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IRELAND'S
Declarations and Addresses

ON BEHALF OF THE

MAINTENANCE OF THE LEGISLATIVE UNION,

1893.

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IRELAND'S DECLARATIONS AND ADDRESSES.

ON BEHALF OF THE
MAINTENANCE OF THE LEGISLATIVE UNION.

1893.

IRISH ROMAN CATHOLIC PETITION.

“To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.

“The Humble Petition of Roman Catholics in Ireland sheweth,—

“That we entertain unshaken allegiance and devotion to the Crown and Constitution under which we live and enjoy full civil and religious liberty.

“That we regard the maintenance of the Union between England and Ireland as a necessary safeguard of that liberty.

“That we believe the establishment in Ireland of a separate Legislature and Executive in the manner proposed in the Government of Ireland Bill recently introduced into your honourable House would be most prejudicial to our religion, and disastrous to the best interests of Ireland.

“We beseech your honourable House to reject the said Bill.

“And your Petitioners will ever pray.”

The above petition is being extensively signed by Irish Roman Catholics.

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND.

THE ACTION OF THE VESTRIES.

“The Archbishop of Dublin said—I have a communication to make which will, I think, give us all much encouragement at the beginning of this auspicious day. You are aware that about a fortnight ago there was a circular sent to every select vestry in Ireland requesting that that vestry should be summoned for the purpose of

considering and, if they should approve, of adopting a protest against the so-called Government of Ireland Bill. This was done in order that we might ascertain what was the feeling of the rank and file of our Church—what, in fact, were the opinions of those who have sent us to this House. We were going back as it were to our constituents to see whether we here were representing their opinions. I will read you out now the results indicated—

			Parishes.	Protests.	Dissentient Individuals.
Armagh	...	...	92	90	0
Meath	...	...	72	68	0
Derry	...	...	110	109	0
Down	...	...	165	161	1
Kilmore	...	...	106	105	1
Tuam	...	...	61	61	0
Clogher	...	...	72	70	2
Dublin	...	...	136	150	3
Ossory	...	...	110	109	2
Cashel	...	...	62	57	2
Cork	...	...	107	104	4
Killaloe	...	...	60	56	1
Limerick	...	...	56	50	4

The 39 parishes which make the difference between the 1,190 protests received and the 1,229 parishes are accounted for in the following way—2 of the parishes are vacant; 11 have either no parochial organizations, or no select vestries; 12 are defaulters for various reasons—one rector was not able to get a vestry together, three rectors declined to take action, one reported that he took no action; in two parishes it was not thought wise to summon a vestry, though petitions against Home Rule were being signed. In one the lawlessness of the neighbourhood made the parishioners afraid to meet; in the four remaining out of the twelve parishes, though the rectors were strongly in favour of the protest, they reported that opinion was too much divided in the parishes to warrant the holding of vestries. The result of all that briefly is this—that among these vestries, representing, I suppose, between 14,000 and 15,000 select vestrymen, there were altogether recorded 20 individual dissentient votes—20 out of between 14,000 and 15,000—(applause)—and if we add to that 20, we will say even the half of those four parishes that were divided, it would not, even

so, reach to a sufficient number to fill a moderately-sized tram-car. (Laughter.) And I wish also to mention, because this is a very practical matter, that in the circular that was sent round a request was made that the parishioners should show their sympathy with the cause by contributing something to the funds that are necessary for the purpose of carrying on this movement, and the result has been that upwards of £500 has been subscribed by the vestries. (Applause)."

Address of the Archbishop of Dublin to the General Synod, March 14th, 1893.

THE GENERAL SYNOD.

1. "That we, the bishops, clergy, and laity of the Church of Ireland, in General Synod assembled, view with the deepest alarm the introduction of a measure which is charged with dangerous elements of revolutionary disturbance, destructive of those most sacred bonds by which society is held together, and in reverent maintenance of which empires, nations, and Churches can alone look for the blessing of Almighty God. Objecting to the whole tenor and spirit of the Bill on this primary ground, we are strongly opposed to its provisions in detail; and first:—

"As loyal subjects of the great British Empire, we earnestly protest against its threatened disintegration, and call on our fellow-subjects in England, Scotland, and Wales to join us in resisting a measure that must inevitably and irrevocably effect the dismemberment of the Empire, and the consequent ruin of our position and influence among the nations.

