000 only, or 235,000 less than 800 years ago at the time of the union, and 3,000,000 less than it was forty years ago. In the last thirty years—from 1851 to 1881—there has been an emigration from that country of no less than two and three-quarter millions of souls. Now, it may be said that Ireland is overcrowded. I deny that Ireland as a whole is overcrowded. There are parts of Ireland in which the distribution of the population is probably too dense; but I maintain that judging by all the tests which we can reasonably apply to it, Ireland as a country is not an overcrowded country. The number of inhabitants to the square mile in France is 180; Italy, 225; Belgium, 221; Flanders, 718; England and Wales, 442; the whole of Great Britain, 333; in Ireland, 181. The acreage of Ireland is 20,235,000 acres, of which there is at present arable 13,485,000 acres, and an additional acreage easily made available for tillage of 4,000,000 acres, making a total of land actually arable and available for tillage of 17,485,000 acres. How many acres are cultivated at this time? Only 5,200,000; and this is the case with respect to a country of which the soil is indubitably very fertile, which has raised in times past enormous crops, comparing favorably in past times with crops at the same time raised in England, of wheat, rye, barley, peas, beans, potatoes, and turnips, and no one doubts the capacity of Ireland for raising cattle. It has very great advantages. It has great quantities of bog land, from which is produced a very cheap

fuel, and which lands when reclaimed are inferior to none in the world, whether as wheat or as pasture lands. It has splendid coal fields, although these are hardly used at all. It has magnificent, perhaps unequalled, fisheries, in regard to the quantities of fish caught, and harbour and other facilities in connection with the industry. It is possessed of valuable mines of gypsum, gold, silver, lead, copper and zinc. It has besides great facilities for manufacturing, both as regards the facilities for the transport of manufactured goods, for the supply of raw material, and for the cheapness of the labor to be employed. It has, moreover, great water-power, economizing the manufacture of the raw material with the perfected article. It has a population confessedly very free from crime of the ordinary kind; a population which, whatever its prospects and chances and capabilities may have been demonstrated to be in its own country, in every other country than Ireland it possesses the capacity to rise; and by its industry, its ability, its capacity to take its own place in the world, wherever it is likely to be cast. That population is also a population confessedly affectionate, grateful, and possessing in a large degree the organ of veneration, and easily impressed by any act of kindness shown towards it. With such a population, with such a soil, with such natural advantages how does it come that we have such a result with respect to population as I have mentioned? How does it come to pass that the population of Ireland should have diminished instead of increased? That the emigration should have been so great and that the condition of the country should be and as we know it to be, the whole is due to the chronically wretched state of Ireland, its miseries—social, material, and political. That is the reason why, although there may be, although there has been, as we all rejoice to know, some improvement in the physical condition of some portions of the population during the last few years, this is, to-day, a pressing question, and no man can hold that the condition of Ireland is satisfactory when viewed in those aspects to which I have referred. The condition of the people materially, as well as in other respects, is one which ought to create in all of us who call ourselves British subjects, a feeling of shame.

