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IRELAND'S VOICE IN THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT

Blake and Redmond Lead the Attack in Ventilating the Financial Grievances.

Stirring Speeches by Other Members of the Irish Party.

COL. SANDERSON'S SPIRITED DECLARATION.

Sir Edward Clarke Delivers a Vigorous Reply to the Chancellor of the Exchequer—General Features of the Proceedings, and Comments of Leading Irish Journals.

The Financial Relations question, after many delays, came up for the consideration of the House of Commons. From recent Irish exchanges we take the following report.

MR. BLAKE called attention to the report of the Royal Commission on the Financial Relations between Great Britain and Ireland, and moved a resolution to the effect that the report established the existence of an undue burden of taxation on Ireland which constituted a great grievance to all classes of the Irish community, and made it the duty of the Government to propose at an early day remedial legislation. He observed that on this question more than on most Irish questions Ireland was a united Ireland. It was said, however, that the Irish members were not fit judges in this matter, because they were plaintiffs in the case. But if they were plaintiffs, who were the defendants? (Hear, hear). Clearly the English members, who by virtue of their numbers would be the judges also (hear, hear). He hoped that this would be borne in mind, and that the Irish case would be listened to with the greater patience. In presenting this case, he first called attention to the great

DECLINE OF POPULATION IN IRELAND within the century, whilst the population of Great Britain had enormously increased. He also pointed to the inferiority in the economic condition of the people. In Great Britain the scale of living was so high, and the margin against the emergency so large, that famine was unknown and impossible. In Ireland the scale of living was so low and the margin against famine so narrow that even one bad crop tended to famine in important areas. The low rate of births and the high rate of deaths were also of grave significance, and so was the absence of manufactures. Ireland had become more and more absolutely and relatively dependent on the land, and in this respect suffered much from the fall in the prices of agricultural produce. Ireland furthermore suffered from an entire absence of foreign commerce and investments. At the same time a large part of her income was drained away by

ABSENTEE LANDLORDS AND MORTGAGEES. The facts showed that British rule had advanced British prosperity but failed to advance the prosperity of Ireland (Hear, hear). The situation, therefore, demanded just and generous consideration, and this the report of the Commission clearly suggested to be necessary. He quoted from the report at great length. The disproportion between the taxable capacity of Ireland and the demands upon her was very great, being equal to a minimum of about two or three quarter millions per annum, or nearly twice her maximum relative capacity. He asserted that the present state of things was contrary to the undertaking of the Act of Union, in which it was provided that relative capacity should be the basis on which taxation should be fixed (hear, hear). He protested against the doctrine which was made the basis of the appointment of a new Commission, that the taxation should be apportioned to the expenditure on Ireland. The principle of justice and of the Act of Union was that the expenditure of the United Kingdom should be a common expenditure, just as the revenue was a common revenue. The place and manner of the expenditure was a question for the United Kingdom to determine. Unionists could not consistently maintain that the expenditure of the United Kingdom was in effect federal, and should be subject to separate accounts. Contribution according to relative means, and expenditure without regard to limit, was the basis of the treaty. Answering the argument that the first complaint

was due to excessive drinking, he repudiated the allegation, quoting the figures of the Inland Revenue to show that the BRITISHERS DRANK TWICE AS MUCH beer per head as the Irishman and a good deal more spirits also. The Britisher not only drank more, but arranged to get his drink cheap (laughter), for relatively, the duties on beer, which was the National beverage in England, were less than the duties on whiskey, the National beverage of Ireland (hear, hear). Concluding, he said he protested against the proposed inquiry as based upon wrong principles, as useless, and as dilatory, for if ever ended it would never satisfy (loud Nationalist cheers).

MR. JOHN REDMOND, who was also cheered, said he rose to second the motion, a fact which alone showed that upon the main issues which underlaid it there was practical unanimity among all sections and classes of Irishmen, and that the claim for redress was put forward on behalf of no class, but of the whole people (hear, hear). The question was no new one.

