

am the descendant of an Irish family, which at least has borne a not ignoble part in the history of that country; and I say, as representing that class of Irishmen to which I am now alluding, that I protest against any measure such as that introduced by Mr. Gladstone, which bristles with objectionable features, and which I think should be defeated on the ground that if it is passed something worse must follow. When the hon. Minister of Inland Revenue or other hon. gentlemen undertake to speak on behalf of the people of Ireland, I think it only fair to mention that at least one-third of the population of Ireland, including the great bulk of the Protestant population, and a large minority of Roman Catholics, who do not believe in the doctrines of Mr. Parnell, look on Mr. Gladstone's measure as disastrous to the country, and have protested and do protest in the strongest manner against it. They have taken very many occasions to express that opinion; and to show the depth of their feeling, I think I may be allowed to quote the remarks made by a member of the English House of Commons, whose name is historical, and who will, I think, be accepted as an authority on the subject. I allude to Mr. Plunkett, who, I think, is the member for the University of Dublin. At a public meeting recently held, that gentleman used the following language:—

"I wish I could realise for you the feelings of anxious grief, almost of despair, with which the loyalists of Ireland regard the present crisis. We foresee that our country, where we were born and bred, with which every hope and every affection and every tradition of our lives is bound up, will be committed to a condition of squalid poverty and violent social disorder which before long is almost certain to end in civil war."

These are serious words; they were uttered under a full sense of their importance, and I think they may be accepted as expressing the feeling of the minority of the people of Ireland towards the measure now before the Imperial House of Commons. But, Sir, the most serious objection to that measure, and the one which we, as Canadians, are most entitled to consider, apart from any sympathy which we may feel, as I do, with that Protestant minority, is that it is regarded by Mr. Parnell and his followers, whatever may be said to the contrary, as a mere lever by which they may accomplish what they really desire—that is, the complete isolation and independence of Ireland. In proof of that, I may cite no less an authority than Mr. Parnell himself, who, speaking at Cincinnati so long ago as 1880, said:

"None of us, whether in America or in Ireland, or wherever we may be, will be satisfied until we have destroyed the last link that keeps Ireland bound to England."

And that language has been repeated time and again. It was repeated only the other day by Mr. Davitt, one of Mr. Parnell's most trusted lieutenants, who, when asked if he approved of the Bill now before Parliament, replied: "When a man gets his breakfast, is it to be said that he should not get his dinner?"—meaning thus to illustrate his feeling towards that measure; and if it is carried, even with modifications, can anyone believe that those who support it in Ireland would stop short of claiming absolute independence? Mr. Gladstone has put a weapon in their hands, which I am sure they will not be slow to use. Why, did not that hon. gentleman say, when speaking of the laws made for Ireland: "Laws might be good in themselves, but not be accepted by the people because they came in a foreign garb." He there laid down the doctrine, from which I most decidedly dissent, that anything connected with England is foreign to Ireland. Now, what will be the necessary consequence, which will result from the absurd anomaly, looking at it from a constitutional point of view, no matter what one's politics may be, that taxation is to be unaccompanied by representation. The hon. gentleman proposes that the officials of what he himself said is a foreign country, shall hold possession of Ireland. If that is to be

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the case, how long will the Irish people consent to such foreign domination? I consider it a great misfortune that Mr. Gladstone should have used that word; but it is not a misfortune in the sense that the use of it gave the people of the Empire to understand what will be the necessary and inevitable results of the measure he has introduced. Not to be tedious, I will briefly refer to another objection, which, from an Irish point of view, is a most serious objection. I cannot understand how an Irishman, with any ambition beyond a mere provincial ambition, can give his consent to a measure which will degrade Ireland from the position of an integral part of the Empire to that of a mere Province. This, in the converse form, was well put by Lord Clare at the time of the Union, and, though hon. gentlemen may criticise his conduct and say his opinion was of little value, he was a man of surpassing ability, whose opinions necessarily carried great weight, and who may fairly be given as an authority on this matter, when he asked, putting the converse of his proposition: "What Irishman and what man who valued the independence and welfare of his country, would wish it to be degraded from the position of being an integral and governing part of the Empire to that of a mere mercenary Province?" That is precisely what Mr. Gladstone's Bill will do, and I am astonished any man of ambition should support a measure which will cut him off from all Imperial employment and Imperial honors. How could any man in Ireland, no matter what his ability, expect promotion or employment in the Imperial service? How could he expect to be anything better than the official of a mere Provincial Government, when he had no longer a voice or representation in the conduct of the affairs of the Empire. It is a matter, not of congratulation, but of humiliation, to think that there should be a party in Ireland which will declare to the English people that they want to shut themselves out from the dignity and responsibility attached to their position as citizens of an integral part of the Empire at large, and become degraded to the position of mere provincialists. Take our Provinces. Is it not considered a higher position to have a seat in this House, to have something to say in the management of the affairs of the Dominion, than to have a seat in one of our Provincial Legislatures? Would any Irishman of ability be satisfied that he should be restricted to a mere provincial position? Would he not desire to be enabled to gratify his legitimate ambition for a share in the management of the Empire? Would he not consider it humiliating that it should be placed out of his power to take any part in the management of the Empire, and that his country should be reduced to the position of a large municipality? For these reasons, I am disinclined to say anything, which, however remotely, may tend to strengthen Mr. Gladstone in this measure. Mr. Gladstone made a very singular statement in his manifesto the other day. He said the opposition to Home Rule came from a single class. But do we not know well, does not every gentleman who takes an interest in public proceedings know, that the opposition to Home Rule is not confined to any one class, is not confined to the hangers-on of any one particular class, as Mr. Gladstone politely put it? Do we not find men like Mr. Goschen, Mr. Collings, Mr. Rylands, Mr. Chamberlain, to say nothing of Lord Hartington, Lord Derby, and Lord Salisbury, showing their faith in the true interests of the Empire by their opposition to this measure? When we see leading Radicals casting their radicalism aside, and standing forward as champions of Imperial interests, it is certainly time to give this matter more serious consideration. How many hon. members here who are prepared to vote on the resolution proposed, really know anything, or have read anything, or have thought anything, about Irish affairs? Have they considered the necessary consequences to Ireland which will result from the carrying out of this proposed measure? Have they ever considered what will be the position of what is called the minority, and