THE CAUSES OF DISTRESS AND DISCONTENT. I say that the condition of Ireland to-day is due largely to the want of security and contentment, to the want of identification with the soil and attachment to the Constitution, to the want of hope of improvement and of bettering their condition, which is really the most essential thing to induce men to labor. I say that it is due to a feeling that their grievances are not in reason redressed, to the lack of a feeling that their Government is conducted according to their needs and wishes, and to the lack of machinery for the management in the locality of their local affairs. There can be no doubt that Ireland at and before the time of the Union was subject to some great political grievances. There can be no doubt that those grievances were not of a sentimental character, but were such as to a large extent are to-day acknowledged to be grievances which demand the attention of legislators and should be redressed by legislation. If you go back over the history of the parliamentary government of Ireland for the last eighty years, and if you begin your enquiry by a reference to those great and important landmarks of grievances, and should enquire as to the time when, and the circumstances under which, those grievances have been, so far as they have been redressed, you will find a very good reason there, if you sought for a further, for a deep seated and justifiable dissatisfaction with the parliamentary government of Ireland by the Parliament of the United Kingdom. There was the question—was that time as much a question of justice and of right as it was at any later time—of Roman Catholic emancipation. There was the question—at that time as much a question of justice and of right as it was at any later time—of the disestablishment of the nominal church of the minority. There was the question, what was called here the lamentable question, but still in the condition of that country none the less a pressing question, of a proper measure for the relief of the poor, required because of the unnatural conditions that ruled distribution. There was the question of reform of the land laws, by the creation of proper interest in the soil by those who occupied the soil. There was the question of the creation of local institutions to manage local affairs, and rendered very important because of the abrogation of the rights of the Parliament of Ireland and the transfer to Westminster of the management of those minute affairs which, up to that time, were under the control of the Legislature which sat in the capital city of Ireland. These leading questions to which I have referred have been in part—all but the last one, and that one has never been substantially dealt with—disposed of, and it may be asked, since such is the fact, why do I refer to them? I refer to them because I see that the circumstances under which and the time under which those questions were dealt with demonstrate more clearly than anything else can do the unsatisfactory character of the government of Ireland by the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

REMEDIAL LEGISLATION—HOW BROUGHT ABOUT. When was the question of Roman Catholic emancipation dealt with? It was not dealt with until nearly thirty years after the time of the Union. Thirty years is about a generation, and it required about a generation for the Parliament of the United Kingdom to nerve itself to the task of dealing with that question. And how was it then granted? Was it granted then as the boon of a cheerful gift? No, sir. It was granted grudgingly and of necessity. It was granted, avowedly granted by the Ministry, because they were forced to do it. Not because it was just, because it was right, because they had been proclaiming that it was wrong. It was granted because, as they themselves stated in Parliament, the question was between granting that concession and civil war—not an ordinary outbreak, but the condition of things had come to that pass that there was to be an immediate outbreak, a civil war, unless Roman Catholic emancipation was granted. Well, sir, did that do good? Of course you could not remove even under such circumstances a monstrous injustice of that description without some good being done, but I say the good was minimized by the delay, which took place and by the attitude which was assumed by those who received and by those who gave that Act. The Irish people were taught that dreadful lesson, so far as the administration of the Parliament of the United Kingdom could teach them it, that England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity. They were taught this by the delay and by the disposition with which those Ministers proceeded to the grant. They were taught not to rely upon that constitutional agitation which is the proud basis of our system, and which every one is free to engage in, but upon other and worse methods of accom-

plishing by unconstitutional revolt. I say that no doubt something was done by the removal even under those circumstances of that great blemish, yet nothing was done towards relieving or conciliating the feeling of the Irish people, towards leading them to believe that they had a right to expect from the unconstrained sense of justice of the British Parliament the relief which they had a right to have, or towards obtaining those golden fruits which might have been reaped from a great act of justice cheerfully performed, in sufficient season. The next great measure of relief for Ireland—and I am dealing now only with remedial legislation; I am dealing with those measures to which the English Parliament may point with the greatest pride as marks of its parliamentary government with reference to Ireland—the next great measure of remedial legislation occurred how long after? Nearly twenty