

These were the words of my hon. friend, the Secretary of State; and, at the opening of this present Parliament, in the first address delivered by the hon. the leader of the Opposition in this House, he re-echoed those sentiments, and expressed his detestation of coercive measures for the land of his forefathers. I may be asked, why should this Parliament be called upon to give expression to this opinion, why should the voice of our people be raised against this coercion measure? Because coercion in its most detestable form has been employed over and over again in Ireland, and has utterly failed in the past as it is doomed to utter failure in the present instance. I will refer this honorable House for a very few moments to a list of Coercion Acts which have been passed in Ireland since the date of the unfortunate union eighty-seven years ago. In 1800—they began soon—in 1800 an Act was passed which extended to 1805. I will give the list:

1800 to 1805. Habeas Corpus suspension. Seven Coercion Acts.
 1807. Feb. 1st, Coercion Act, Habeas Corpus suspension. Aug. 2nd, Insurrection Act.
 1808–9. Habeas Corpus suspension.
 1814 to 1816. Habeas Corpus suspension. Insurrection Act.
 1817. Habeas Corpus suspension. One Coercion Act.
 1822 to 1830. Habeas Corpus suspension. Two Coercion Acts in 1822 and one in 1823.
 1830. Importation of Arms Act.
 1831. Whiteboy Act.
 1831. Stanley's Arms Act.
 1832. Arms and Gunpowder Act.
 1833. Suppression of Disturbance.
 1833. Change of Venue Act.
 1834. Disturbance, amendment and continuance.
 1834. Arms and Gunpowder Act.
 1835. Public Peace Act.
 1836. Another Arms Act.
 1838. Another Arms Act.
 1839. Unlawful Oaths Act.
 1840. Another Arms Act.
 1841. Outrages Act and another Arms Act.
 1843. Another Arms Act.
 1848. Act consolidating all previous Coercion Acts.
 1844. Unlawful Oaths Act.
 1845. Additional Constables near Public Works Act.
 1845. Unlawful Oaths Act.
 1846. Constabulary Enlargement.
 1847. Crime and Outrage Act.
 1848. Treason Amendment Act.
 1848. Removal of Arms Act.
 1848. Suspension of Habeas Corpus.
 1848. Another Oaths Act.
 1849. Suspension of Habeas Corpus.
 1850. Crime and Outrage Act.
 1851. Unlawful Oaths Act.
 1853. Crime and Outrage Act.
 1854. do do do
 1855. do do do
 1856. Peace Preservation Act.
 1858. do do do
 1860. do do do
 1862. do do do
 1862. Unlawful Oaths Act.
 1865. Peace Preservation Act.
 1866. Suspension of Habeas Corpus Act.
 1867. do do do
 1868. do do do
 1870. Peace Preservation Act.
 1871. Protection of Life and Property.
 1871. Peace Preservation—continued.
 1873. Peace Preservation Act
 1875. do do do
 1875. Unlawful Oaths Act.
 1881–1882. Peace Preservation Act (Suspension Habeas Corpus).
 1881–1886. Arms Act.
 1882–1885. Crimes Act.
 1886–1887. Arms Act.

Now, it would seem to the impartial observer, it would seem to the mind of anyone who has read the history of Ireland, written by no matter whom, when we find that every historian who has written upon this subject has denounced the manner in which the people of Ireland were deprived of their national Legislature, in view of the means of bribery and corruption which were used upon that occasion, that the people of England or the Government of England would have endeavored, by a policy of conciliation, to win the affections of the people whom they had thus

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deprived of their national Parliament, that they would have endeavored, by some means or other, to convince them that their interests lay in having one Parliament for the two kingdoms, and that, though they were deprived of their national Parliament, although the voice of Ireland's patriots and statesmen was no longer heard in College Green, at all events they would get justice and fair play in the British Parliament; but, instead of that, since the first year of the alliance there has been only an interval of some five or six years, I believe, during which no Coercion Act was in force in Ireland. From that day to this, every year has brought forth new measures of coercion, new devices for depriving the people of their liberty, and in this year of grace 1887—eighty-seven years after the Union was consummated—we find the Government of England again coming forward and asking from the Parliament of the Empire new powers to suppress and repress the Irish people, and if possible to choke out the last spark of their national aspirations. I say that such a state of things cannot be tolerated. I say that such a state of things is not one which we should expect to find in any Christian country. In 1848 an Act consolidating all previous Coercion Acts was passed. On 28th July, 1843, Mr. Sherman Crawford proposed a motion to the effect that the state of Ireland demanded instant attention of Parliament, to improve the condition, redress grievances, establish just rights, &c., and thereby promote the good order and prosperity of that part of the United Kingdom and give increased security to Her Majesty's Crown and Government. Mr. Crawford pointed out that bad government was the cause of distress and discontent in Ireland. The people were treated by the Government as a race of slaves. He stated the people were allowed to be exterminated, while there were 5,000,000 of acres of improvable land in Ireland, and all the authority of the State was given to aid the landlords to produce the extermination. Whenever the Government was asked to do aught to ameliorate the condition of Ireland, the answer was that they had no means nor time—but they had means and time to push on a Coercion Act at that moment. Vainly they have attempted to govern by coercion. It failed, it will fail, it can never succeed and will only widen the gap between England and Ireland and sap the support of the United Kingdom. And the longer we live, and the further we move from the days of ignorance, barbarism and slavery, the more dangerous will coercion be to England and the less effective will it be in Ireland. In the same debate, Mr. Fagan, a member of the Imperial Parliament, spoke as follows:—

"That the Chief Minister referred (Lord John Russell) to the grievances of Ireland, but that he took no steps to ameliorate the country's condition—rather he wished to goad her on by adding insult to injury. The First Minister said that in due time Ireland would get measures to improve her condition,—but Mr. Fagan asked, had the Irish to die in the meantime? What were they to do? At the rate the Government was proceeding forty years would pass and still they would cling to coercion as the old slave driver—played out and dying—would still wish to wield the lash, forgetting that his slaves had been freed and his strength was gone."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I ask if the words of Mr. Fagan have not proved to be a true prophecy? The period of time which he then indicated has elapsed, and to-day we find a Government, not a strong Government, not a Government able to control the affairs of the country by the votes of the party to which it belongs, but a Government supported by Liberal and Radical coercionists, endeavoring to wield the lash again, and only wielding it by the grace of those men who have joined in the pressing of this measure. Now, we find that Ireland is not alone in this conflict. She has been joined by Scotland and Wales, she has been joined by the people of Canada and by the other possessions of Her Majesty in all parts of the world. This brings me to another branch of the subject. We have seen it stated in the press, as having been urged in the English Parliament, that the Protestants of Ireland are against Home Rule, and in favor