

cases even to falsehood, and Home Rule unfortunately was no exception. Thus, some would have it that Home Rule means the severance of Ireland from England, but looking at events by the light of the past, by the aid of history, looking at the loss by England of the American Colonies, brought about by the withholding of self-government to the colonies, they could say with great force that it was the refusal of Home Rule, and not the granting of it, which dismembered Empires (applause). "Let any one," said the speaker, "read the early newspapers of this Colony breathing violence and hatred almost against the English Government, which was then denying us the right of self-government. I say let any person read those early newspapers and contrast their tone with the devoted loyalty breathing in the columns of our Press of to-day, thriving in a community which has secured the sacred right to manage its own affairs. Do we not learn by the contrast that content and union are promoted by every measure of Home Rule granted by the English Crown to her dependencies? The same contrast is to be seen in the history of all the colonies possessing Home Rule (applause). Now what is true of the American Colonies is true of the other colonies—deprive them of 'Home Rule' and they will desert the 'old flag' as sure as fate. What is true of America is true of Ireland; deprived of Home Rule she is nearly as discontented as was America before her Independence. With Home Rule her loyalty will be as great as that of Home Rule colonies." Now let us in passing glance at the history of Ireland from 1782 to 1800 when peace and prosperity existed under her National Parliament, and let us contrast that period with the present era of misery under the Union. In the colonies, as you are aware, and in every civilised part of the globe, we measure the prosperity of a country by the growth of its population. But what do we find in Ireland during the past 89 years of Union and Coercion? We find that the population has decreased by four millions of people, about one-half its population under Home Rule, by a number equal to the whole of the population in the Australian Colonies, including New Zealand. Mr. McGuire said, I will now briefly answer some of the principal objections put forward by the opponents of the measure. They say that it is impossible to draw the boundary line between what are local and what are Imperial affairs. His answer was that it has been found possible in the case of the federation of the American states. In discussing the Federation of the British Empire and her colonies it is not treated as hopeless to draw the line, and what was regarded as possible in the one case cannot be impossible in the other. Surely the arrangement and adjustment of such matters were not beyond the wisdom and ability of English and Irish statesmen. (Applause.) Again, the opponents of Home Rule contended that if granted it would lead to the dismemberment of the Empire. Why should a Parliament in Ireland disintegrate the Empire any more than a Parliament in New Zealand? If these gentlemen were asked what prevents separation, they would answer the "Army and Navy," and would not that army and navy exist and be as efficient the day after Home Rule was granted. Gentlemen who talk such nonsense would, on reflection, discover that the dismemberment of the Empire is the alienation of the people. Were separation possible, it would prove a most serious disadvantage to Ireland, of that he was certain. They were often informed that the Protestants of Ireland are not in favour of the movement, although Home Rule originated at a meeting where their Protestant fellow-countrymen were in a majority. What was the first act of the Protestants of Ulster when the franchise was extended? Did they not return a majority of National members to the House of Commons? Have not all the great leaders of the Irish people, with the solitary exception of O'Connell, been Protestants? But in the face of this he had heard it said that if Home Rule was granted, Roman Catholics would persecute the Protestants. Mr. A. Webb, a merchant of Dublin, an Englishman, and a member of the Society of Friends, addressed the following circular to a number of non-Catholic gentlemen, residing in different parts of Ireland, and the replies were published in an entitled "The opinion of some Irish Protestants regarding their Catholic fellow-countrymen." This is what he asked:—"Have you during your experience of life in Ireland observed any instances of intolerance amongst your Catholic friends and neighbours, such as would lead you to fear for your liberty and safety, and for the free exercise of your religion under the Irish Constitution, such as that sketched out in Mr. Gladstone's Bill." He would read for them one of the replies, that of Dr. Webster, Protestant Chancellor of the Diocese of Cork:—"I don't suppose that any wise man believes that persecution will ever disappear from Christendom until all Christians feel what our Lord meant by the words, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'" As far as I am concerned, I have had 29 years experience in Cork, and I have met many Roman Catholic fellow-subjects here in all the public, and in many of the private relations of life, and I have never experienced anything from them other than the treatment of tolerant Christian gentlemen, and I have no hesitation in expressing my belief that Mr. Gladstone's Bill will tend to strengthen the relations of all classes in Ireland. Speaking for himself he had suffered a little in this way. If he (Mr McGuire) thought for one moment his countrymen would make such a foul use of their liberty as to interfere in any man's conscience and his Maker, to help his God, under such circumstances he would be the most bitter opponent of Home Rule. But he had faith in his countrymen and to such an unfounded statement he gave the most emphatic denial. It has also been said that the Irish members have sympathy with crime. The great national party headed by Parnell have no sympathy with crime. They all deplore and detest it. They know it can have no other effect than to alienate the sympathies of their fellow-men and retard the progress of their country towards national freedom. In order to show the strides that the Home Rule party are making throughout England, it would only be necessary for him to point out that the numbers of votes polled at the last general election in favour of Home Rule were greater than the number of votes polled against it, showing that more than 50 per cent. of the English people were in sympathy with the Irish in their demand for domestic legislation, and also that a large majority of the people of Scotland returned members who enthusiastically supported Home Rule, while the great majority of members elected by Wales are ardent advocates of Home Rule. The by-elections