years after. It was not until nearly twenty years had elapsed that we had the measure for the relief of the poor to which I have referred, followed shortly by, and intended at the time to be followed as soon as possible by an Act for the sale of encumbered estates. The years 1846 and 1849 are, I think, the years in which those two measures were passed—one fully twenty years after the Emancipation Bill and the other a few years earlier. These Acts, as I have said, were not of a late date. They were not the offspring of fresh institutions lately developed. They were the approach by the English Parliament—the Parliament of the United Kingdom—to dealing with old difficulties; and how again was it that they were brought about? How was it that the public opinion of the British people and the opinion of the Parliament of the United Kingdom was aroused to action, such action as was then taken in these two particulars? Sir, it was not the hand of the insurgent upon that occasion. It was not the hand of the agitator so much as the hand of famine and of pestilence. It was not until the direst calamity which has beset the modern Christian world came upon us, and until a famine took place in which more human lives were lost than in all the wars with which England has reddened the soil of Europe or the world. It was not until that had happened that the public opinion to which I have referred was sufficiently aroused to deal with this question. Such was the unhappy condition of Ireland, and the measure passed for the relief of the poor was a great boon to her. The Encumbered Estates Act, too, was greatly needed. It was hoped, however, that it would have had an indirect effect very beneficial to the tenants, but that hope failed. The condition of the tenants as a whole, from the practical operation of the Act, was not mitigated, because it happened that the sales of many of the lands that were sold under the Encumbered Estates Act were made to persons entirely new to the country, and who in a great many instances were wholly neglectful and deficient of those customary—I do not call them rights—but those customary favours which were granted by the former proprietors to the tenants; and the system of rack-renting and the other difficulties which might be expected to grow from such an unnatural system as existed were aggravated and intensified by the new proprietors; and so it happened that the demand for tenant right—pressing as it was before—became still more pressing by reason of the practical operation of the Encumbered Estates Act. Well, sir, about twenty years more elapsed before the next great remedial measure for Ireland was carried through the British Parliament. It was, I think, in 1868 that the law for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church was passed, nearly fifty years after the Union took place. Now, who can pretend that that act of justice was not so much an act of justice at the time of the union as it was at the date it became law. The principles upon which the disestablishment was carried is immutable and eternal, and the question had been raised, as we all know, generations before. Public men in advance of public opinion of the United Kingdom and of Parliament—intelligent men, statesmen—had raised it, had pointed out that it was impossible that that establishment could be defended and maintained, had proposed that an act of justice should be performed, but it was utterly impossible to make progress in that direction, an old grievance, a grievance so old as to be almost out of date, a grievance of a most pressing character. How, I ask, was redress for that grievance obtained?

Now, sir, I shall give you an authentic account of how it came that Parliament and the people of the United Kingdom decided to remove that ancient grievance, and I shall give you the account which the author of that great measure for Ireland himself gave in 1878 in the Midlothian campaign. After referring to Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian speech, delivered in 1878, upon the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church, he went on to explain the reason in this great measure of legislation, by which the people and politicians of the United Kingdom were led to the belief that the question was within the range of practical politics, and led to see what was their duty to the people of Ireland. Once again there was the same moving cause to the remedy. Once again there was the same long heart-breaking delay, and once again English and Scotch opinion would not act until compelled to do so. Once again, therefore, there was no deed of grace in the measure so obtained. It was forced from the British Parliament and was so acknowledged, and therefore, if it did remove the grievance it did not as timely and cheerful legislation would have done, as any consideration of justice would have done, and did not excite a feeling of gratitude in the hearts of those to whom the benefit was granted. Sir, that measure was a great measure in two distinct aspects. First of all it destroyed the pre-eminence of the Church; it changed a condition which had combined the religion of the majority with their patriotism, a patriotism which, so long as it was the policy of the Parliament and people of the United Kingdom to maintain the church of the minority was necessarily an anti-national patriotism. Besides that, there was the material gain that Irish funds to the amount of many millions were set free for legitimate and proper Irish purposes—not for the minority, not for the majority, but for the whole people. Besides all this, the practical results of the disestablishment of the Irish Church, it had an indirect effect hardly less important. It was the first effective measure for giving to the occupiers of the Irish soil a real and tangible interest in the soil and for increasing the number of Irish proprietors. The just provision which gave to the tenants on Church lands the pre-emptive right to purchase those lands on moderate terms, a very small sum being payable down, and the residue being spread over instalments for 32 years, compounding principle and interest at a low rate, which made the annual payment not materially more than the accustomed

