

3. We would further respectfully represent to Your Majesty that the Dominion of Canada, while offering the greatest advantages and attractions for those of our fellow-subjects who may desire to make their homes amongst us, does not receive that proportion of emigrants from Ireland which might reasonably be expected, and that this is due, in a great measure, in the case of many of our Irish fellow-subjects who have sought foreign homes, to their feelings of estrangement towards the Imperial Government.

4. We would further most respectfully represent to Your Majesty, that in the interests of this, your loyal Dominion and of the entire Empire, it is extremely to be desired that Your Majesty may not be deprived in the development of Your Majesty's possessions on this continent of the valuable aid of those of Your Majesty's Irish subjects who may feel disposed to leave their native land to seek more prosperous homes.

5. We desire respectfully to suggest to Your Majesty, that Canada and its inhabitants have prospered exceedingly under a Federal system, allowing to each Province of the Dominion considerable powers of self-government, and would venture to express a hope that if consistent with the integrity and well being of the Empire, and if the rights and status of the minority are fully protected and secured, sure means may be found of meeting the expressed desire of so many of Your Irish subjects in that regard, so that Ireland may become a source of strength to Your Majesty's Empire, and that Your Majesty's Irish subjects at home and abroad may feel the same pride in the greatness of Your Majesty's Empire, the same veneration for the justice of Your Majesty's rule, and the same devotion to, and affection for, our common flag, as are now felt by all classes of Your Majesty's loyal subjects in this Dominion.

6. We would further express a hope that the time has come when Your Majesty's clemency may without injury to the interests of the United Kingdom be extended to those persons, who are now imprisoned in Ireland charged with political offences only, and the inestimable blessing of personal liberty restored to them.

We pray that the blessings of Your Majesty's Reign may, for Your people's sake, be long continued.

Mr. BLAKE. If no other hon. member proposes to address the House on the subject, I do not, for my part, feel disposed to give a silent vote upon it. It is now two 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 lead very shortly to the concession of some measure of Home Rule to the Irish people. I believed, as I said, that such a solution 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 prudence and of justice alike were observed and fulfilled by the granting of some measure of control over their local affairs, we would see that which 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, in 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—we had a material 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 then 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 inevitable 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 confiscations, to the history of the proscriptions, to the history of the penal laws, directed at one time against Protestants, and at one 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

Mr. COSTIGAN.

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 not upon the history of the past eighty years, but upon the history of the government of Ireland under the present constitution of the United Kingdom. That history begins with the Union Act—an Act secured, as you all know, by means of the basest corruption. However beneficial the public men who carried that measure may have believed it to be, I do not suppose it will be urged to day that the end justified the means, and I have myself a strong belief that the nefarious 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 it a poor chance of being satisfactory to the people of the country which was by such means brought into more intimate connection with the Empire. 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 palpable tests as to whether there has been a good and 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, more than 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 it 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 at 8,200,000, stands to-day at 5,160,000 only, or 235,000 less than eighty 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 2,750,000. Now, it may be said that Ireland is over-crowded. I deny that Ireland, as a whole, is over-crowded. 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 over-crowded country. The number of inhabitants to the square mile in France is 180; Italy, 225; Belgium, 421; Flanders, 718; England and Wales, 442; in the whole of Great Britain, 333; in Ireland, 161. The acreage of Ireland is 20,325,000 acres, of which there is at present arable 13,465,000 acres and an additional acreage easily made available for tillage of 4,000,000 acres more, making a total of land actually arable and available for tillage of 17,465,000 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 land. 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 har-