2. "That we believe the Bill for the Government of Ireland would produce grave and disastrous difficulties in questions of international treaties, war, and commerce; and that the constitution of a separate Irish Legislature, alien in sympathy and possibly adverse in action to the Imperial Parliament, would give rise to complications far more serious, wide, and vital than can have been calculated or even considered by those who framed this Bill.

3. "That the proposed retention of Irish members in the House of Commons would enable an Irish Party on any critical occasion to decide the fate of British Ministries; would present to successive Administrations an irresistible temptation to conciliate opposition by concession to Irish demands, leaving Irish members as much as ever masters of the position; on the other

hand, we apprehend that their exclusion would furnish to the Irish Government a ground of resentment, and a plausible pretext for refusing to pay taxes, in the levying of which they would have no representation and no vote.

4. "That we call on all true Irish patriots, who have the welfare and dignity of their native land at heart, to repudiate a measure, which, under semblance of Home Rule, imposes new political disabilities, injurious commercial restrictions, and many conditions at once vexatious and humiliating ; and we believe that all parties in Ireland would even prefer a measure of total separation, with all its risks and evils, rather than consent to the ignominious terms of apparent independence and actual political vassalage offered under this Bill.

5. "That the proposed machinery of Government provides no constitutional check whatever against hasty class legislation, since by the mode of election and the definition of electoral areas scheduled in the Bill, the minority in Ireland would be practically unrepresented and wholly defenceless ; while, as between the Irish and British Legislatures, conflicts of interest and collisions of authority would make their mutual relations a condition of frequent irritation and of intolerable strain.

6. "That the financial clauses of the Home Rule Bill would involve the Irish Legislature and Exchequer in serious embarrassment—would lead to the accumulation of debt, to general commercial insecurity, to the withdrawal of capital, the depreciation of private investments and public funds, the necessity of additional and intolerable taxation, and possibly to retrograde measures of political economy and legislation, which an Imperial Parliament would find itself practically unable to prevent.

7. "That we especially and solemnly protest as Churchmen against this Bill, because remembering how our Church, deprived in 1871 of her endowments, was forced by voluntary efforts to repair the loss of her material resources, we cannot, without deep sense of wrong, see her once again placed in sore strait and danger. We consider that the clauses of the Bill, under illusive phrases (the real drift of which is not perceived by all its supporters) deprive her of those safeguards which she possesses under the British Constitution, and expose her to imminent danger of further confiscations ; and, moreover, the impoverishment and probable expatriation of many of her members would certainly

lead to the crippling of her remaining resources, and of her opportunities of good.

8. "That we regard the measure as fraught with peril to the civil and religious liberties, which are our prized inheritance ; and see, with grave alarm, that not only is the Church of Ireland deprived of security for the continued possession of its property, but that many educational institutions, charitable endowments, and incorporated bodies, some of which have been already marked out for spoliation, are altogether unprotected under this Bill."

Resolutions adopted by the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, March 14th, 1893.

THE METHODIST CHURCH.

"Whereas, the Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland has frequently in its past history, and more especially in the course of the last seven years, earnestly affirmed its desire for the maintenance, unimpaired and inviolate, of the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland ; and whereas a grave crisis in public affairs has arisen in which a measure has been again introduced into the Imperial Parliament, the effect of which, if carried, must be seriously to impair, if not destroy, that Union ; and whereas there is no provision in the Methodist constitution by which a special meeting could be called to consider and determine the action to be taken in the crisis, this Committee, appointed to act on behalf of the Conference in relation to public affairs during the intervals of its sessions, considers itself imperatively called upon to give emphatic expression to its convictions concerning the character and tendency of the measure now proposed under the title 'A Bill to amend the provision for the Government of Ireland.'

1. "That this Committee, speaking on behalf of the Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland, shares those feelings of distrust and alarm with which a large number of Irishmen of all creeds and conditions view the proposed measure, which would introduce, without any proved necessity, such momentous changes in the government of the country, and without any guarantee or reasonable ground for hope that the changes thereby introduced would not be made available for more extended and more destructive changes.

