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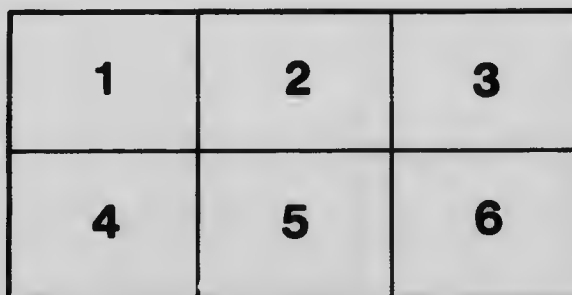
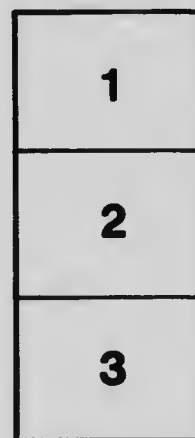
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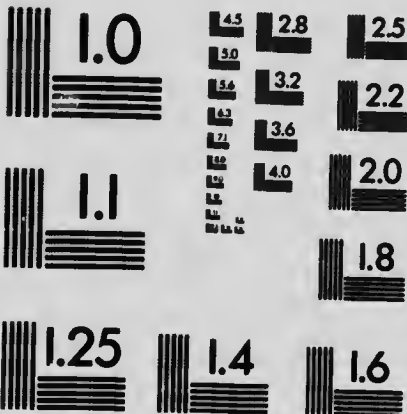
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IRELAND AND CANADA

An Address delivered in Hamilton, Ont., on Saint-Patrick's Day, 1914, under the auspices of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Mr Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me thank you heartily for having given me once more the occasion of expressing my deep sympathy and admiration for your noble race in its unceasing struggle for national life, national entity and national recognition. In a way, it is peculiarly fitting that this testimony should be publicly rendered to your race by one of foreign blood, and especially of French descent, intimately connected, after six or eight generations of Canadian born ascendants, with the public and national life of a self governing or home ruled British community. In doing so, I propose to draw from Ireland lessons applicable to Canada, and from Canada teachings of direct bearing upon the actual and future situation of Ireland.

IRELAND

The Model of Struggling Nationalities

After centuries of struggle for her existence, Ireland stands as a living lesson of courage, combativeness and perseverance; of resistance to all corrupting or mollyfying influences, of adherence to the highest ideals of humanity. Alone perhaps in these days of mercantilism and greediness, which make the power of gold supreme, Ireland has persistently refused to barter her faith and nationality for mere material advantages.

To all struggling nationalities, to all resisting minorities, she offers a marvellous example of the possibility of preserving the spirit and characteristics of the race against all odds. The Irish people — in Ireland — are perhaps the only sample of a conquered race preserving its ethnical identity in spite of the fact that it has, to a large extent, — though not to the degree which many Irish-Canadians imagine, — adopted the language of the conqueror.

Upon the historical circumstances which nearly brought about

the eradication of the Irish language, I need not dwell at present. It is more fitting and practical, I think, to draw your attention to the remarkable and interesting revival of the old language. The leaders of the Irish nation have long realised that political and administrative self government is not sufficient to keep up the vitality of a race. They clearly understand that Ireland will maintain her dearly acquired political entity in the degree in which the Irish people may preserve their national and ethnical character, and differentiate themselves from the other races of the British Empire and of the world at large. Among the means adopted to reach that result, the most effective perhaps is the resurrection of the idiom associated with the glowing period of Irish history, the language associated with the development of Irish thought, of Irish character, of Irish nationality. One of the first things the Irish did after the creation of their national University, and its endowment by the Imperial parliament, was to restore the teaching of the Irish language; — not only at the University but in many schools throughout the country. This has been qualified by some tamed Irish-Canadian as a "piece of ingratitude towards the British nation". The broad and enlightened statesmen and people of Great Britain have not understood it as such. On the contrary, they look upon this move as most natural and legitimate. When it was proposed lately, as one of the amendments to the Home Rule bill, that English must remain, not *the* official language, but merely *one of the* official languages in Ireland, the proposal was rejected not only by the supporters of the Home Rule bill but by many Unionists.