also prove that the Liberals and Home Rulers are winning all along the line. He had often wondered that Englishmen, who are so desirous, and rightly so, of standing on a pedestal before the world as the great champions of freedom, should have been so unjust to Ireland as to force upon her that hateful measure called the Union. He might appear to have done these noble-hearted men an injustice, for it was now clear to him that the mass of the English people until lately had not thoroughly grasped the Irish difficulty. The majority of the English people knew little or nothing about it until Mr. Gladstone identified himself with the movement. Previous to this they had been misrepresented to them, but their eyes have been opened and they are acquiring a knowledge of Ireland now that they are made aware of the wrongs done to their sister island in their name. With that generosity for which they are proverbial they have again and again come forward demanding that Ireland shall be allowed to manage her own affairs (applause). "When they know us a little better," said Mr. McGuire, in conclusion, "I am confident they will do us justice. I am also confident that the day is not far distant when they will obliterate the memory of former contentions and unite the people of Great Britain and Ireland in a solid and lasting bond of friendship (applause). The Irish are a generous race, though I, as an Irishman, should not, perhaps, say so. They quickly forgive, and they carry their loyalty to the cause they adopt almost to a fault. Home Rule has been conceded in this Colony, to the neighbouring colonies, to Canada, to Jersey, and even to the little Isle of Man. Why, then, withhold it from Ireland? (Applause.) Have not my countrymen generously shed their blood in extending the British supremacy, and are not her sons at the present time engaged in maintaining a military frontier in the most distant as well as the most dangerous parts of the Empire, and was betide the nation who oversteps the frontier they are guarding. It must surely be to the interest of British statesmen to act with equity and justice to Ireland, for I believe that the granting of Home Rule will restore the country to tranquillity and save the British taxpayer the expense of a standing army of 30,000 men." (Mr. McGuire sat down amid loud applause.)

Mr. Thos. Hutchison said he had readily consented to second this resolution for two reasons: in the first place because it had his entire assent, and in the second place because he thought it not unwise that it should be shown, as far as it could be shown in his humble person, that this was not a question which entirely or exclusively affected Ireland: that it had become, from the nature of the case, as Mr. Balfour had said in his letter, a cardinal principle of policy of one of the great historic parties at Home, which had made it, as he called it, one of the main planks in their platform. In a meeting of that kind he need not take up time in discussing at any length the reasons which induced him to think that Home Rule was the best policy to be carried out, though he might wish that the meeting was not so unanimous on that point, because if a little discussion could be got up he would be able to show arguments why, from the historical point of view, into which Mr. McGuire had entered at some length, as well as from a commercial point of view and from that of political expediency, Home Rule had the argument all its own way. He asked for a few moments to develop this idea, that, whether Home Rule were for good or for evil, whether it were a proper policy or not, it was, at any rate, inevitable. The position was laid down clearly by Mr. Gladstone when he went to the country on his Bill in 1886. Up to that time, recollect, for 86 years the problem of how to govern Ireland had perplexed and baffled statesmen. Every means, except the one way the Irish desired, had been tried. The discontent still existed, and, when following upon that large extension of the franchise given by Mr. Gladstone's Bill there was returned to Parliament a united, and compact, and complete phalanx of members who desired some other remedy than those which had been applied theretofore, the disease, so to speak, entered upon an acute crisis; and it was then that Mr. Gladstone came forward and launched his Home Rule policy. What he put to the country was this: For all these years we have been trying to govern Ireland according to English ideas, let us now try this remedy that we have not tried before, endeavour to rule Ireland in accordance with Irish opinion (applause.) Hence it was that Bills were introduced by him. The results were known. The two bills, one the Home Rule Bill and the other a concomitant measure for the purchase of land, were rejected by the House of Commons. It was said they were sprung upon the House, and that there was not time to realise what the issue distinctly was. They were rejected, and Mr. Gladstone went to the country on the subject. Now the issue Mr. Gladstone put before the country was this: You must either consent to govern Ireland by a measure of Home Rule or you must return to the drastic coercion exercised for the last 86 years. He said there was no alternative. Of course the Tory party seconded that idea. They said it was perfectly true that the day of coercion had passed away; they would have none of it, but there was a middle way, that Ireland could be pacified by an extension of the local Government. The Tories, with the assistance of the dissentient Liberals, won the election. But what had been the result? Mr. Gladstone's provisions had proved all too true because, in 1887, instead of any new local Government being granted to Ireland there was passed another still more drastic Coercion Act, and the 87th year of the union of Ireland and Great Britain was celebrated by the 87th Coercion Act, one for every year, on the strict average of the Union (applause). Lord Salisbury's policy was this; this was what he announced to the country:—Ireland is what it is because of the vacillating policy which different political parties have applied to it. Give it 20 years of resolute Government, let it be seen that England will never consent to Home Rule, and at that time you will have Ireland submissive, contented, and he thought the hon. gentleman even said happy (laughter). There had been two years of that policy, and Ireland was not yet contented and was decidedly unhappy, and he believed that if that policy ran 20 years, or even another 90 years, as Mr. McGuire had said, Ireland would still be found in the same state. Coercion was foredoomed and the only remedy was to give Ireland a measure of Home Rule; with that there would be certain success (applause). There must be success (applause). Why could coercion never be a success? Because the laws and the system of Government which coercion attempted to force on Ireland, were