2. "That in the judgment of this Committee the Bill, if it were to become law, so far from being a message of peace to Ireland,

would be a fruitful occasion of more distressing discord and strife ; that, in the new state of things which it would create, the religious equality now happily subsisting would speedily be destroyed, and religious freedom be seriously imperilled ; that class would be arrayed against class and party against party with a virulence now rare or unknown, and that the inevitable result would be not the amending the provision for the government of Ireland, but the overturning of all order and good government.

3. "That, while this Committee looks with sad foreboding at the peril to social order and religious equality and freedom threatened by the passing of this Bill, it cannot leave out of account the peril to the commercial interests of the country which is involved in its complicated, illiberal, and unworkable financial arrangements, and in the impotence of the proposed Legislature, deprived of the substantial aid heretofore derived from the Exchequer, and hampered by restrictions to do anything effectual for the quickening of the industry or developing the resources of the country.

4. "For these and other reasons which might be assigned, the Committee urges that the Bill be opposed at every stage of its progress, and recommends the ministers, office-bearers, and members of the Methodist Church in Ireland to give expression to that opposition either by petition from individual congregations or by signing local petitions, or taking part, where it may be deemed expedient, in local meetings to protest against the Bill.

5. "In view of the great peril which threatens our country, and of the great need of Divine guidance and help at this critical juncture, this Committee requests the vice-president of the Conference to recommend that in every congregation special prayer shall be offered to Almighty God for His gracious guidance so as to guard against any course of action which will not tend to the safety and welfare of this Kingdom and the honour of His name."

Resolutions adopted by the Committee of Privileges of the Methodist Church, representing the Conference in the interval of its sessions in public affairs, March 3th, 1893.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

1. "That we declare anew our devoted loyalty to the person and throne of her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria.

2. "That we re-affirm our strong attachment to the Constitution of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and express

our determination to resist every attempt to destroy the Legislative Union at present existing, and our firm resolve to maintain unimpaired for ourselves and our children the heritage of citizenship which we now enjoy. We protest against any proposal to thrust us out from the protection of the Imperial Legislature in violation of repeated assurances that the liberties and interests of the Protestant minority were safe in the hands of the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

3. "That having carefully examined the measure at present before Parliament, entitled "A Bill to Amend the Provisions for the Government of Ireland," we are amazed at its revolutionary character, and strenuously oppose its enactment by the Legislature for the following, among other reasons:—(a) Because the measure seriously imperils our civil and religious liberties, inasmuch as it would deprive us of the protection of the Imperial Parliament and Government, under which our persons and property are safe, and our religious freedom is secure, and would force upon us instead an Irish Legislature and Executive, controlled by men declared to be "marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire," whom a special Commission found to be guilty of a criminal conspiracy, and who have supported and still attempt to justify the iniquitous and criminal organization of the Land League, the Plan of Campaign, and the system of boycotting. Since the Imperial Parliament has in the present generation abolished religious ascendancy in Ireland, placing all denominations on an equality, we are painfully surprised that a project of law should now be entertained under which one race, party, and creed would always dominate, and which would inevitably result in a new religious ascendancy of a most objectionable character. Our conviction as to this result is amply confirmed by the arrogant claims of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy to control the members of their Church in the exercise of their political rights shown by recent election proceedings in the two divisions of the County of Meath. (b) Because the provisions which the bill contains for the protection of minorities against misgovernment and sectarian domination are illusory in themselves, and would be incapable of application in the face of a hostile majority. In the opinion of the Assembly no securities can be devised which would safeguard the rights and privileges of minorities under an Irish Legislature as they are safeguarded under the Imperial Parliament. Under

the provisions of the bill ample scope is afforded for the direct endowment of Romanism out of the general taxes of the country, and under its provisions small Protestant minorities might be deprived of State education for their children except under conditions subversive of their faith. (c) Because the Bill proposes momentous changes in the Constitution of the United Kingdom, to which changes the Protestants of all the Churches and many Roman Catholics, comprising over a third of the population of Ireland, and representing the intelligence, education, wealth, and industry of the country, are determinedly hostile, and because no advantages would be derivable from an Irish Legislature and Executive which could not with more certainty and safety be obtained from the Parliament and Government of the United Kingdom. The measure cannot, therefore, 'afford contentment to the Irish people, important relief to Parliament, and additional securities for the strength and union of the Empire.' but, on the contrary, is calculated to embitter the hostility of conflicting creeds and parties in this country, to add to the difficulties of the Imperial Legislature, and to encourage the disloyal to seek the complete separation of Ireland from Great Britain.