rent, and so gave the tenants of Church lands an opportunity, of which they gladly availed themselves, of becoming the owners of the lands they occupied. And thus it added no less than five thousand to the number of Irish proprietors of the soil. With our notions, having regard to the figures I have given as to the population, you may say that five thousand Irish proprietors is a trifle. What is the use of saying so much about five thousand Irish proprietors? I admit that it is a drop in the bucket, but then the bucket had very little more than a drop in it at the time. The total number of Irish proprietors at that time was but 16,000; so that this measure in its operation added no less than 5,000, or very nearly one-third, to the number of Irish proprietors, and a measure which has such an effect cannot be regarded as a very important measure of relief. Now, sir, Ireland is a country of small agricultural buildings, and in considering that question, you must not forget that circumstance. There are in Ireland no less than 533,000 distinct farm tenancies, of which no less than 450,000 are under 50 acres, and no less than 50,000 are under 50 and 100 acres, showing that the great bulk are under 50 acres, and no less than 500,000 out of the total 533,000 are under 100 acres. Although there are exceptions, as we know, principally in one of the provinces of Ireland, but also in the case of many estates scattered through other parts of that country, yet, speaking in the large, the bulk of these 533,000 holdings are yearly—and they are yearly in a country in which the custom has been that the tenant shall make the improvements, a country which combines what would be regarded in practical countries in which there is a practical freedom of contract as wholly incompatible conditions of yearly tenancy, while the tenant does the substantial improvements on the land. Now, sir, while that is the number of Irish farm tenancies, let us see to what extent the ownership of farm lands prevails. In Ireland one in every 257 persons owns farm lands, while in France one in every eight persons owns farm lands; in central and northern Europe, the tenure of land is widely diffused; and while we have seen a very gradual growth and a very imperfect development in the continental countries of Europe of the principles of popular and responsible Government, while in that regard they are far behind the United Kingdom, yet we have seen, since the days of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic age, large advances made—much larger advances than have been even dreamed of in England—towards diffusion of the tenure of land and the abolition of the most objectionable portion of the feudal system. In the Rhine provinces, including Westphalia, there are 11,000,000 acres of cultivable land—and how many proprietors?—1,157,000 proprietors, or one to every ten acres of land, and if you read the history of the contentment and comfort, the work and labor, the energy and industry—the indomitable industry—that is displayed in many of these countries by the proprietors of these small areas, you must be convinced that the only thing that enables the Governments of these countries to be carried on at all, burdened as they are with enormous expenses, with an imperfect development of constitutional government, with great military armaments, and with an oppressive system of conscription and military service—the only thing that gives the people heart and hope, and enables them to struggle on at all, is that wide diffusion of the ownership of land, which there is nothing better calculated to promote the stability of the people to whom the land belongs. Take the State of New York, in which there are 22,000,000 acres of farm lands, and in which the holdings are large, as is natural in a new country, where there is so much land undisposed of as there is in this continent. There the owners of the land in 1870 were 216,000, against 21,000 in Ireland, including the owners of Church lands, which may be selected as examples; take the agricultural counties of West Meath and Cavan, which comprise 130,000, and in which there are 612 owners of less than 50 acres in that whole district; in the counties of Galway and Mayo there are 2,750 acres, and there are only 215 owners of less than 50 acres. The number of small owners is insignificant in England, but that number is computed to be about ten times as large in proportion as the number is in Ireland, and that in a country of which I believe the greatest practical blemish to-day is its own land laws. I believe there can be no doubt that the greatest blemish in England and Scotland to-day is the condition of the ownership of the land; but even there that difficulty has diminished relatively to the condition of things in Ireland. Now, sir, there can be no doubt that the old penal laws, which among other relics of barbarity prohibited for a long time Roman Catholics either from owning or inheriting lands, had much to do with the creation of the present state of things as to the landholding in Ireland, and that state of things being once created and marked deeply upon the country, it became of course proportionately difficult to obliterate it. The result was a practical serfdom; the people who cultivated the lands were only left with enough to subsist on in a miserable manner.

