

with which the gentleman's utterances were received proved beyond cavil that the great audience was entirely in agreement with his views.

"His speech was full of the fire which is so closely associated with the general ideas of Irish oratory, yet with it all there was a careful (almost a judicial) calmness of statement which was admirable throughout.

"He presented his arguments in a manner suggesting the great pleader engaged in a great case before the high court of last resort of modern times — the public opinion of the world."

The Hon. Thomas J. Gargan presented in a few well-chosen words His Honor Mayor Matthews as presiding officer of the evening.

SPEECH OF MAYOR MATTHEWS.

MAYOR MATTHEWS was given a very enthusiastic greeting as he rose in response to the pleasant introductory speech. He said: —

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: The people of this city are, as the size of this great audience bears witness, deeply and sincerely interested in the home rule movement, and they are in hearty sympathy with the efforts of the people of Ireland to secure once more the inestimable benefits to be derived from the exercise of self-government, denied to them for so many centuries.

We on this side of the ocean recognize in this movement an attempt to regulate the relations between Great Britain and Ireland according to the federal idea of government, which was first applied in a large and successful way to the political institutions of the United States of America.

We feel a certain pride of authorship in the federal system of government, and we are naturally desirous of seeing that system spread and its benefits extended to the people of other lands. Despised, derided, and derided at first by foreign statesmen, the experience of this country has proved its worth, and the present generation has witnessed the adoption of the federal idea in the great empire of Germany, in the Dominion of Canada, where our honored guest to-night took his first political lessons, — [applause] — and in other parts of the civilized world.

As we look dispassionately without prejudice abroad, I think we cannot fail to agree that there is no country in the world more apt to realize benefit and profit from the adoption of the federal system than the Empire of Great Britain, a part of which already is constituted upon this basis, and another part of which — and that the part we are most concerned with to-night — is engaged in a determined, and I believe soon to be successful, struggle to realize the blessings of home rule. [Applause.]

Accustomed as we American citizens are to a systematic sub-division of the functions and powers of government, it is almost inconceivable to us that intelligent and conscientious men anywhere should object to giving home rule to Ireland. If there is any form of government that the ingenuity of man has yet devised that seems to us wholly unsuited to conduct safely and triumphantly the march of democratic progress, it is that in which all power, local as well as general, is centralized and concentrated in a single legislative body like the English Parliament, which has no real executive behind it to prevent by veto the enactment of hasty legislation, which is hampered by none of the checks and balances provided by a written constitution, and which is thus practically the sovereign arbiter of all the details of public business in every section, county, town, and city in the land. [Applause.]

We and all in this country, I think, favor home rule for ourselves and for the people of Ireland, for England and for Canada; and we are always ready to do honor to the men who have distinguished themselves in that cause.

But there is another reason, gentlemen, to which I beg to call your special attention, why we should be ready to do honor to that particular statesman who visits us to-night.

The methods by which the home rule movement has been promoted have been changed in recent years. Under the leadership of this gentleman and his colleagues that movement is being carried out now solely upon constitutional lines and by parliamentary methods.

The will of the majority [applause] in respect to party leadership and party tactics is recognized and obeyed, as it should be [applause]; and while the ultimate end, the restoration of self-government to the people of Ireland, is never lost sight of, these gentlemen believe it to be their patriotic duty to take also into account existing conditions, political contingencies and all considerations of a practical nature. [Applause.]

In other words, the agitation for home rule is now being carried on as a matter of practical politics in a practical, constitutional, democratic, American way. [Applause.] And let me tell you, my friends, speaking as an outsider, that is one reason why the people of this country are more generally in favor of home rule for Ireland now than formerly. [Applause.]

It seems to me that the Irish people have home rule within their grasp to-day. They have only to keep their courage up, to practise the patriotic virtue of patience, to act together, and to follow the wise counsels of their present leaders. [Applause.]

We met in this hall something over a year ago, to bid God-speed to our guest of this evening in his mission to assist in framing and in passing through the House of Commons, if he should be elected to that body, a practical and sufficient measure of home rule for Ireland.

We meet to-night to congratulate him upon his personal and party success in the House of Commons. [Applause.]