IT HAD BEEN RAISED BY O'CONNELL; it had been raised before him in the early forties. But all along Irishmen had failed to get the ear of the House. Owing to the labors of the Royal Commission, however, it was no longer possible for even that House to ignore facts with which probably not more than three per cent of them had formerly been acquainted. Into some of these facts, as well as into historical details bearing upon them the hon. and learned gentleman went at some length, laying special stress upon the 7th article of the Treaty of Union, which provided that Ireland, after the amalgamation of the Exchequers, should be in a position to claim exemptions and abatements according to her circumstances demanded, so that she should never be called upon to pay more than her relative taxing capacity, he did not think any political party would controvert the legal and constitutional claim of Ireland to be taxed only according to her taxable capacity, and it was certainly clear that that was the intention of those who framed the Act of Union. Under these circumstances the question to be decided was whether Ireland did pay more than her fair proportion according to her taxable resources. In 1853 Mr. Gladstone, who was the author of a great deal of the financial injustice that had been done to Ireland, extended the income tax to Ireland, and inaugurated a system of indiscriminate taxation, as it was called by the Act of Union, or identity of impost, as he called it. The result of that financial policy was to increase the taxation of Ireland between that year and 1860 by two and a half millions per annum. The condition of Ireland at the moment that addition was made to her taxation was absolutely pitiful, for she was exhausted after one of the most

TERRIBLE FAMINES KNOWN IN THE HISTORY of the world. Her population had diminished by millions, and her people were leaving for other countries. The result of that action of Mr. Gladstone following upon what had already happened had been that the taxation of Ireland per head had gone on increasing, while that of England had been decreasing. Taking the figures from the time of the Union down to today, they had these extraordinary figures, that whereas in Great Britain the taxation per head was £4 13s 4d, and at the present day £2 0s 10d, in Ireland it was £1 4s 6d in 1860, and £1 8s 10d now. That was to say, that while in the course of a century of almost unexampled prosperity the tax per head in England had decreased by one-half, in a century which had meant for Ireland a diminished population and a loss of prosperity, her taxation per head had more than doubled. The question then for the House to consider was what was now, under the circumstances of the present moment,

THE FAIR PROPORTION IRELAND SHOULD PAY in relation to her present taxable capacity. The result of the application by the Commission of a number of different tests was that it had been held by the Commission that the relative annual wealth of Ireland did not bear a proportion of more than one eighteenth or one twentieth to the actual wealth of England. The comparative resources of the two countries, however, taken alone did not afford a proper test, because taxation pressed more heavily upon the poor than upon the rich, and he held that that estimate of the Commissioners was a most moderate one. His own view was that it was altogether too low, but even at the proportion of one to twenty Ireland was contributing from two and a half millions a year more than her fair share. That was substantially the Irish case. What answer could be made to it? The real answer seemed to be that Ireland received back in the shape of imperial expenditure within

her shores so much more than her share that the balance was redressed. Though Ireland was one of the poorest countries in Europe, her Government was probably one of the most expensive, because the Government of any country against the will of the governed would always be wasteful and bad (hear, hear). Looking at the matter, however, from a wider point of view, if Ireland was really a part of the United Kingdom what possible distinction could be made between Imperial and local expenditure? What he asked was it that the Unionist Government of the Unionist Parliament proposed to do? As he understood, THEY PROPOSED TO SUE THE QUESTION

for an indefinite time. In his opinion the proposal of a new Commission was a dishonest and cowardly evasion by the Government of their responsibilities. Its one object was delay for the manufacture, if possible, of an excuse for the continued refusal of justice to Ireland. After all, the question was more for Unionists than for Nationalists. Let the Government refuse justice to Ireland, let them appoint their new Commission so that years might pass, let them pack it as they liked, let them in the meantime go year after year increasing the load of taxation upon Ireland, but Nationalists would, at any rate, have the consolation of realizing that by their action the Government would have torn to shreds the last rag of argument in favour of the maintenance of the Union, and would have hastened the day when Ireland would find in a National Government of her own not only political freedom, but her best safeguard against further spoliation (Nationalist cheers).

The Purport of the Amendment. MR. WHITTAKER moved an amendment providing so long as the Exchequers of Great Britain and Ireland remained consolidated all portions of the United Kingdom must be regarded as forming one country for fiscal purposes, and that if any genuine and tangible grievance existed it could only be satisfactorily removed by so adjusting the present fiscal system as to render it just and equitable to all persons in whatever part of the United Kingdom they might reside.

COLONEL WARING seconded the amendment. SIR THOMAS ESMONDE expressed surprise at the action of Colonel Waring in seconding the amendment. It was, he thought, a strange action for an Irish landlord (hear, hear). The hon. member had apparently seconded the amendment from opposition to Home Rule, but it was possible that before the agitation on the question of the financial relations was brought to a close, the hon. member and many other gentlemen who now thought with him, might find themselves in the same lobby as the Nationalists. He was convinced that there was no conceivable relation between the taxation of Ireland and her capacity to pay (hear, hear).