It may be recalled in passing that a similar revival of the Gaelic idiom is taking place in Scotland and Wales, in the latter country especially. All courses of teaching in the public schools of Wales frequented by a majority of Welsh-speaking children are now conducted in the Welsh language, under the supervision and authority of the British Department of Education. It is meeting with such success, that not only in the English parts of Wales, but in the neighbouring districts of England, the Welsh language is now taught as an auxiliary language in almost every public school frequented by English-speaking children.

This marvellous resurrection of the Irish people comes in its turn to maintain and revive the hopes and aspirations of all noble races and nationalities. It is a worthy sequence of the secular efforts of the Swiss, the Dutch and the Belgians to resist absorption by larger nations and wrest their independence from the Austrians, the Spaniards, the Germans or the French. It is a worthy parallel, though by other ways and through differing circumstances, to the magnificent upheaval of the Hellenes and the Balkan nations, which may result in the triumph of the Cross in Constantinople, five hundred years after its conquest by Mohammed II.

Ireland, the Champion of Individualism and Nationalism

To the world at large, to all peoples and individuals, the Irish, although they may not realise it, have rendered a service of a still broader nature, of a more enduring and penetrating influence. They stand as the indomitable champions of individuality against uniformity, of nationalism against imperialism.

In the sphere of economics, of purely mercantile interests, huge trusts and combines, destructive of competitive emulation, are justly considered as the direst threat to the progress and prosperity of the world. Likewise, in the higher sphere of moral and mental development, the most dangerous tendency in our days is the attempt to mould all brains and characters according to the same standard pattern of thought, habits and ideals, or rather, the same lack of idealism. This is the final result, if not the ultimate object, of public school education, in most countries in Europe and America.

In his remarkable work, "The Decline of Aristocracy" (1), Mr Arthur Ponsonby, M.P., has not hesitated in laying his finger on this, as the primary cause of the loss of power and prestige of that splendid class of Englishmen to which he himself belongs:

"This stereotyping (which in many other ways is very noticeable), constitutes perhaps the strongest indictment that has to be brought against our public schools. (page 208).

"We set up an iron mould and we purposely and intentionally stamp out and bake the soft clay into a fixed pattern. We sacrifice individuality and suppress originality so as to produce a conventional average type. (page 209)."

In this is true of a class of men remarkably prepared by their family education and national traditions to resist that "stereotyping" influence, in a country where the old tenets of education still subsist in some degree, what will be the outcome in more democratic communities, in America especially, where the system of so-called public "national" schools prevails triumphantly? Will not the clearest result of that system be to bring all individuals to an equal degree of superficial knowledge and a common level of general mediocrity?

The Irish at home have resisted persistently the introduction in Ireland of that system of education. Their political leaders even went to the point of allying themselves temporarily with their traditional enemies, the Tory Unionists, in opposition to the school legislation introduced by the Liberal government headed by Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman. Let the Irish in America be faithful to that tradition and always stand by the principle that the first say in matters of education belongs to the father of the child, and

(1) London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1912.

to those who are primarily responsible for his moral upkeep, and individual liberty.

The same instinct and tendency which make for the extinction of independent economic forces and the levelling of mental individualities, operate with equal force in the sphere of national construction. The new doctrine of imperialism is nothing but a combination of the old Roman spirit of conquest and sword rule, and the modern greediness for land and wealth, popularised by the teaching in public schools of a false, vulgar and noisy patriotism.

Of all nations in our days there is none to whom that doctrine is more alluring than to the British. There is none either to whom the triumph of that same doctrine would be more fatal.

The Anglo-Saxon possesses a "vaster Empire than has been". Deprived of every principle of unity — geographical, economical, racial or even political, — that Empire has grown and maintained itself on the principle of local home rule and self-government. Naturally, if the Anglo-Saxons, who figure for less than one-tenth of the total population of that Empire, could succeed in inducing all their co-British subjects, white, brown or yellow, Celtic, French, Dutch, Hindu or Malay, in worshipping the one god of Anglo-Saxondom, of which they, the Anglo-Saxons, would be the earthly incarnation, it would be their supreme triumph. But this will never be. And the British Empire will cease to be, the moment the British people cease to realise that it cannot exist but by the principle of decentralisation and local rule, — whatever risks of future disintegration may be run thereby. If, in order to avoid those risks, the Anglo-Saxons endeavour to centralise and to unite, for peace or for war, they will simply hasten the day when the various communities, who prize their national entity more than any share of imperial plunder and glory, will secede abruptly and decide their future in their own way.