4. "That the Assembly is strongly of opinion that the land question has long lain at the root of Irish discontent, and that the time has come for the abolition of dual ownership, which only the Imperial Parliament can with justice effect. The Assembly is persuaded that a measure enabling every tenant-farmer to become on equitable terms the proprietor of the land he tills, combined with a proper scheme of local government, would go far to satisfy all reasonable demands, and would be free from the evils that would follow the creation of a Home Rule Parliament in Dublin.

5. "That the General Assembly earnestly exhorts the Presbyterian people to continue to cultivate forbearance, peace, and goodwill towards their fellow-countrymen of every class and creed, and to exhibit calmness and patient reliance upon the Most High in the present eventful crisis.

6. "That the General Assembly recommends that in all the churches Sabbath, the 26th day of March, be observed as a day of humiliation and prayer, when we shall confess our sins, and entreat the Most High to avert the dangers with which the Church and the country are at present threatened, and to extend His kingdom throughout the entire land.

7. "That copies of these resolutions, signed in the name of the Assembly by the Moderator and the clerk, be transmitted to her Majesty the Queen, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Prime Minister, the Chief Secretary, the Marquis of Salisbury, the Duke of Devonshire, Mr. A. J. Balfour, M.P., and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P.

8. "That a petition embodying the resolution, and similarly signed, be presented to both Houses of Parliament, and that the Committee on the state of the country be empowered to send a deputation to wait upon the Prime Minister and other members of the Legislature, and speakers to address public meetings in Great Britain, and in such other ways as they may deem advisable to oppose the passing of the Home Rule measure."

Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, March 16th, 1893.

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (of Scotland).

"That we utter our strong protest against the Home Rule Bill now before the House of Commons. Whilst giving all credit to Mr. Gladstone for his efforts to reconcile the Nationalists of Ireland to the British Empire, and to bring about religious equality, we believe that the Government proposed to be established in Dublin would be certain to endow the Roman Catholic Church and schools, and greatly to intensify the antagonism now existing between the two peoples inhabiting Ireland."

Resolution adopted at a meeting of the Presbytery of Ireland of the United Presbyterian Church (of Scotland), February 28th, 1893.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

"Considering the grave nature of the present political crisis, we, the Executive Committee of the Congregational Union of Ireland, respectfully urge the members and adherents of our Churches to consider whether it is not their duty as Congregationalists, as well as citizens, to protest against the Government of Ireland Bill now before the country, and for this purpose we beg leave to submit the following petition for your approval:—'We, the undersigned members and adherents of the Congregational Churches of Ireland, view with serious misgivings the proposals embodied in the

Government of Ireland Bill, and are of the opinion that in the event of its becoming law serious injury would be inflicted upon many of the prosperous and loyal sections of the community. This being our firm conviction, based upon intimate acquaintance with the actual conditions of life here, we earnestly appeal to our brethren in England, Scotland and Wales, to do all in their power to avert the danger which threatens us.”

Resolution adopted by the Executive Committee of the Irish Congregational Union, March 28th, 1893.

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

“To our fellow-members of the Religious Society of Friends
in Great Britain.

“We earnestly appeal to you, our fellow-members in Great Britain, to consider your responsibilities in relation to the ‘Government of Ireland Bill’ now before Parliament. Although we believe that we represent almost the entire weight of opinion in our society in Ireland, we consider it more consistent with the rights of the small minority who think differently from us, not to use the official machinery of the society in order to express our views, and we therefore adopt the present means of stating our carefully considered and deliberate judgment that this measure if passed into law, will of necessity be extremely injurious to the moral and material prosperity of this country.

“We view with increasing concern and apprehension the results which we believe must follow if the interests of the Society of Friends, as well as those of other Protestant bodies in Ireland are placed under the control of a separate legislature, dominated in political matters by clerical rulers, whom experience has shown to be frequently unmindful of the claims of equal civil and religious liberty, and of whose modes of action the events of recent times in Ireland do not enable us to take a more hopeful view. We believe that these apprehensions are shared by many Roman Catholics of all classes, who equally with ourselves object to the proposed legislative changes. We look on the so-called safeguards which have been introduced into the bill, with a view to the protection of the rights of minorities, as almost, if not wholly, illusory.

