

THE IRISH NATIONAL CONVENTION

UNANIMOUS ACCEPTANCE OF HOME RULE BILL

HISTORIC GATHERING IN DUBLIN

The Irish National Convention called to consider the Home Rule Bill was held on April 23 in Dublin. The gathering, which was the largest in the history of such conventions, took place in the spacious Round Room of the Mansion House. The hall was packed to its utmost capacity, and those who were not able to obtain admission were accommodated in a big room adjoining, and were addressed in the course of the afternoon by Mr. John Redmond, M.P., and other members of the Irish Parliamentary Party. The delegates numbered about 5000. They had come together from all parts of Ireland, and manifested great enthusiasm in favor of the Bill. A resolution accepting it was carried without dissent, and it was left to Mr. Redmond and his Parliamentary colleagues to deal with any amendments which may be thought necessary.

At a quarter past 11 there was a tremendous scene of enthusiasm as Mr. Redmond, followed by Mr. Dillon and Mr. T. P. O'Connor, walked up the floor from the Oak Room door. The delegates all rose to their feet, waving hats and handkerchiefs, and roared themselves hoarse. Mr. Redmond immediately sat down in his chair, and promptly rose to try and restore order. The entrance of Mr. W. Gladstone was the signal of a special cheer, and when he reached the dais Mr. Redmond called for 'Three cheers for the grandson of Mr. Gladstone,' which was responded to with great vigor, vehemence, and enthusiasm. At this moment Alderman O'Shea, the new Lord Mayor of Cork, appeared on the platform, and had a great reception. Mr. Devlin had a thunderous one. Mr. Redmond called on Father Cannon and Mr. Devlin, who were sitting at each side of him, to act as secretaries to the Convention.

Father Cannon then got up and read a statement to the effect that the Bill provided not only for the present, but for the future. The hour had come to secure Ireland's rights. There was considerable applause when he read the telegram from Mr. Patrick Egan that in no way did the *Irish Daily Independent* American messages represent Irish Nationalist opinion.

THE IRISH LEADER'S SPEECH.

Almost dead silence prevailed when Mr. Redmond moved a resolution that the Convention place on record its profound regret at the loss of the Titanic. The whole Convention, at Mr. Redmond's request, rose to their feet as a tribute to the dead. He then announced the procedure that would be observed, after which he began the main burden of his speech. The Bill, he declared, was a complete justification of the policy pursued by the Irish Party for the last three years against unparalleled opposition. The Bill, he declared, was the greatest and most satisfactory Bill ever offered to Ireland. The Irish Parliament would have the control of every purely Irish affair, with certain exceptions, and will have the power to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of Ireland. Amid great applause, Mr. Redmond contrasted this state of affairs with the blood-stained annals of the past, and went on to describe the great powers that were to be conferred. There were matters excluded which they did not ask for and did not want. His references to the clauses in regard to religion were heartily received. He thought the restrictions in regard to this matter unnecessary and somewhat humiliating, but in the name of the Convention he accepted the safeguards, even if there were only a dozen men in Ireland who thought them necessary. He proceeded to analyse the other temporary reservations, such as the police, the Old Age Pensions, Land Purchase, and his statement of the position in regard to all these matters was listened to with the very closest attention. Under the Bill, he went on to say, Ireland got immediate control of most of the Irish services, and after a time of all Irish services. Personally he believed, from his reading of history and knowledge of the colonies, in a nominated

Senate, such as that provided for in the Bill. He wanted that Second Chamber to be crowded by men who had hitherto no sympathy with the National Party, men who had a great stake in the country, men of literature and art, men who had stood aloof from the National movement during all these years. He would, if he were responsible, put a majority of them into the Senate. No delegate objected to this view.

Mr. Redmond then went on to deal with the financial clauses of the Bill, and his statement was listened to with close attention. He deplored the fact that Ireland was to draw a million and a-half at first from the Imperial Treasury, although she was well entitled to it owing to years of over-taxation, for Ireland desired to stand on her own legs; but in a short time that condition of affairs would disappear with the increasing prosperity of the country. He was glad, he said, that under the Bill Ireland should still have her share in governing the Empire. Then, he went on, this is not a perfect Bill, but it is a great Bill. Every Bill was open to amendment, and the amendment of this Bill would arise on the next resolution. He made an appeal that amendments that might lead to the wrecking of the Bill should not be unnecessarily pressed against the opinions of the men who were responsible for the Bill.

There was tremendous applause when he added, 'I have accepted this Bill.' Then he asked the delegates to endorse his words, and the whole assemblage rose to their feet and cheered and waved hats and handkerchiefs for three or four minutes.

He immediately afterwards said, 'I ask you to say that I spoke not only for the Irish Party, but that I spoke for the Irish people.' Here again there was even a greater demonstration, which made the Round Room shake. There has scarcely ever been anything like it before in Ireland.

The Lord Mayor of Cork then proposed the resolution accepting the Bill, and the motion was carried in the same spirit.

But the most exciting and stirring episode was just at hand. Mr. Redmond got up and quietly introduced to the Convention

'The Grandson of Mr. Gladstone.'

A young gentleman, slim, straight, with dark hair, a flashing eye, an eagle nose not unlike that of the Grand Old Man, stepped on the platform. When he appeared the scene was indescribable, and one could almost imagine that the spirit of the great Liberal leader was hovering in the air. Young Mr. Gladstone was evidently surprised and touched at the tremendous enthusiasm of his welcome. He paid it well back with a speech which delighted the delegates, who, when he finished, rose and hailed him again with loud acclamations.

Canon Arthur Ryan (Tipperary) then proposed that the necessary amendments to the Bill should be left to Mr. Redmond and the Irish Party to move in Committee, paying a great tribute to Mr. Redmond's leadership. Some of the points which he made against the opponents of the Bill created considerable amusement.

A Non-Catholic Rector.

The resolution was seconded, amidst great and prolonged applause, by the Rev. Mr. McCutcheon, the Protestant Rector of Kenmare a venerable old gentleman, with white hair and beard, who said that he never experienced so unanimous a decision as had been given there to-day. 'What we want in this country,' he declared amidst applause, 'is that we should stand together,' and he went on to say that when Home Rule was adopted he believed the Unionists of the North would be as staunch in its support as they were in that room. He finished by asking the delegates to stand up to show that they trusted Mr. Redmond and the Parliamentary Party to see that the necessary amendments were carried. All the delegates stood up, cheering.

Mr Redmond then asked for a list of the delegates who wished to speak, but said that before he took it he would call on