In resisting with unabating vigour, at times even with violence, the appeals of imperialism, the Irish at home and abroad have rendered to Great-Britain, and to the British Empire at large, a service which the broadest measure of Home Rule could never repay.

What is the Objection to Irish Home Rule ? (1)

Now, it may be asked, why should there be such opposition, so persistent and so violent, to Home Rule for Ireland?

The vast majority of the people of Ireland demand Home Rule, and have demanded it for years. Its principle is in complete accordance with the principles and the practise of British government. It has prevailed in every important dependency of England, peopled with white inhabitants. It is making rapid progress in In-

(1) The following observations have not in view the Bill now under discussion, or any particular form of local government. All I desired to emphasise was the right of Ireland to be considered as a national entity, and to rule herself, just as Canada, or Australia does.

dia. Home Rule in Ireland would free England and the Imperial parliament from the thorniest problem they have had to cope with.

What are then the objections? Ulster, of course. But why should the objections of Ulster — or rather, of hardly one-half of Ulster — stand as an insuperable obstacle against giving effect to the will of the vast majority of the people of Ireland, including close on one-half, if not an actual majority, of Ulster itself? Why does the rule of majority, which rightly or wrongly prevails in every other civilised portion of the British Empire, remain inoperative in Ireland alone?

Is it for economical reasons? Is it because Ireland is not capable of supporting herself? Apart from the fact that this objection would come rather strangely from the mouth of Englishmen, it should not be forgotten that from 1817 to 1870 the British government drew close on £300,000,000 from Ireland, and spent therein somewhat less than £100,000,000, leaving or rather *keeping* a difference of £195,000,000, extracted by "wealthy" England from "poor" Ireland (1). The results already achieved from the revival of agriculture and home industries are ample warrant for the anticipation that Ireland, under proper management, will be self-sustaining in the near future as she was for centuries, before she was depopulated and famished by a policy always stupid when it was not cruel.

Is the objection political? For years it was the common talk that Catholic or rather Home Rule Ireland was disloyal at heart; that Orange or Unionist Ulster alone was true to the Crown and to the Empire; and therefore that the King, Parliament and people of England had no right to abandon the "loyal" Ulstermen to the tender mercy of the "rebels" to the south.

What the "loyalty" of Ulster is, the world knows now. Ulster was loyal as long as King, Parliament and people of England obeyed Ulster. But the moment the Parliament and people of England decide to do justice to the vast majority of the people of Ireland, while giving ample security for the liberties of Ulster, — the moment the King of England prepares to sanction that measure of justice, — then Ulster rebels, foments civil war, her leaders violate all laws of public order, her sympathisers in the army give the example of insubordination and treachery. In a word, Ulster, her leaders and her friends become disloyal to the extreme and refuse to submit to the laws of Parliament and to the will of the King. (2)

No! when the whole range of arguments pro and con has been viewed and reviewed, when all objections have been formulated and refuted, when all facts have been proved and disproved, the whole

(1) These figures are taken from an article on "Mr. Balfour and Home Rule", by Mr Redmond, in the *University Magazine*, of Montreal, February, 1914.

(2) Just as this is going to print, I have the wired report of Mr F. E. Smith's wild ejaculation: "Whatever consequences, civil war or other cataclysm that might dismember the whole Empire, the Unionist party will support Ulster, whatever the consequences might be". It is to be hoped that no more will be heard of Ulster's "loyalty".

thing has to be brought down to this simple proposition: Home Rule, long ago and easily granted to Canada, Australia, New-Zealand and South Africa, is violently and persistently disputed to Ireland for one single reason: the majority in Ireland is Roman Catholic, while the majority in Canada, Australia, New-Zealand and South Africa was Protestant.

To the support of this truism, I could bring an array of evidence. Perhaps you will be content with three authorities.

