

movement now on the eve of consummation, Ireland's condition cried out for betterment; now, am I not entitled to consider myself and my few colleagues who survive the stormy days following the inception of our party, exceptionally privileged and honored to be able to say, as we can say to you, that every item on our programme of reform, which we set out to accomplish, under Parnell's leadership, has been achieved. Ireland is a changed country better fitted for Government, with better conditions of life, the people better educated and better governed. It has been greatly transformed from the Ireland of thirty-one years ago. (Applause). And now we stand on the threshold of the one reform necessary to make every other reform effective in the highest degree; we stand on the threshold of the concession of self-government to our country. (Prolonged applause).

#### **All Reforms Long Overdue.**

I have sometimes been asked by our Conservative friends in England how it is since Ireland has so much improved, it is not satisfied with the form of Government under which these reforms have been effected? That is a fair question which is answered very fully in this way: We in Ireland claim that every reform brought about in the last thirty years has been long overdue. Had we a Government of our own there was no doubt we would have accomplished them long before. We may point out that no single one of the reforms was carried in Ireland without paying the price of long years of agitation, of turbulence, of violence, if you will. The Irish people, too, have this characteristic, the better off they are, the more educated they are, the more independent they are, the more absolutely resolved they become never to rest until they enjoy at least a modicum of those self-governing institutions, which have been granted to all other peoples in the Empire and which have made the Empire great.

#### **Extraordinary Political Record.**

What are the political facts with regard to Ireland? I claim that what I am about to tell you is the most extraordinary political record that the history of any country in the world can show. In 1885, when we had the third Reform Bill the franchise