“In many former times of trouble and danger the members of our society in Ireland have been enabled to live amongst their

neighbours in peace and goodwill to all men. We, in this generation, are attached and loyal citizens of the United Kingdom, in which we and our fathers for nearly a hundred years have had our birthright. Living thus under the free and equal administration of laws enacted by the United Parliament and carried out by an Executive responsible to it; actuated by no party spirit or sectarian prejudice, but with earnest desires for the peace and prosperity of all around us, we yet cannot ignore many facts and circumstances of which our friends in England are necessarily unaware, and we are solemnly convinced that our rights and liberties, both civil and religious, and those of our fellow-countrymen in Ireland, of all conditions and of all religions, cannot be securely guaranteed, as they now are, under the new and unprecedented arrangements proposed to be made.

“We claim from our fellow-members in England an earnest and candid consideration for this appeal, which we make, not only on our own behalf, but, as we believe, in the true interest of our countrymen of all creeds and all classes in Ireland, and we ask that, believing in the sincerity of our convictions and the disinterestedness of our motives, you should lend us your aid in opposing by all suitable means the enactment of a measure the result of which, in our judgment, cannot fail to be disastrous to Ireland, and must tend to perpetuate and intensify the strife and discord which we have so long lamented and which we earnestly desire, as far as in us lies, to mitigate and to allay.”

(The total membership of the Society of Friends in Ireland, including children of all ages, is about 2,600. Of this number about 910 consist of children and young people under sixteen years of age, and of Friends who live in foreign countries, or are otherwise non-resident. Of the remaining 1,690, comprising adults of both sexes, and young persons over sixteen years of age, 1,376 signatures are appended to the foregoing address. Some Friends were also unable to sign it owing to illness, absence from home, and other causes.)

THE SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN.

“We the Chancellor, Doctors, and Masters of the University of Dublin, declare that we are faithful and devoted subjects of the Queen, and claim it as our birthright to live under the British Constitution, to which we are ardently attached, and to be subject only

to such laws as are passed by the Imperial Parliament ; and we, therefore, adopt the following petition to the House of Commons :—

“ “ We, the Chancellor, Doctors, and Masters of the University of Dublin, petition your honourable House not to assent to the Bill for the Government of Ireland now before you ; inasmuch as we are convinced that, if passed into law, it would be disastrous to Ireland, injurious to Great Britain, and most dangerous to the interests of the Empire.

“ “ That we believe that the guarantees which the Bill professes to contain for the rights of the minority are altogether illusory, and that, if carried into effect, it will produce a widespread sense of insecurity in relation both to property and to religious liberty, and, instead of promoting peace and harmony, will deepen the existing divisions between the several classes and creeds in Irish society.’ ”

Resolutions adopted by the Senate of the University of Dublin, March 6th, 1893.

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

“ That we protest against the passing of the Government of Ireland Bill now before Parliament, as, should it become law, it would seriously injure the College, and be injurious to the interests of its fellows and licentiates, inasmuch as—Firstly, that it imperils the existence of the Charter and of the college ; secondly, that the property of the College, exclusive of its buildings, being secured by mortgage on lands, its value will be depreciated ; thirdly, that the moneys provided for medical charities (including poor law, medical and sanitary services), amounting to about £100,000 a year, appear to be totally unprovided for ; fourthly, that the Bill makes no provision for the registration of the members of the medical profession under the General Medical Council, or for the control of that Council over medical education in Ireland. That, as a result, it is to be feared that students intending to practise outside Ireland, will no longer be educated at home, or take their diplomas from the Irish licensing bodies.”

Resolution adopted at a meeting of the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons, March 18th, 1893.

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS.

“That this College protest in the strongest manner against the Bill introduced into the House of Commons, entitled, ‘A Bill for the Government of Ireland,’ believing that were it to become law it would be injurious to the interests of the College.”

Resolution adopted at a meeting of the Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians, March 10th, 1893.

THE GRADUATES OF DUBLIN UNIVERSITY.

“That the graduates of the University of Dublin desire to express their emphatic protest against the injustice of the clauses in the Government of Ireland Bill, 1893, by which the University of Dublin is left open to spoliation and at the same time deprived of its representation in Parliament.