The first is the Right Honourable Mr Samuel, Post Master General in the present British administration. Mr Samuel, a Jew in religion, ought to be a disinterested party between the two conflicting groups of Christians. When in Canada recently, he told one of his audiences, in Ottawa, I think, that "if the majority in Ireland were Protestant and the minority Catholic, Home Rule would have been voted long ago."

My second authority is the Right Honourable A.-J. Balfour, late Prime Minister of Great Britain and leader of the Unionist party, perhaps the most constant opponent of Home Rule. With the idea that Home Rule is a political or economical necessity for Ireland, Mr Balfour disagrees entirely, but he admits that Ireland is still "divided into two camps (1):" Protestants and Roman Catholics. Finally, Mr John Redmond himself, leader of the Nationalist party and future Prime Minister of Ireland, agrees with Mr Balfour on this one point, that the whole difficulty is one of religious cleavage, and nothing else.

Is there any reasonable ground to expect that the Protestant minority of Ireland would be maltreated by the Catholic majority?

Mr Balfour for one seems to think so; or rather he justifies the apprehension and the revolt of Ulster by a counter imaginary proposition: "The Roman Catholics of the South and West", says he, "certainly would not have considered themselves secure if, under whatever paper safeguards, they were placed in the power of Ulster Protestants. Why should the Ulster Protestants be content to be placed in the power of Leinster, Munster and Connaught?"

Here a sub-question naturally comes to the mind. Why should the Catholic minority of Ulster be placed in the power of the Protestant majority of Ulster? Which sub-question would generate a further deductive interrogation: Why should the Protestant minority in the Catholic counties of Ulster be placed in the power of the Catholic majority therein? or likewise, the Catholic minority in the Protestant counties of Ulster? This process of dubitative argumentation is characteristic of Mr Balfour's statesmanship. The fact that the Unionists do not carry the process to the extent I have just indicated simply shows that their logic is not quite as developed as their sectarian spirit.

To Mr Balfour's objection Mr Redmond replies conclusively,

(1) "Nationality and Home Rule", in the *University Magazine*, Montreal, Oct. 1913.

when he reminds him that Catholic Ireland was once under Irish Protestant rule, in Grattan's days; and that no bones were then broken. Likewise, as Mr Redmond wisely anticipates, when English politicians and factions cease playing one Irish faction against the other, when matters Irish are dealt with by the Irish people in Ireland, peace will soon prevail. Ulster will find out, first, that her religious and civil liberty is just as safe under Dublin free rule as under Downing Street protection; second, that her relative importance and influence will be far greater in a parliament dealing only with the affairs of Ireland than it is now or will ever be in the British House of Commons, loaded as that legislature is not only with responsibilities for the whole Kingdom, but with all the burdens of Empire; and third, that with the unavoidable development of party cleavages among the Irish Catholics or Home Rulers, once masters of the internal destinies of Ireland, the representatives of Ulster will be in a position to chose their political allies and exercise thereby a preponderating influence, which they never can expect to have in the British Parliament or in the government of the United Kingdom.

If the people of Ulster do not lose their heads altogether, before Home Rule is finally voted, or if they find means of recovering them once Home Rule is an accomplished fact, provided they show in politics half the sense they have evinced in business matters, they will soon be the umpires of Irish politics.

Examples of Maryland and Quebec

To anticipate the fate of a Protestant minority at the hands of a Catholic majority, within the boundary of the British Empire, one can draw inspiration from very few examples in history. In fact, I know of two only.

The first is Maryland, the only one among the thirteen English colonies in North America where Catholic rule prevailed — the only one also where absolute equality of rights and full liberty were given to all Christians, long before the *Saints* of New England had ceased burning witches. This precedent ought not to forebode persecution to the Ulster Protestants.

The second is Quebec. Not only the Quebec of to-day, where the Protestant minority enjoys the amplest measure of liberty and generosity ever enjoyed by a minority differing from the majority in race, creed and language; but Quebec as it was a few years after the Conquest, overwhelmingly French and Catholic, still smarting under the yoke of English oligarchy, still denied some of the elementary rights of British citizenship, but already in possession of its elected Legislative Assembly, — a privilege granted to it as a partial reward for the loyalty of its people at the time of the American Rebellion. One of the first measures which that French and Catholic Assembly passed was to give to all Protestant churches, the same powers of legal organisation as were possessed by the Roman Catholic Church.

