

Their struggles for power are apparently destined to be as endless as they are untiring. Those alternations of success are the *systole* and *diastole* of the political body, which seem to accompany its life, and whose absence perhaps would be inconsistent with sound health. The element of insincerity, which leads to so much corruption and is threatening to become a public danger, is forced into the struggle. The system which throws legislative questions into the same parliamentary mill is the cause of their inevitably becoming grist for the party leaders. This results from the unscientific incompleteness of our institutions in their present state, as already pointed out. Hence the benefit to be expected from reverting to an equivalent of the older system, under which the inconsistent functions of legislation and of executive government were in a great measure severed in their exercise. To Parliament—the elected repository of the authority of the nation—belongs the choice, the support, and the criticism of executive governments. With it must also remain, as a part of its supreme power, the duty of giving final effect to new projects of law. But let the most substantial part of legislation, the business of approving or condemning all proposed legislative action, at least on those questions which are the subject of class jealousies, be once more undertaken by a voluntary convention from time to time of representatives of all the class interests of the country liable to be affected by impending economical legislation.

These conferences would be held on a neutral territory which Party would not easily invade. Party organisation—or even party spirit—seems to stop at the doors of the Bank Board and the Company meeting. Equally distinct and independent will be the constituency of the Industrial Parliament. A like sense of separate and important interests being at stake may be expected to make every class vigilant in repelling political intrusion.

I have (in the book referred to) used Ireland as an illustration that the whole can be done by the classes severally interested acting for themselves in the matter.

It does not seem to be impossible that local Industrial Conventions or Parliaments, habitually assembling, as described in the book, in all the British Kingdoms, would give much of the desired relief to Parliament, the necessity for which has formed the chief English argument for the creation of local legislatures, not in Ireland alone. They might even prove to afford such perfect expression to all genuine local demands, that the desire for a Home Rule Parliament would lose much of the hold it now has on the minds of many reasonable men.

But whether the seal to be put upon those conclusions, in the form of an ultimate authoritative act of legislation, is to come from the Imperial Parliament or from a Home Rule Parliament, is really a secondary matter.

Thus the proposition may be entertained altogether aside from the more theoretical question of the expediency of political "Home Rule" for Ireland.

The institution to which I give the name of an Industrial Parliament is proposed as supplying a gap which meets us everywhere in our processes of evolving industrial legislation. It is needed in Canada—notwithstanding the complete Home Rule which Canadians are admitted to be enjoying—and the same want is experienced in the different States of the American Union.

It seems to me that the assembly of one of those extra-political Industrial conferences must under any circumstances be a useful, if not an essential, preliminary step in arriving at a just and peaceable solution of the misunderstandings now existing between the two great Irish industrial classes.

It has been the habit of the advocates of a Home Rule Parliament to urge in answer to the fears of their opponents that when left to make a settlement for themselves, the various classes and interests in Ireland would proceed with more fairness than some expect; and that they would end by arriving at some reasonable and just basis of agreement. I venture to point out that it is easy to put the justice of those fears beyond controversy by an immediate and conclusive test. What prevents those classes from meeting in a conference now, and proving the possibility of an agreement by arriving at it in advance? Let the challenge be fairly given by either side, and those declining it would exhibit a want of confidence in the righteousness of their claims—a reluctance to submit them to fair discussion, an anxiety to reserve them for an overbearing majority in a Parliament, partial on one side or on the other, which would almost at once decide against the recusants the wavering sympathies of the civilised world.

Already, since the appearance of the book expressing such hopes, more than one step has been made towards their accomplishment. Within the past month the Irish landlords have organised themselves into a completely representative class assembly, corresponding to that previously existing on the part of the tenants. Between these two plenipotentiary bodies protocols for a conference have actually commenced to pass. Two distinguished Irishmen, both no doubt earnestly desirous of bringing about a peaceful and honest settlement, have concurred in forwarding this tendency. The cable telegrams have announced that Lord Monck, a nobleman who was once Governor-General of Canada, and who is himself an Irish landlord, has joined his voice to that of Archbishop Walsh in urging the conference. It will no doubt interest the readers of *THE WEEK* to see the language used by the Irish Landlords' Convention in reference to the Archbishop's proposal. I quote from the *Times* of September 16:—

"Mr. Bagwell, as a middleman as well as a head landlord, had much pleasure in proposing the following resolution:—'That this meeting desires to express satisfaction at the kindly expressions contained in Archbishop Walsh's letter of the 27th of August, 1887, and to reciprocate his Grace's wish for an amicable settlement of the land question.' He was glad to see a prelate in the position of his Grace stating that there was something to be said on both sides of this question, and discountenancing the

idea that landlords had no rights. Archbishop Walsh in a letter subsequent to that of the 27th of August stated that he was inclined to think the moment for the terms of settlement to be discussed had not arrived. He concurred with this view, but they were anxious to show that they were not unreasonable people, and had no objection to consider any reasonable proposition. Archbishop Walsh would receive the blessing which Christian morality had described to be the portion of peacemakers. . . .

