

guarantee, what reason had I to believe that if Ireland had Home Rule, it would be more prosperous than it is at present. Well, I will not take up the time of the House, by dwelling upon details, I will not give my own opinion, but what may be accepted as facts by this House. In order that the House may judge whether a system of self-government for Ireland would prove beneficial to the Irish people, I will give them the true record of the past, when the Irish people possessed the rights which they want to have once more :

"Self-government had not been an idle toy, but an efficient weapon in the hands of Ireland. After 1782 her commerce was extended, her manufactures fostered, wages rose, and the value of land increased. The bankers and merchants of Dublin, naturally a cautious and conservative class, declared in petitions against the Union, that the prosperity of the Kingdom had wonderfully grown under the care of a native Parliament. But statistics spoke with more stringent force. During the period of parliamentary independence, when the use of tea increased 45 per cent. in England, it increased 84 per cent. in Ireland; the use of wine increased in England 22 per cent. in Ireland 75 per cent.; coffee increased in England 79 per cent., in Ireland 600 per cent.; and so of the other taxable articles, the consumption of which measures the rise of prosperity. After the Union the proportions were reversed; in some cases, notwithstanding the growth of population, an actual decrease of consumption followed the loss of independence."

Sir, at the same time, we all know, the population of Ireland was much larger than it is now. We have been told that the true remedy for the evils of Ireland is to find an outlet for the population, to tell the people to pack up their traps, and come and find a home on this continent. But, Sir, where a national dissatisfaction exists, this is no remedy. If there is any people on the face of the earth who love their own land, who are attached to the soil on which they were born and brought up, it is the Irish people; and to tell them that their liberties are to be fettered, that their system of government is more stringent and oppressive than any other system of government in the world, and still tell them that the only hope for them is to pull up stakes and come to our North-West or the north-west of the neighboring republic, is to add insult to injury. Sir, I would like to see any of our people come and take up their homes amongst us: I would like to see those who leave Ireland come and settle in our North-West, where I know, by their industry and toil, they would soon become independent, happy and prosperous, establishing comfortable homes for themselves, and contributing to the prosperity of Canada in which they would become citizens. But still I do not think that is really a true and generous way of meeting the grievances of the Irish people. I had hoped for a better feeling; and if there is any people in the world whom I would like to see exhibit that better feeling, it is the Canadian people; if there is any people in the world who ought to prize the rights and liberties they enjoy, it is the people of Canada, who are living under a form of the most perfect self-government in the world. Sir, I will not appeal to the warm sentiments which might arise in the breast of every man in this Parliament, by asking him what he would do in the same circumstances; but I will ask them, when the wire flashes accounts of outrages in Ireland across the Atlantic, not to be hasty in their judgments; I will ask them not to be too severe against the Irish people. I will go half-way and tell them that I blush at some of the crimes committed in Ireland; I will tell them that the great body of the Irish people condemn any indefensible acts perpetrated in Ireland as strongly as any people in the world condemn them. We are told also that these agitators are responsible for all these acts. Sir, I take a very different ground. It is my solemn conviction that if the leaders who are imprisoned in Ireland to-day were still at liberty to use what they believe to be constitutional means to advocate the cause they have at heart, there would be more order among the people than there is to-day. I believe that the fact that the outrages, of which the telegraph wires tell us from day to day—though I believe they have been exaggerated in many cases—have

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not been more numerous, is largely attributable to the fact that the men who are imprisoned from the time they first headed this movement to the time they were imprisoned, confined themselves to constitutional means of agitation. On this point, I admit there is a difference of opinion. There are many who claim that Parnell and his associates did use means that were not constitutional; but even to these men I will say, will you criticise with so much nicety and so much severity men who are striving and struggling to bring about reform, men who are seeking the redress of grievances that have been endured century after century? Sir, I think it would be only fair to say that the Government themselves are responsible for a great deal that has taken place in Ireland. I do not ask the members of this House to hold the Government of that country responsible; but in asking the House, in judging of the merits of this question, not to be too severe in their estimation of the men at the head of this movement, I may use this argument in order to show that a good deal of consideration ought to be allowed for the circumstances of these men who are found battling for what they call their rights in Ireland, and for what are generally conceded to be their rights. We, Mr. Speaker, are not the only people who are influenced by a desire for Home Rule. The very proposition itself, independent of the claims of the Irish people or the Scotch people, is on the face of it one that ought to be well considered by the people of Canada. Our own experience of the system of government we live under shows us, and many able writers are beginning to express the same view, that the time must soon come when the system of legislation in England must be changed. Suppose that, to-morrow, the House of Commons, in England, were relieved of that portion of legislation which might fairly be distributed among the different portions of the Empire; it would certainly be in a better position. We can imagine the difficulty we would labor under in this country, if we had to legislate for all the Provinces in this Dominion; and, how much more difficult it must be for the House of Commons, in England, to legislate for the whole country, on subjects which, in this country, are settled by the municipal council. Sir, we find that the people of Scotland are also awake to the idea of a measure of self-government. I am aware that many who have admitted the necessity of self-government for Ireland, believe that it would be a prelude to separation from England. I think that the majority of Irishmen, who have suffered in their own country and fought for it, are not open to such a suspicion. But, while Irishmen have suffered, more than any other portion of the Empire, I say that they have not been behind any other element that constitutes the British Empire, in the defence of the country, and in building up that power, of which Englishmen, to-day, are so proud. I do not, for this reason, think that Irishmen have a right to ask what is unreasonable, unconstitutional, or what is inconsistent to the rights, liberties and freedom of their neighbors; but they have a right to ask the same measure of freedom and liberty freely conceded to other elements in the Empire. My own opinion is that the more you relax the bonds which now fetter Ireland, the more strongly you bind her to England. I believe, and will appeal to the experience of hon. members in this House and to that of the old Provinces of Canada, as well as the experiences of those other Provinces now constituting the Dominion, which did not always enjoy that measure of freedom and responsible government that we are now so proud of, to say if the concessions that have been made to these Provinces by the Imperial Government have weakened the tie between them and the Mother Country? I say no. Nothing has tended more to strengthen that feeling of loyalty and attachment to the Mother Country now prevailing than the fact that she was willing to extend to this country those liberties