How many Protestants in England and Ulster, nay, how many Protestants in Canada, know that all Protestant sects were put on a footing of equality with the Roman Catholic Church, in French and Catholic Canada, long before the Church of England was disestablished in Ireland, over a century before that Church was disestablished in Wales? that the civil and political disabilities of the Jews disappeared in Quebec many years before they were totally removed in England? that all citizens, irrespective of creed, were given access to all political or judicial honours not far from a century before the last disabilities against Roman Catholics were removed from Imperial Statutes?

How many of them especially know that one of the grievances of the so-called "rebels" of 1837, in Lower Canada, was that the English Governor, and his creatures in the Legislative Council or on the Bench, persistently refused to the French and Catholic elected representatives of the people the power to put all Protestant Non-conformists on a footing of equality with the Roman Catholic Church and the Established Churches of England and Scotland?

In the last years of the 18th century, the Legislative Assembly had passed several statutes granting to all Protestant sects the right to keep records of birth, marriages and death, in the same manner and with the same legal effect as the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches of England and Scotland. The constitutional validity of those statutes was challenged and upheld by the French judges of the lower court. They were pronounced unconstitutional by the Court of Appeal composed of nominees of the Crown. They were again voted by the Legislative Assembly, and mutilated by the Legislative Council, also dominated by the English Governor.

In 1827, the acknowledged leader of the majority, Papineau, was appealing to the mixed community of Montreal West, to vindicate his resistance to the arbitrary will of the Governor. He reminded his hearers of the circumstances relating to those laws, and then made this declaration:

"I recall these circumstances only to declare my unalterable creed that men are accountable for their faith and worship to their Maker only, and not to the civil powers; that diversity of religious opinions which creates no resistance to the laws, ought not to be submitted to the oppression of laws enacted merely to prohibit and punish it; that the same freedom in that respect, which I claim for myself, for my countrymen, for those who have the same belief with them, I allow to those whose belief is different; that persuasion, teaching, the practise of virtues, the weight of good examples are the legitimate means of free conversions, without any improper interference of punishment or exclusive temporal advantages offered by the law; that the Governments which, without distinction, impose equal charges on all the citizens, owe them all equal protection, and a common participation in the advantages, as they have it in the burthens; in the public offices as they have it in the public contributions of the community."

This was *then* as it is *now* the sentiment of French and Catholic Quebec. By a strange contrast, while Papineau and his followers

were making that fight for the liberties of all Protestants against the arbitrary power of an English ruler, he was opposed at the polls by one of the most noteworthy representatives of the Protestant minority, the Honourable Peter McGill, founder of the great University which bears his name.

It may not be out of place to recall that these efforts of a Catholic people to do justice to all Protestants were displayed not far from half a century before an enraged mob in London forced a British government and a majority in the British Parliament to enact laws forbidding the restoration of the Roman Catholic Episcopacy in the free Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

Such historical remembrances should help in eliminating the fears of those who believe that the liberties of Protestant Ulster will be at an end the day Ireland is ruled by a Catholic majority.

An Ulster in Quebec: the Eastern Townships

The history of Quebec offers further lessons of hope and optimism for the future of Ireland and her Protestant minority.

The British had implanted in Ulster a colony of stern Presbyterians from Scotland, to split the block of Roman Catholicism and eventually to dominate Ireland. Likewise, the British government gave the Eastern Townships of Quebec to a strong group of United Empire Loyalists in order to counteract and eventually to overcome the French. After the Rebellion of 1837-38, when the proposal for uniting Upper and Lower Canada was discussed in the British Parliament, some favoured the Union because, in their mind, it was the only means of subduing the French; others, as the Duke of Wellington, opposed it, because they thought it was unjust for the English of Upper Canada to have to deal with so many French people. Very few considered the viewpoint of the French-Canadians. Naturally, the Union, displeasing both peoples, worked badly for both and for the whole province. From this struggle the idea of Confederation eventually emerged.

This time, the question was not primarily discussed and settled in London. The terms of Confederation were practically agreed upon and even given statutory form at the Quebec Conference, before they were sanctioned in the Imperial parliament. In spite of long standing feuds and rivalry, French and English in Canada had not much trouble in coming to an understanding. There was, however, one dissentient voice, and this was the voice of the Protestants in Quebec, — of the Ulster of French Canada.

