

was extended and the Irish people at large got the power of saying what they wanted. Even before that with a much restricted electorate the Irish people asked for Home Rule. When that franchise was extended what happened? In 1885 Parnell was sent back at the head of a Nationalist party 86 strong. We have had a great number of elections since then. Election after election has been held, but there has been no change in Ireland. Year after year, bill after bill has been passed for the improvement and betterment of conditions in other parts of Great Britain but all through that period the answer to our one claim has been the same, our attempts to gain what Ireland has wanted for so long have been countered in the same way, and the eighty-five Irish Nationalists in the House of Commons still stand for Home Rule exactly as they did when the franchise was first extended.

Democracy Answers the Plea.

The indisputable claim of Ireland, however, has impressed the present Prime Minister of England, Mr. Asquith, as it impressed Mr. Gladstone, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and the leading British statesmen, Liberal in politics, in Great Britain, and they hold by the principle that you cannot ignore the voice of the people. The voice of Ireland always has asked for Home Rule and the British Democracy at last is answering it favorably.

I do not pretend to be able to speak in detail of the changes that seem to have taken place in the question of Home Rule since I was at home. But I can say this with perfect confidence that there is nothing I know of, that the members of the Nationalist party are not prepared to do, to allay, and to meet, the honest and sincere doubt of any countryman of ours, whether Protestant or Catholic, about Home Rule. (Applause.)

Ready to Make Concessions.

There was a time, I confess, when feeling ran high and bitter in Ireland, but whatever may have been said or done in the early days of the agitation, under coercion and exceptional laws, I tell you that in view of the near approach of the responsibility