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, who was received with Unionist cheers, said the speeches of Mr. Blake and Mr. Whittaker had been exhaustive from their respective points of view. He would not attempt to rival them in length. They showed how very difficult it was for men living on the two sides of S. George's Channel to adopt similar conclusions. Listening to the member for Longford they might suppose that all

THE EVILS OF IRELAND WERE DUE TO GREAT BRITAIN,

that Great Britain instigated the Irish Rebellion, was responsible for Irish famine, for decline of population, the absence of commerce and of mineral resources (laughter), for the condition of local taxation (a Nationalist member—"And for the east wind") (laughter); for many other things also. It might be thought, that during all this time Ireland had no representatives in this Parliament, or that they had no chance of having their way in anything regarding the country (hear, hear). That being the view of the Irish members, as expressed by the hon. member, it was more waste of time for him—an unfortunate person living on this side of the St. George's Channel—to argue with the hope of convincing them in the opposite direction; but it was his sincere desire to approach this question in a most impartial spirit (hear, hear). He reviewed the problem from a historical standpoint, asserting that however unsatisfactory the working of the arrangements set up by the Act of Union might have been in the earlier years, that practical injustice ceased when the Exchequers were consolidated in 1817. The Treasury estimated that in 1855

THE TOTAL REVENUE OF IRELAND for all purposes was £8,034,000, and that of that £5,938,000 went for Irish local purposes, and only just over two millions for Imperial purposes. If the Treasury were to give back to Ireland the two millions and three-quarters a year which the hon. members claimed the result would be that Ireland would contribute nothing whatever to the common expenditure of the United Kingdom, and would also receive from England and Scotland a tribute of £600,000 a year. MR. T. M. HEALY—Is England running

Ireland at a loss? (laughter and Nationalist cheers.)

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said the reply to his contention would no doubt be that the expenditure on Irish local purposes was too much, and, no doubt, it was very high. A NATIONALIST MEMBER—End the partnership (cheers.) If Irish contributions were reduced according to the one-twentieth proportion there would be a deficit of £500,000 a year for local services alone.

A NATIONALIST MEMBER—Give us back our country (cheers). The SPEAKER—I must ask hon. members to behave in accordance with the traditions of the House.

A NATIONALIST MEMBER—Better ask him to behave (cries of order). The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER remarked that they on the one side had listened patiently to the non-members opposite (Ministerial cheers.) It was true that the cost of the police and of education in Ireland was heavy, but he did not know

WHY IRISHMEN SHOULD NOT PAY

for keeping the peace if they insisted on breaking it (much laughter), and it must also be remembered that in Ireland certain matters were paid for from Imperial sources which in England were partially paid for from local taxation, which he said at least showed the necessity for some further exhaustive inquiry, and when the facts were fully ascertained it would be the desire and the endeavor of the Government to do full justice to the poorest parts of the United Kingdom, but on this one condition, they would take no steps whatever to depart from that system of common taxation which was established in 1817. They would do nothing to impair either the financial or the political permanence of the Union between the two countries; and, lastly, they would give no countenance to the monstrous doctrine that any part of the United Kingdom should be relieved from her fair obligation to contribute to the necessities of the National Debt, the army and navy and the maintenance of our great Empire.

A Capital Speech.

On Tuesday the debate was renewed by Sir Edward Clarke, the Tory member for Plymouth, in a speech of great power and convincing argument. The Tory party sat silent while Sir Edward with merciless logic answered the sophisms of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The speech would have done honor to the most patriotic Irishman; issuing from a Conservative statesman, it would be impossible to over estimate its importance. Rare courage is necessary for a man of Sir Edward Clarke's position to place himself in opposition to his party on such a momentous question. Nobody heeds the antics of the Ashmead Butts and the Bowleses, self-advertisement is as necessary to them as the air they breathe. But Sir Edward is a man of established reputation, a man with a future. There can be no question that his present attitude is a bold stroke of policy, one which may jeopardise his prospects. His brother Tories say he is a disappointed man; that bitterness at his exclusion from the Government actuates him rather than a desire for justice. It is indeed but natural that a feeling of disgust should possess the honourable gentleman, for it looks as if no place can be found in the ranks of Ministers for any save those who are prepared to sink their individuality and become propped opportunists. The Tories received Sir Edward's speech in ominous silence. A man of smaller intellectual calibre would have been howled down, but the irresistible influence which commanding ability exercises over a multitude of puzzled mediocrities held them in check. The Irish members keenly relished Sir Edward's speech.

Mr. Horace Plunkett's Sympathetic Speech.

It was very pleasant to hear an Irish Protestant Unionist telling the House of Commons that British policy for centuries had been one of pure vandalism, and that the day of reckoning had come at last. When he said, speaking of England's policy towards our country, "that it was generally admitted that the policy of England was to ruthlessly destroy every trade and industry in Ireland which at all competed with the industries of the English," not an Irishman in the House but felt he had summed up admirably the blessings of British domination in the sister isle.