To make matters easy, the French Canadians consented to have inserted in the constitution special guarantees for the Protestant minority in Quebec, which were not thought necessary for the protection of the French minorities in the English provinces.

Not satisfied with this, the representatives of the Eastern Townships went to London and fought to the last against the adoption of the British North America Act.

What has been the sequence?

The English Protestant minority of Quebec stands to-day as the only minority in any province of Canada, whose rights and privileges have never been curtailed, challenged or disputed. Not only does that minority enjoy all and every one of the privileges guaranteed by the law; but it receives at the free hand of the Catholic majority a far ampler measure of privileges of every sort than it is entitled to, either in law, in usage or in equity. And this, mind you, in spite of the fact that the rights of every Catholic or French minority in the English provinces of Canada have, to a greater or lesser degree, been encroached upon, disputed or measured in the most meagre manner.

Indeed if any lesson can be drawn from the history of Canada for the future of Ireland, it is that the privileges of the people of Ulster will be safe in the hands of the Catholic majority of Ireland, — as safe at least as the Catholic minority of Ulster would be under the rule of the Protestant majority of that province if it were excluded from the jurisdiction of an Irish parliament.

This brings me to the latter and shorter part of my address.

CANADA

Adjustment of Racial Differences

I have already covered much of the ground of comparison between the two countries. I merely desire to demonstrate, by a short reference to the past history of Canada, the possibility of reconciling races and peoples, inimical to each other and deeply divided by long standing prejudices.

Canada was practically the last piece of land in the world whose fate was settled at the end of the bloody conflict pursued for centuries between France and England for the supremacy in Europe and eventually throughout the world.

But in one respect, the outcome of the fight in Canada differed radically from the result of that same struggle in every other land conquered by either of these two great nations.

In Europe, England's power was finally expelled from the continent. All her possessions, either those forming part of the feudal inheritance of the Dukes of Normandy, or those conquered in the protracted struggle of the Hundred Years War, were finally retaken by the French King.

In Asia or America, England, having become mistress of the seas, wrested from France practically the whole of her immense colonial Empire.

In either case, the conquest was complete, — moral and ethical, as well as material and political. It was not only a change of flag and authority, military or civil: the laws, the customs, the language, the religion of the vanquished disappeared.

Normandy and Guienne, Picardy and Poitou, once the secular

apanages of the Kings of England, became as thoroughly French as Isle de France or Berri.

In India and in the numerous islands of the Atlantic or the Indian Ocean, once under French rule and now British, every vestige of French occupation and civilisation disappeared — with the insignificant exception of Mauritius and the puny trade posts of Pondichéry and Mahé.

In America, had England remained in possession of her own colonies, mostly peopled by settlers speaking English and practising all religions but the Roman Catholic (Maryland excepted), the fate of New France would likely have been similar to that of French Hindustan. The moral conquest would soon have followed the military and political occupation. But Providence had decreed otherwise. The English Royalists of Virginia and Carolina, the stern Puritans and Covenanters of New England, the mild Quakers of Pennsylvania, as well as the half-British and half-Dutch population of what was once New Amsterdam, all rebelled against the British King, and seceded from the British Empire. Alone, the new French and Catholic subjects of England remained faithful to their oath of allegiance and enabled Great Britain to keep hold of her new conquered dependency, while she was losing each and every one of the thirteen colonies established and peopled by her own sons.

Partly from gratitude, I presume, and largely from shrewd and well calculated policy, the British government thought proper to acknowledge to the French Canadians the right to live nationally, and granted them a guarded measure of political independence. Having found that the moral influence of the Roman Catholic Church was the safest guarantee of their own political influence, they granted to the authorities of that Church a measure of respect and liberty which was still denied to the Roman Catholics of Great Britain or other parts of the Empire. True, in the treaty of Paris, France had stipulated that the existence of the Roman Catholic Church would be acknowledged and respected in the colony. But France was then powerless to enforce any treaty provision against the ill-will of Great-Britain; and past and subsequent events have proved that treaty stipulations are frequently broken, when they are not backed either by force in the hands of the stipulator or by self interest on the part of the consenting party. Fortunately for French Canada, British self interest, long distance from England and territorial closeness to the American Republic, were all causes which militated in her favour and enabled her to secure religious and civil liberty, and eventually political autonomy, long before Ireland, far from America and close to England, was capable of achieving the same enviable result.