"The motion was put and carried.

"On the motion of Mr. James Wilson, seconded by Mr. B. W. Bagot, it was resolved that it be an instruction to the Executive Committee to carry out the wishes of the meeting as expressed by the resolutions which have just been adopted." (All mention of this important resolution has been carefully suppressed in the partisan despatches of the American Associated Press.)

Since action has gone so far on the lines I have advocated, I am emboldened to point out that many objections the Archbishop's proposal has met with from writers in the *Times* would probably be removed by more fully adopting the features of an Ancient Parliament in the form of the Industrial Assemblies I have ventured to advocate.

In the first place, for the settlement of the land question a conference must be incomplete unless, along with landlords and tenants, the other great classes of Irish people are included in the invitation.

Thus one of the chief objections already made to the proposed Irish land conference would be overcome. The presence of the bankers, the merchants, the manufacturers of Ireland, would remove the possibility of the assembly degenerating into a mere wrangle between extremists of the landlord class on the one hand and of the tenant class on the other.

Strange to say, this necessity for a more general conference has been set forth by one of the landlords taking part in the recent convention in language remarkably coincident with some of that to be found in the book.*

Lord Castletown, seconding the above-quoted resolution, is reported as saying that "They were all anxious to see kindly relations renewed between landlords and tenants, but in a settlement of the land question they must remember that other interests than those of the two classes referred to in Archbishop Walsh's letter were deeply concerned and intimately connected—the labouring classes in Ireland and the smaller artisan class—while many of the great commercial houses derived much of their income from the same source. They, as well as the present owners and occupiers of Irish land, must have a voice in this settlement. The question was Imperial and comprehensive. It was not local and circumscribed. The interests of these sections of society must be consulted, and their views regarded. The land question must be solved, and will be solved soon and finally, but it must be solved in such a manner that the best interests of every class in Ireland, not of two only, are consulted, that every portion of the community might be equitably and properly protected in that settlement, and that the unity of our empire might be maintained."

I had called the meetings suggested in my book *Industrial Parliaments*, because on nearly all great class questions the conference ought to be a universal one—a national representation, and not a mere representation of the one or two classes apparently most directly concerned. As a general rule all classes will prove to be affected to some extent by the prosperity or depression of any one important industrial class. Moreover, the delegates least directly interested in each subject under discussion would act a semi-judicial part, holding the balance of reason between the immediate parties to the dispute. Would not the summons to a general conference come more acceptably from some of the mercantile bodies than from either landlords or tenants?

A second cause of distrust would disappear if the representation of each class were understood to be strictly confined to members of that class. If Mr. Parnell should appear at all, it would be as a representative of some association of *landlords*. As a politician he would have no *locus standi* whatever.

Finally, but perhaps most important of all, is the condition that there should be complete freedom from anything like a foregone programme or theory, either with or without a political savour. This I think is a defect in Archbishop Walsh's proposal which would appear to justify the landlords in declining it in that shape. To bind down the assembly in advance to the mere working out of the details of some set proposition, like the "abolition of dual ownership," would not only prevent the possibility of a conference being agreed to, but would diminish the dignity and might fatally cripple the usefulness of the assemblage, if it were to take place. It would expose its deliberations to the chance of being reduced to an absurdity, such as befell the Imperial arbitrators appointed under the Washington Treaty for the purpose of deciding the San Juan boundary dispute. The terms of that reference required the arbitrators to declare which one of two disputed channels formed the historic boundary. To this they found themselves limited, although the result of the evidence was to show that a third, an unmentioned channel, not known to the draftsmen of the treaty, alone truly fulfilled the description. It is to be hoped, therefore, that when the Irish national conference eventually takes place it will be a full and free conference. Delegates should not be sent to it hampered with "mandates" or "instructions." It ought to be assumed that the assembly would be wiser than its conveners. The meeting of that assembly, which the principal parties have all but promised, ought to be looked forward to with widespread interest. Its success must not only give peace to Ireland, but may enure to the benefit of the English-speaking world. Ought not the Press to lend the vast force of its moral encouragement towards hastening the consummation?

O. A. HOWLAND.

* I would refer readers who happen to have copies of the book to pages 80-81.