Mr. Clancy's Able Effort.

He remarked that Irish members would require to din the A.B.C. of the Irish case into the skulls of their English friends. It certainly looks very like it, for there can be little doubt that the most elementary bearings of the subject are scarcely comprehended by the vast majority of English members. Luck of comprehension is, however, regarded by Englishmen as anything but a disqualification for attempting to deal with Irish affairs. Into mazes where men like the late Sir Robert Hamilton, an expert financier, may be said to have carefully and only laboriously tread; men like Mr. Whittaker and Mr. Bigham march with elephantine strides in the complacent belief that at an average British legislator cannot understand has really got nothing in it.

Col. Sanderson followed Mr. Clancy. The Colonel is generally amusing. Mr. Johnston, of Ballykilbeg, the grim warden of the Union, in these dark and evil days, could not restrain his anger. He

interrupted the gallant officer, who retorted that from Cape Clear to the Giant's Causeway

IRELAND WAS UNITED ON THIS QUESTION. It was a pretty boast and one that must have struck a dull pain to the loyal heart of Ballykilbeg. But better things were in store for us. The Colonel boasted that his ancestor voted against the Union. Poor Mr. Johnston sat like one petrified, while the Irish members gave the patriotic Sanderson of 1800 a cheer which must have made his brother "shades" turn green with envy, if House of Commons burials can reach the Land beyond the Styx.

The Close of the Debate.

On Wednesday the debate on the Financial Relations was resumed. Mr. Lough's speech was the first important contribution to the Irish case. Mr. Lough followed. His speech was listened to with respect attention by both sides of the House. He scouted the notion that Ireland was a province of England. He reminded that Ireland was a nation with a national Parliament which made a Treaty on 1801 terms with the English Parliament was received with great cheering by the Irish members. It was a bitter pill to the Tories to find a man of Mr. Lough's reputation demanding special and separate treatment for Ireland.

Mr. Morley continued the debate after luncheon. His speech was characterized by his usual fair-mindedness and moderation of tone. The Government put up Mr. G. Schen to reply. He is the only occupant of the Treasury Bench, after Sir Michael Hicks Beach, who could deal at all satisfactorily with the question. It is almost quite apparent that other Ministers have not taken the trouble to read the report of the Commissioners. His remarks were heard with some impatience by the House. Notwithstanding Mr. F. M. Holywell's efforts to have the debate prolonged over another day, the Government decided to take the division on Wednesday afternoon, so that when Mr. G. Schen rose it was the signal that discussion was practically closed. Most unusual and a bundle pervaded the lobby prior to the division; and a faint thrill of that excitement which an Irish question alone arouses stirred the expectant House.

At half past five the House divided, and Mr. Blake's motion was rejected by a majority of one hundred and sixty. Four hundred and seventy-four members took part in the division.

Press Opinions.

THE DUBLIN NATION, in referring to Mr. Blake's speech says, it was an admirable statement of the Irish case. It was calm and moderate in its tone; and although it took two hours and a quarter in its delivery, no one who heard him could say that one single minute was wasted. Mr. Blake's speech was only marred by one drawback, and indeed it was, perhaps, under the circumstances rather acceptable to the House; that was, he spoke somewhat quickly, but at all times very distinctly, and perhaps he read his extracts and quotations with too much speed. But it was a fine speech, by far the best one he has ever delivered in the House. No one who heard him could refrain from giving him the praise so justly earned by his eloquent address.

The Dublin Freeman, in the course of a review of the debate, refers to Mr. Blake in the following terms:—

"The Hon. Edward Blake opened the debate on the Financial Relations question on Monday night in a speech which will rank amongst the most masterly statements of a national grievance ever made in a deliberative assembly. It was complete, comprehensive and logical. It covers the whole ground, both from the constitutional point of view and the standpoint of the simple equity and justice which characterize Ireland's claim, even if she had not constitutional grounds to go on."

The Leinster Leader says: It was truly an Irish night. None but Irishmen may be said to have been in the House. The Parnellites, anti-Parnellites, Unionists from the North of Ireland; in fact every section was represented. There has not been such a gathering of the clans since the days of Parnell. Mr. Blake's presence is striking and imposing, his matter is excellent. His speech was a marvel of industry. There was not a nook or cranny of the question that he did not explore. For a book of reference his speech is invaluable, but the excellence of his conclusions was lost in the mist of figures and per centages, which baffled attention and destroyed interest. He was not that faculty of Mr. Gladstone to array figures in a garb of romance, which made his Budget speeches as interesting as his speeches on some important crisis. He never once during the two hours and a quarter that his speech occupied left the beaten track of calculation, and without it was a masterly exposition of historical, financial, and economical aspects of Ireland. It was a great effort, and well deserved the hearty cheers he received as he sat down.