Upon the history of the half-secular struggle for Home Rule in Canada, I need not dwell at present. In justice to all, however, it should be remembered that although the French were the pioneers in this respect, as they have been in all spheres of civilisation in America, they were soon aided by a noble phalanx of English and Scotch settlers, and even by numerous descendants of United Em-

pire Loyalists. But the conquest of responsible government, coupled as it was with the rash and unjust union of Upper and Lower Canada, did not put an end to racial and religious feuds. It simply displaced the ground of battle. The struggle, instead of being pursued between the French and Catholic subjects of the King against English Governors and their salaried creatures, was now pursued between French and Catholic Lower Canada and English and Protestant Upper Canada. But precisely because Canadians alone were concerned, with practically no more interference from Downing Street, and no influence exercised by any faction or party in England over any section of the Canadian people, the more thoughtful and patriotic Canadians, of both races and creeds, soon hit upon the means of adjusting their differences.

From that admirable coordination of efforts, Confederation was brought to life. In the sphere of Imperial politics, the new constitution preserved and enlarged the measure of Home Rule secured under the Act of Union of 1841. In the adjustment of internal difficulties, it accomplished a great deal more. Indeed, it was based on a radically different principle. The Union Act had been inspired by the thought and desire of subduing the French. The free alliance of both races and nationalities, with absolute equality of rights in every part of Canada, was the basic principle of the British North America Act.

The Principle of Confederation: Union, not Fusion, of Races

Frequent comparisons have been made between the American constitution and the national Charter of the Dominion of Canada. The respective peculiarities of those constitutions, their relative superiority in matters purely political or judicial, I will not consider at present. But in the eye of all those who believe in the preservation of the noblest assets of humanity, of the highest standards of nationality and civilisation, the superiority of the Canadian constitution is obvious.

Under the American constitution, the exaggerated supremacy of State rights over national unity eventually caused the most protracted and bloody civil war of modern times. On the other hand, no provision was made for the preservation of the moral rights of the various ethnical groups which had brought their contribution to the making of the nation. The adoption and the rapid spreading of a uniform system of public education, largely deprived of religious and idealistic inspiration, soon developed the germs of mob rule, greed for gold, and worship of material success, which threaten to poison and debase the civilisation of that great country.

In Canada, each province received a reasonable measure of Home Rule, compatible with and subordinate to the principle of national unity. But above all, the principle was acknowledged that, in each province, the rights of the minority, Catholic or Protestant, as the case may be, were to be respected, in matters of Church or-

ganisation and religious teaching, and in the preservation of the two national languages of the country. In other words, the inspiring thought and the primary object of Confederation was not *fusion*, but *union*, of races.

When, for the first time, the legal status of the French language was challenged in the House of Commons, that principle was emphatically asserted by the most illustrious among the Fathers of Confederation, by the statesman who was not only the principal framer of the national pact, but who put it into operation and looked to its execution for over twenty years, I mean Sir John-A. Macdonald:

I have no accord with the desire expressed in some quarters that by any mode whatever there should be an attempt made to oppress the one language or to render it inferior to the other. I believe that would be impossible if it were tried, and it would be foolish and wicked if it were possible. The statement that has been made so often that this is a conquered country is *à propos de rien*. Whether it was conquered or ceded, we have a constitution now under which all British subjects are in a position of absolute equality, having equal rights of every kind — of language, of religion, of property and of person. There is no paramount race in this country; there is no conquered race in this country; we are all British subjects, and those who are not English are none the less British subjects on that account. (Cited 1905, June 28th — page 8323).

These words I commend especially to the attention of those, ignorant of facts or dispossessed of the last vestige of equity, who now pursue the unmaking of Confederation by endeavouring foolishly and uselessly to eradicate the French language from every portion of English Canada.

The Irish in Canada

Through all those struggles in Canada, what was the part of the Irish?

In all the early period of the struggle for Home Rule or responsible government, it was practically non-existent.