THE TREATMENT OF THE TENANT-FARMERS. All concede that there were many landlords in Ireland who granted proper leases, and behaved with propriety towards their tenants; yet in the large, the practical result was that the whole profit of the lands, with the exception of a poor, miserable subsistence to the tenant who worked them, went to the landlord; and also that where improvements were made, an early opportunity was taken to increase the rental of the lands to the extent to which they had become capable of producing by virtue of the improvements which the tenant and his family had made. This was a state of things which of course did not merely diminish, but destroyed, that hope of bettering himself, which is the spur by which you can expect men to rise, and under the influence of which you can expect happiness and contentment to be diffused. The first or one of the earliest writers on the subject of landholding—Yongue, I think—says: "Give a man but nine years' lease of a garden and he will turn it into a desert; give him the freehold of the native rock and he will turn it into a garden." And I believe that not a natrly represents the relative condition of things between the short holder under the customs that prevail in Ireland and the proprietor. Now, that situation would have been bad enough, if the rents so exacted from the tenants were rent in any proper sense of the term; but the whole produce of the soil goes, not to enable the unfortunate people to clothe themselves, but to live in rage; not to feed themselves, but to keep starvation from them, and above that the whole of the produce of the soil is taken by landlords who do not live in the country. A certain measure of improvement and property would necessarily have arisen from the expenditure of the soil of those enormous rents. But to make a condition—miserable enough, God knows, without it—still more miserable the bulk of those who received those rents were absentee landlords;

and so it happened that, speaking once again in the large, not merely a fair share and increment of the proprietor of the soil from it, but the whole produce of the soil of Ireland also, with but wretched livings for those who raised it, went away from Ireland—was rather a tribute paid by Ireland to foreign countries than legitimately supplied within the land itself and which would have occasioned the development of trade and manufactures which would have given more employment to the agriculturist as well as otherwise and produced some mitigating circumstances at any rate to relieve the darkness of the picture to which I have referred. I say it happened there was luxury for the absentee landlord, misery for the resident tenant, as the rule, and that in a country of which it has been said, not rhetorically, but in sober truth, that if you wiped out the tenants' improvements you would convert nine-tenths of Ireland into a desert again. I have said enough to show that the question of the land is at the core of the Irish question, and to show how great was the importance of any measure, such as the Irish Church Act, which should have tended even in a moderate degree to give the tenant an opportunity to create a land proprietary in Ireland. That measure was followed within a year or two by the Land Act of 1870, an Act which was, no doubt, a useful Act, and which was, probably, in effect, I have no doubt, quite as strong and sweeping a measure as the public opinion to which I have referred of the people of the United Kingdom would suffer to be passed at that day, but which, in consequence of that public opinion not being sufficiently appreciative of the situation was far behind what the necessities of the situation called for; and both the Church and Land Acts were brought within the domain of practical politics, not because interested or selfish landlords or wealthy tenants had come to the conclusion, from some new turn of reasoning, that the condition of Ireland was one of injustice that required amelioration, but because a great goal in the heart of London was broken open and some politicians in Manchester were killed. That it was this that aroused England's attention to Irish affairs and rendered possible those measures of reform is beyond doubt; and again the same fatal error, and again justice and measures of propriety and prudence too long delayed; and again those measures obtained by acts deplorable, by acts which we cannot defend, not by constitutional agitation, for constitutional agitation had been proved powerless; and again those lessons taught the Irish people which have borne so many years such fatal fruits as those to which Mr. Gladstone referred.