The professor of mathematics, the father of a bright boy, took a nap the other afternoon. He had not been asleep long when his wife heard the most heart-rending groans and found him sitting, face in hands. "What is the matter, dear?" asked Mrs. K. "I've had the most horrible dream," the professor replied. "I dreamed that our Charley was a minus quantity under the radical sign, and I couldn't get him out!"—Exchange.

NINETY-EIGHT IN IRELAND.

The Centenary Celebration Awakening Great Enthusiasm.

The Preliminary Work in Ireland and the United States—The Movement Has Already Exceeded the Expectations of Its Promoters—The Monument to be Erected in Dublin.

The preparations for the Irish American Pilgrimage to Ireland next year, in commemoration of the celebration of the centenary of '98, are attracting widespread attention throughout the United States. The Sunday Democrat, in its last issue, contains the following interesting account of the preliminary work of the executive committee of the organization:—

The executive committee of the association met at 323 West Forty-sixth street, Sunday evening, March 28, and the members of it were greatly encouraged by a mass of correspondence showing the widespread progress of the movement on both sides of the Atlantic.

Letters from Dublin show that Ireland is united as she has never been since the Parnell trouble, in the determination to do fitting honor to the heroes who died on the scaffold or the battlefield a hundred years ago. On the Central Executive committee of Dublin, provided for by John O'Leary, the distinguished litterateur and former political prisoner, are grouped men representing every section of extreme and moderate Nationalists in the old land, all the factions of the Parliamentary party and every form of religious belief. None is excluded except those who "fear to speak of '98," and every city council and board of town commissioners, with the exception of Belfast and Londonderry, is represented by its Mayor or chairman. The Irishmen of England, Scotland and Wales are acting in co-operation with the men on Irish soil, while many distinguished descendants of exiles who found refuge in France, Spain or Austria have written letters of approval.

The committee expects that the grandson of Arthur O'Connor, one of the chiefs of the United Irishmen, who is a colonel in the French army, a nephew of Marshal McMahon of France, a grandson of Marshal O'Donnell of Spain, and the descendants of the Nugents of Austria, will each lead delegations from their respective countries.

For the moment fashion hides its head and there is every reason to hope that the result of the great celebration will be the permanent union of the Irish race on a sound and practical national policy.

Here in America the movement has already outgrown the most sanguine expectations of the original promoters—a small group of Westfordians descended from men who fought in the great uprising—and it now bids fair to rival the great Moslem pilgrimage to Mecca, rather than anything of which Irish history affords a precedent.

President Edward O'Flaherty, Secretary J. B. Kelly and Treasurer R. J. Kennedy are overwhelmed with letters asking for places among the pilgrims, or offering to subscribe to the fund for the great monument which the Dublin committee is preparing to erect in honor of all the heroes.

This monument will have inscribed upon it a galaxy of glorious names, which will give the lie to the English calumny that it is Irish Catholics only who seek to overthrow British domination, for seven-eighths of them are those of Protestants. First in order will come the bold Wolfe Tone, the great organizer of the United Irishmen; then the two Emmets, the Shearers, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Lord Cloncurry, Beauchamp Bignall Harcourt, Henry Joy McCracken, Munro, William Orr, Hamilton, Riwan, Samuel Neilson, James Hope, William Putnam McCabe and many others, all Protestants. Then will follow the names of General Michael Aylmer, John Keogh, Michael Reynolds, Garret Cullen, father of the Cardinal; Fathers Murphy and Roche, Myles Byrne, Matthew Teeling and other Catholic leaders, who were in the minority, while the 50,000 of the gallant rank and file who lost their lives in battle or were butchered in cold blood by England's redcoats, will not be forgotten.

The whole arrangement of the details of this monument will very properly be left in the hands of the Central Executive Committee in Dublin, and the American organization will content itself with the sending of a munificent contribution. As the monument will be a great work of art, requiring time for the elaboration of designs, and still more for the execution, all that can be done next year is to lay the foundation stone on the site selected by the committee, which meets by the permission of the municipal authorities in the Dublin City Hall.

ST. MARY'S PARISH.

At the regular monthly meeting of the St. Mary's Young Men's Society, held last week, the President referred to the death of Miss Blanche E. Kearns, and a resolution of sympathy with the family of the deceased was adopted.