The first contingents of Irish immigrants of any considerable number came in the forties, just about the time Home Rule was granted to United Canada. These new comers came in the darkest days of Ireland. Exiled from the land of their birth after many years of dire endurance, they came here deprived of all material advantages, and cruelly struck with the plague of typhus. They landed in Quebec. There, they were received as suffering brethren and martyrs by French priests and nuns. Their children were adopted by French mothers. Many an Irish name in Canada, connected to-day with wealth, learning or high social station, can trace its origin to the lugubrious graveyard at Grosse-Isle. If those names have not perished, it is because in thousands of instances some French mother, whose modest cottage was already overpeopled with the sons of her own blood and flesh, still found room in

her babe's cradle, or in her own bed, for the little Irish orphan, whom she raised as her own, upon whom she lavished the ever lasting overflow of motherly love and devotion.

Those remembrances should never be lost, either by the descendants of the first Irish pioneers in Canada, or by those Irishmen who came at a later period to enjoy the full benefits of Canadian liberty, of Canadian laws, of a Canadian constitution based on the principle of equality of rights for all creeds and nationalities.

I am second to none in rendering high testimony to the magnificent qualities of the Irish, to the skill and energy they have displayed in Canada, to the marvellous success they have reached in all spheres of life, public or private. Ever since I have been capable of exercising the slightest influence in the public life of Canada, I have lost no occasion to stand by the Irish in their just causes, either in Canada or in the noble land of their origin. I have acquired, I think, the right to ask them in return not to take sides, in any part of Canada, with the enemies of the French-Canadians, of the French language, of French civilisation and influence.

If the Irish have attained in Canada the eminent position I have just described, they owe it in a high measure to those who preceded them here and sustained in Canada, for nearly a century previous to their arrival, the noble fight which they themselves have made at home: the fight for Home Rule, the fight against Imperial domination, the fight for religious equality and liberty, the fight for the survival of other nationalities than the Anglo-Saxon, the fight for the maintenance of national languages and characteristics, the fight for high standards of moral education.

If the Irish Catholics enjoy to-day in Ontario the benefit of separate schools and Catholic education, they owe it largely to the long struggle made by the French-Canadians for the recognition of that principle, many years before Confederation time.

If the French-Canadians, thanks to circumstances far more favourable than those which the Irish have met in their native land, have preserved their language and look upon it as the mainstay of their social and religious entity, why should one single Irish-Canadian deny them that right or refuse to help them in preserving it, when his own people in Ireland are making such admirable efforts to bring back to life their national idiom?

Let the Irish Catholics be under no delusion: the enemies of the French language are the enemies of separate schools and Catholicism in all its forms. The Irish who help in the crusade for the suppression of the French language, or even those who stand aloof in this struggle for right against might, are, knowingly or unknowingly, the fast allies of the bitterest enemies not only of Catholicism but of true Canadianism as well.

The only explanation that can be given of the attitude of those Irish Catholics, more noisy than numerous, who work hand in hand with the enemies of the French-Canadians, is that they have forgotten the history of Ireland and not learned the history of Canada.

Let all Irish Canadians imbibe those lessons of history; let

them be faithful to the noblest inspirations of their faith; let them obey the generous impulse of their rich Celtic nature; in a word, let them be true to themselves, and they will remain the steadfast allies of the French Canadians, as their forefathers were for centuries the allies of the French in Europe — but with this radical difference and result, that whereas the alliance of the French and Irish in Europe had and could have no other object but to humble their common and secular enemy, England, in Canada, on the contrary, the close partnership of Irish and French must have as its sole and constant object the maintenance, in peace and harmony, of the basic conditions of the truce of amity concluded, fifty years ago, between English and French, Catholics and Protestants. Upon the terms of that truce, Canada emerged from the low rank of a wrangling and forced association of discordant races to the high level of a free partnership entered into by the descendants of two great peoples.

Upon those terms alone shall Canada live and attain her higher destinies.

Associated by their language with the English-speaking majority, by their faith and their common remembrances with the French-speaking minority, the Irish, who had no part to play in the earlier life of Canada, may become the everlasting link of union between English and French, — the three groups communing in the same broad sentiment of Canadian nationalism.