OPERATION OF THE LAND ACT. The Land Act was useful in its way, but it was not wide enough. The land clauses, most hopeful in theory, which struck largely at the root of the question, turned out in practice not so useful as the land clauses with reference to the Irish Church, owing to a difference of conditions. The truth was that in other respects the land laws of Ireland, as of England and Scotland, were grievously defective, and the exposure of a voluntary transfer of land in small parcels was almost prohibitory. The search for titles and copies and conveyancing itself were such that whatever price you might fix for those moderate portions of land which were the utmost aspiration of the occupant would in many cases fail to meet the expenses of conveyancing. That was one difficulty with which legislation was unable to grapple. There was another in the want of sympathy on the part of the Treasury and other Departments of the Government with those classes, which savoured a little too much, in the then public opinion of the country, with a feeling of interfering with the sacred property and land, which looked a little too much towards a denial of the divine right of landlordism, which looked a little too much like a practical recognition of the motto that property has its duties as well as its rights. And so it happened in practice that there were out of 100 sales a year on the average, or a total of 800, by the last return I have been able to obtain under the provisions of the land clauses of the Act of 1870. So, therefore, you will observe that the Act was wholly defective as a remedy for the evils complained of, and by experience was proved to be wholly inadequate. Then in 1880 the last Land Act was passed under continual pressure; under the same pressure increased and aggravated by events—a great measure, but in itself not likely to settle the great question. I will not discuss the complicated details of that measure; but I will say that a principle, and, in the practical application of it, a measure which is based upon the ground and founded upon the reason upon which that measure de-peeds, and which makes no provision at all for dealing with cases of arrears of rents, cannot be regarded as a final or satisfactory measure if there were no other defect. If you look at the history of the ill which preceded that measure, and at the circumstances of the country as stated by others, you will see that a measure must be to a large extent wholly inadequate and entirely beyond practical application towards many, or most, of the grievous cases that can be supposed to exist under it, unless it deals with arrears. The most grievous cases will be those of parties unable to pay their rents. However, nobody can doubt but that the measure was an immense, active relief—that it was a measure that gave more than was expected by many, or thought possible to be obtained from the Parliament of the United Kingdom, and nobody can doubt that it was obtained also from Parliament only by continued difficulties. The state of Ireland, as it had been, was becoming more aggravated still. Things were growing worse and worse before the adoption of the last remedial measure, and the conviction that something more must be done to remedy those evils. But the same fatal errors which attended the agitation for the introduction of the previous remedial measures attended this. It came so late that a large portion of the benefit, so far as restoration of a better feeling, so far as the conviction that Ireland could depend on the justice of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, so far as the expectations of Irishmen themselves that there were any prospects of an ending of their suffering was concerned, that this last remedial measure had wholly lost its grace. So far as all these considerations are concerned I say it is as plain as the day that true statesmanship pointed to earlier action; to action under other and different circumstances, when a measure even less thorough-going than the one would have procured an amelioration in the condition and temper of the people of the country much greater than could be expected from the measure brought in and carried at the time and under the circumstances and under the pressure which attended its being carried. This is the record of 80 years of remedial legislation for Ireland. These are the important landmarks of the Acts for the remedy of wrongs and the day of justice that have distinguished British legislation in the

past 80 years. There are others, no doubt, subsidiary Acts. It did not take quite so long, I forget whether more or less, a couple of parliaments, to induce the members of the United Kingdom to pass a Succession Dues Act, which was demanded by the unanimous voice of the Irish people, and was applicable to them only, but which did not agree with the sentiments of the British public, and which therefore it was thought wrong to give to the Irish people. But it came at last, and minor measures of this description have come to Ireland from time to time, but the large and important measures of statesmanship which had agitated the public mind are those to which I have referred, and which have been accomplished only after the delays and under the circumstances I have briefly stated. Can anybody wonder, then, that there should have grown up early, and that there should continue with an ever-increasing volume and urgency, a cry for a measure of Home Rule? Put the question to ourselves. If we had been for eighty years in the position that these people have been in for that time; if we had to act for one generation for one measure of justice, for three-quarters of a generation for the next measure, and two-thirds of a generation for the third; if, as each of these measures had been obtained, it was due not to the recognition of the justice of our cause, but to the recognition of the danger of further delay, what would have been our feelings and how earnestly we would have demanded some portion of control over our affairs? But there is