“That the graduates of the University of Dublin desire to place on record their strong condemnation of the Government of Ireland Bill, 1893, as being certain if passed into law to prove disastrous to Ireland, injurious to Great Britain, and most dangerous to the interests of the Empire.

“That the Graduates of the University of Dublin pledge themselves to use every legitimate effort to prevent the Government of Ireland Bill, 1893, from passing into law.”

Resolutions adopted at Meeting of Graduates, March 10th, 1893.

THE REPRESENTATIVES OF IRISH COMMERCE.

“The deputation which waits on you to-day consists of representatives of commercial interests in the three Southern Provinces of Ireland, who are united in the belief that the Home Rule Bill now before Parliament will, if passed into law, arrest the growing prosperity of Ireland, which, under the firm rule of the last few years, had been steadily increasing. We represent no separate creed or class, and we desire no ascendancy, social or religious. We are all personally concerned and vitally interested in the development of the industries of Ireland. We know that for that development, and for the happiness and prosperity of the Irish people of all classes, a steady and just government, with equal rights and

equal liberties for all, is before all things essential, and we hold, with unhesitating conviction, that the Government of Ireland Bill offers no prospect either of equal liberties or of just and steady government. Into the specific provisions of the measure itself we do not propose to enter. Its whole scope appears to us radically unjust, and certain to promote neither peace nor progress in Ireland. The proposed scheme of a separate Legislature gives enormous powers for mischievous interference with individual and corporate rights qualified only by artificial and impracticable limitations. The special safeguards devised for the supposed protection of minorities seem to us likely rather to intensify and embitter party animosities than to allay them. Much has been done within the last few years, both by Government assistance and by private effort, for the material advancement of Ireland. The effects of these efforts are just now beginning to show themselves, and all classes in Ireland were looking to the future with renewed and, as we believe, with well grounded hope, in which party feeling and barren political agitation were rapidly coming down. The Bill of the Government throws amongst us a new apple of discord, and plunges Ireland again into a state of political and party ferment which cannot but arrest business enterprise in every direction. We find in the Bill no prospect of anything but the perpetuation and intensification of the unsettlement which has so long been a source of shame and sorrow to all true friends of Ireland, and we earnestly trust, not only for the sake of Ireland, but for the sake also of the United Kingdom, of which Ireland still forms an integral part, and of the Empire in which Irishmen, attached subjects of our gracious Queen, and loyal adherents of the Constitution, have been proud to have their birth-right, that it may never be allowed to pass into law."

Address presented to the Unionist leaders by a Deputation of more than fifty of the leading mercantile men of the three Southern Provinces of Ireland on March 10th, 1893.

THE DUBLIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

“Resolved—That the Council of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce strongly protest against the Government of Ireland Bill, 1893, now before the House of Commons, which in their judgment fully bears out the opinion heretofore publicly and repeatedly expressed by the Chamber, that any measure tending to disturb

the Legislative Union at present existing between Great Britain and Ireland would injuriously affect the commercial interests of both countries. That the provisions of the Bill, especially those relating to finance and taxation, are unjust, and would be oppressive, introducing complications and confusion not only into the internal trade of Ireland, but into her commercial relations with the rest of the Kingdom, the effects of which must inevitably prove disastrous to both countries. That petitions be presented to both Houses of Parliament and to her Majesty the Queen, expressing the views of the Council, and praying that the Bill may not be passed into law."

Resolution adopted by the Council of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, February 27th, 1893.

THE BELFAST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

"We are satisfied with our existing position in the Empire. We find nothing whatever in the laws which is not capable of being rectified where found wrong by the Imperial Parliament, in which our interests are linked to corresponding interests in Great Britain. We have no other desire than to continue, on equal terms, citizens of the United Kingdom, and we earnestly protest against the degradation with which we and our country are threatened."

"We conclude by re-stating, as broadly and firmly as possible, our opinion that the circumstances of Ireland—the peculiarities of its population—its poverty and absence of natural resources—render the experiment of autonomy exceptionally dangerous, and we anticipate from such an experiment absolute disaster; that the Bill as drawn is radically and incurably unjust; and that, should it become law, the result would be a blow as deadly to Irish commercial interests as were the measures framed centuries ago intentionally to ruin Irish trade."

