

who declare, though with some exaggeration, that they to-day constitute two fifths of the people, and that they have the wealth and intelligence and education and material power of the country in their hands, should be so very much afraid because what they allege to be so very small a numerical majority of inferior persons happen to be of another creed in the constituency which is to elect the proposed common Parliament? That is the whole of it. I want to know whether our history and the history of other countries, with our notions of such matters, in these modern days, gives any reasonable color of truth to these apprehensions?

My own opinion, which I have expressed in Ireland and in England, is that if they will but come in—I repeat the phrase which has been commented on—instead of being the oppressed, the Protestants will be the spoiled children of Ireland. (Loud cheers.) I shall not to night enter into any contrast, into which I might enter, as to the tolerance and liberality exhibited by the adherents of the two creeds in Ireland, in those matters in which they have had power to act, whether political or municipal. My own principles of action are well known to you. I have stated them in this country often, and I have repeated them in the other land, for I do not change my opinions with the country to which I go. (Applause.) I will repeat them to-night. I will re-state them from public speeches which I have made in Canada, and I ask you to consider whether they do not answer the emergency. This is what I said in 1886:

“I have been in public life for a good many years. The Irish population of my Province is, of course, composed of the Irish Protestant population and the Irish Catholic population. I have endeavored to do my duty and to act upon what I believe were sound Liberal principles towards all classes of the population. I have

found myself opposed by a solid body, by the great majority, by the vast bulk of the Irish Protestants of Ontario. They are my strongest, and sternest, and fiercest political opponents to-day. I have found myself opposed by the great bulk of the Irish Catholics of Ontario. They also, with some noble exceptions, were amongst my opponents when I was defeated in South Bruce during my absence from the country through ill health. It was the Irish Catholics of that riding who rejected me, who deprived me of my seat in Parliament and obliged me to stand for another constituency at a subsequent date. I have endeavored, notwithstanding all that, to do my duty and to act, according to my lights, honestly, justly and fairly towards the Irish Catholics and towards the Irish Protestants—towards all classes. I make no distinction whatever in consequence of class or creed, and I extend no bid for the support of any class or creed. The position of the Irish Catholics and the Irish Protestants is this: They know that from the Liberal party they will obtain all they can justly claim, whether they give or refuse their support to that party. They know that the Liberal party will always act on the principle of justice, freedom and equal rights, because that is the plank upon which we stand. They know they have nothing to gain by supporting us, because they will not gain one jot or tittle beyond what these principles of justice, freedom and equal rights require. They know they have nothing to lose by opposing us, because they know, however strenuous their opposition may be, it will not make us one whit less earnest or less active in the promotion of their interests and of the common interests, according to the same principles of justice, liberty and equal rights. And therefore there is no need for them to turn their votes one way or the other in order that they may obtain from the Liberal party their meed of justice and liberty.”