than that. While remedies were refused justice, force was at the same time constantly applied. While you have the miserable record of remedial Acts to which I have referred, you have the record of Arms Acts, Coercion Acts, Restraint of Frauds Acts, Suspension of Habeas Corpus Acts, and all those legislative means of coercing the people passed from time to time with the utmost freedom by the same Parliament which was denying and delaying what is now admitted to have been only justice to the people. I do not mean to say that the conduct of the Irish people—a large portion of it—under these circumstances was justifiable far from it. I do not mean to say that it might not have been necessary sometimes to pass these Acts. The friends of Ireland have from time to time concurred in this passage, but I do mean to say that the condition of things lasting for eighty years, with such a record on its brighter side of remedial legislation, and such a record on its darker side of coercive legislation, is a record which proves that the experiment of local government for Ireland by the Parliament of the United Kingdom has been a disastrous failure. Besides legislative coercion, there were other methods of coercion employed. There is an army, under the guise of a constabulary, of 12,000 or 13,000, I suppose, the best troops in the world—the Irish Constabulary; and we have had from time to time large portions of the military forces of the Empire quartered in Ireland—from time to time not less than 50,000 men. I believe to-day 50,000 men of the British army are stationed in Ireland to keep the people down, and large detachments of the British fleet frequent Irish harbors for the same purpose. Whether right or wrong in this controversy, it cannot be contended that the Government of Ireland for 80 years has been a Government by constitutional means, but it must be admitted that it is a Government of force. That is the large result of the whole business. Now it is acknowledged—as the hon. member for Victoria has said, freely and frankly acknowledged—that Ireland was being mismanaged all these years. What a humiliating condition is that which the father of Parliament, the mother of constitutional freedom throughout the world, occupies on this question. Who of us did not feel with a pang of humiliation the keen shaft of the satirist who forged, so to speak, the letter from the Sultan of Turkey not long since calling, in response to some call that had been made by England on him to remedy some grievances of his subjects, on the British Government to remedy the conditions of the Irish people? Who did not feel that such a letter might have been fairly written, that such a complaint might have been fairly made, and that the argument sometimes urged in this House of us quoque might have been fairly used. Of the resolutions I think it is needless to speak. No doubt Ireland is largely in a state of anarchy—ruled, as far as the Kingdom is concerned, mainly by force; mainly, so far as a large portion of the people is concerned, by an organization without and beyond the control of the laws; and I maintain that it is the delays which have taken place in their passage, and the circumstances under which these measures of primary justice and importance have been at length granted, which are responsible for the distressed condition of that country.

THE CAUSES OF DELAY. There were for these delays two reasons. Reformers—and I do not use the word in a party sense or as defining wholesale the Reform party of England as compared with the Conservative party, though I might so use it; but still there have been honorable exceptions in the latter sense of the term have from time pressed upon the public and upon Parliament long before these reforms were granted their justice and necessity; but the great body of public opinion was unquestionably hostile to Ireland, and the Parliament being a Parliament of the United Kingdom in which the opinion of the majority must rule, it was impossible under the constitutional system that the justice or expediency to which the majority were not alive could be pushed forward. I believe that long ago many of these measures would have been carried by far-sighted statesmen except that they felt it was impossible to carry them—except that they were as Mr. Gladstone put it, beyond the realm of practical politics, because the aristocratic, the large landholding interest, the Conservative interest, and many other interests were entirely too strong to enable the relatively small band of advanced reformers from carrying them as all. In a word, the public opinion of the United Kingdom did not recognize the importance of, and was not sufficiently advanced to discharge the duties of efficiently managing Irish affairs. The second difficulty was the want of time. Parliament was overwhelmed with its concerns. It had to deal with large Imperial concerns, it had to deal with local concerns which were supposed to be more pressing, and it was unequal to its task. We know that for a great many years Parliament has been unequal to its task in that regard. We know that measures have been brought in by strong Governments session after session and have been just crushed out by the pressure of other affairs, have not been reached. It takes years, as a rule, before that which is deemed sufficiently ripe for legislation to be actually brought into Parliament by a Government; on its responsibility; can reach that stage of discussion; unless there be some extraordinary reason of urgency; such as lately attended the discussion of the Irish question. It has so happened that men have been too apt to say with reference to the large