Extracts from a report of the Council adopted by the Belfast Chamber of Commerce, March 17th, 1893.

THE DUBLIN STOCK EXCHANGE.

"To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.

"The humble Petition of the members of the Dublin Stock Exchange,

“Sheweth—That your petitioners are of opinion that the ‘Bill to amend the provisions for the Government of Ireland,’ now before your honourable House, will, if passed into law, be disastrous to the trade and commerce of this country; credit will be destroyed, and all enterprise paralysed.

“The pursuance of their ordinary avocation places your petitioners in a position to form a just and reasonable opinion as to the effect of this measure upon the very large amount of capital—almost entirely Irish capital—embarked in the various commercial, industrial, and financial undertakings in Ireland.

“Your petitioners can testify that immediately previous to the introduction of this measure these undertakings generally had reached a degree of credit and prosperity never before surpassed, but the publication of the conditions and full text of the aforesaid Bill created an intense feeling of alarm amongst holders of all classes of securities in Ireland, resulting in a depreciation in their market value to the extent of several millions sterling. This unrest has since, to some extent, been temporarily allayed by the opinion gaining ground that the measure may not become law.

“Your petitioners include men of various religions and political opinions, who could not possibly have joined so universally in this petition had not their experience so seriously impressed them with the dangers to be apprehended from the passing of a Bill so framed as that now under consideration.

“Your petitioners, therefore, pray your Honourable House not to pass the said Bill, which they believe, while causing disaster to the merchant, the manufacturer, and the capitalist, will bring distress upon all classes of society through the length and breadth of this island.

“And your petitioners will ever pray.”

Petition signed by 63 out of the 66 Members of the Dublin Stock Exchange. (See Irish Times, March 18th, 1893.)

THE BELFAST LINEN MERCHANTS.

1st. “We hereby earnestly and deliberately confirm after seven years of additional knowledge and experience of the circumstances and needs of Ireland the resolution unanimously adopted at the special general meeting of this association held on 5th May, 1886. viz:—‘That our National interests are identical with those of

England and Scotland, and that no greater measure of self-government is desirable for Ireland than for the other portions of the United Kingdom.'

2nd. "We heartily and fully endorse the report on the Government of Ireland Bill adopted by the Belfast Chamber of Commerce at the extraordinary general meeting held on 17th inst., and declare our solemn conviction that, as conclusively shown by that report, the proposed legislation would prove disastrous to the manufactures, trade, and commercial credit of Ulster, and that our particular branch of industry, which occupies the leading position in the province, would be seriously, if not fatally, injured thereby."

Resolutions adopted by the Linen Merchants' Association, March 20th, 1893.

THE GRAND JURIES OF IRELAND.

As the Grand Jury of every county in Ireland has passed a resolution protesting against the Home Rule Bill, it will be sufficient to quote as instances—

I. THE GRAND JURY OF THE COUNTY OF CORK :—

"That we, the Grand Jury of the County of Cork, assembled at the Spring Assizes of 1893, hereby record our protest against the Bill at present before Parliament for the purpose of establishing Home Rule in Ireland; that we believe that such a Bill, by the withdrawal of Imperial credit and capital from the country, which has obtained over £300,000 in grants and loans in the last thirteen years for county purposes, would prevent the development of our resources, would necessitate enormous taxation, would plunge the country into anarchy and bankruptcy, and would be hostile to the best interests of Ireland; and that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone, to Lord Salisbury, to the Right Honourable John Morley, and to the Right Honourable A. J. Balfour."

II. THE GRAND JURY OF THE COUNTY OF GALWAY :—

"We, the High Sheriff and Grand Jury of the County of Galway, assembled at the Spring Assizes, 1893, hereby record our protest against the Government of Ireland Bill now before Parliament, or any legislation that proposes the establishment of a separate Par-

liament for this country. We believe that the proposed safeguards in the Bill are not safeguards against eventually crushing the loyal and law-abiding minority, and that if it is passed it will work the ruin of our country socially and commercially ; and that copies of this resolution be forwarded to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, the Duke of Devonshire, and the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour."

N.B.—During the month of March, 1893, the number of meetings held in Ireland to protest against the Home Rule Bill was

207

DATE DUE

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