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SPEECH OF LORD VIS-
COUNT MORPETH, ON THE
IRISH TITHE BILL, IN
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS





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S P E E C H

OF

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IN

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

On THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 1836.

L O N D O N ·

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HOUSE OF COMMONS,

THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 1836.

LORD VISCOUNT MORPETH.—Having had but too frequent occasions to deliver my sentiments on this question, I feel that I should have little excuse, and still less temptation, for again presenting myself to the House, were it not for the desire I have to answer any objections, as well as to remove any misapprehensions, which appear to me to have arisen in the course of the debate. I do not feel myself at all constrained to enter into any controversy as to the general principle upon which this, as well as every other proposal of appropriation, rests. We make no secret of that professing principle—we avow at once that it is our intention to act upon it; and whether the burden, which it has been both graphically and rhetorically represented to entail upon us, be light or heavy, at least we make no complaint of it, and it has not yet broken our backs. It is, then, neither the arraignment of our motives nor the denunciation of our principle which I feel to affect or concern me at the present moment; I have merely to deal with the objections which have been made to the machinery and practical operation of the Bill I have had the honour to introduce to the House. I will not even suffer myself to be diverted from this track, in order to follow the Honourable Member who spoke last into the disquisition which his researches into historical lore have enabled him to make as to the antiquity of the Roman Catholic Church—a ground on which I frankly own I have always thought that church to be the least assailable. I agree with him that it is the duty of every State, as it is that of every individual, to promote the reading of the Holy Scriptures as extensively as possible by every means short of the employment of force; but I hope the Honourable Gentleman did not mean to intimate, in his catalogue of names, that Fenelon and Bossuet were not among the readers of the Bible.

With respect to the position in which the question before us at present stands, it appears that my Noble Friend, the Member for North Lancashire, has introduced

a scheme counter to that which I have had the honour of submitting to the House. I will not now stop to inquire whether my Noble Friend is the best and most happily constituted individual to be a mediator on this great question. I hope he will not, however, take it amiss if, in passing, I state that the history of the past shews the interference and assistance he has hitherto afforded the Irish Established Church to have been more distinguished by chivalry than success. In the course of this discussion we have had two Messages brought from the other House : one by my Noble Friend (Lord Stanley), from the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Bench, signifying to us that they will consent to the adoption of his scheme ; and the other by the Honourable Member for Newark (Mr. Gladstone), apparently from the whole of the Upper House, taken collectively, signifying their determination not to assent to ours. But notwithstanding these august intimations, I must venture to hint a doubt whether either constitutional practice or the present complexion of public affairs, tend to make it requisite that such permits should be endorsed on the introduction of our goods. Together with my Noble Friend (Lord John Russell), I state at once, that it is neither much of my business or disposition to quarrel with the measure of the Noble Lord (Stanley) ; there are some points in it which appear to me objectionable, but I have no doubt that upon being fairly discussed they might be easily obviated, should we be disposed to concede the principle which pervades his measure, which is, that if any surplus arise, it must be appropriated exclusively for the benefit of those who are within the pale of the Church Establishment. My Noble Friend (Lord Stanley) and those who have adopted his views, have urged very little objection to the first part of our Bill, which deals with the immediate arrangements to be adopted for the purpose of effecting a commutation of tithe ; and I feel considerably relieved by their abstinence upon this point : because if there is any part of our measure on which I have had a misgiving, it is that by the present situation of affairs in Ireland we are inevitably compelled to deal rather hardly with the existing clergy of the Established Church in that country, in consequence of which I have been induced to believe that should the question of tithe commutation be first settled on such an enlarged principle as would be acceptable to the great bulk of the Irish people, it might be proper for the Legislature to consider whether afterwards it was not in their power to give the clergy relief by modifying some of the peculiar charges to which they are now liable. There is, indeed, one point in which

the two Bills entirely differ, whereas one contains, and the other omits, any provision for the redemption of tithe. It is a point which must be acknowledged to be beset with difficulty: indeed my Noble Friend himself has admitted as much. This being the case, and as we have before us the complicated task of dealing with the commutation of tithe into a rent-charge throughout the whole extent of Ireland, I think it will be better to avoid still further embarrassment by adding the question of redemption; let it be reserved, as is also proposed with respect to English tithe, until we have seen the working of the rest of the measure without it.

I will not enter largely into the difficulties which must be attendant upon this part of the case, but I will briefly intimate that if the rent-charges are redeemed by money invested in Government securities at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., an immense reduction of the clerical revenues must take place; and if by an investment in land, the effect of it will be a general rise in the price of land, which would proportionally bring about the same detrimental reduction in the incomes of the clergy. As my Noble Friend has truly said, the value of land in several parts of Ireland is very different; in the North it is worth twenty-five, twenty-eight, and thirty-one years' purchase, which would only give the respective values of 4, $3\frac{1}{2}$, and 3 per cent. We have each of us one object in common, which is, to provide that the clergy should be a resident clergy; and if it were resolved upon to assign a certain portion of land to the clergyman by way of redemption for the rent-charge, that land should be within the bounds of his benefice—another condition which would enhance the difficulty of a general investment. Again, we wish to relieve the mind of the minister of religion as much as possible from the uncertainty and expense which would thus be attendant upon the collection of his income: and with that view we provide that a certain amount should be given to him on a particular day. If he is converted into a landowner it is impossible to predict what may not be the conflicts which will take place between him and his tenantry; moreover, he will be exposed to all the casualties of bad seasons,—alterations in the market prices; from all which the Bill I have introduced will rescue him now and for ever. It thus secures him from the risk of improvident tenants, who might deteriorate his land, and throw it upon his hands comparatively valueless and unproductive. By the scheme of my Noble Friend, persons who are liable to the rent-charge may enter into an agreement with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners: but these Commissioners, how-

ever competent for their employment they may be, will have to deal with those minute and complicated questions which have been encountered by the Board of First Fruits, and which have been often found to impede them in making the purchases which they were desirous of effecting. Sometimes the persons with whom they would have to deal would not have the fee-simple of the lands—they would frequently meet with leases on lives renewable for ever, by which clergymen would be frequently exposed to much loss; because, on each renewal, it is customary to impose a considerable fine. All these difficulties taken into consideration, I do not say might not, in time, be obviated and surmounted; but I think it advisable not to embarrass the question with any proposition for redemption at present, but reserve it for future consideration, should the circumstances of the Church, either in England or in Ireland, invite it.

In passing to that part of the Bill which relates to the future distribution of the church property in Ireland, I again feel myself relieved by the mitigated tone of opposition which I thought I perceived in the speech of my Noble Friend, when compared with the manner in which not only my Bill of last year was treated, but also in comparison with the mode in which the Church Temporalities Bill was treated by my Noble Friend, its author. This alleviation of attack has not, however, been without its exception, because the Honourable Member for Nottinghamshire has paid me the compliment to say that the Bill could be drawn up by no other than the arch-enemy of mankind. However this may be, listening attentively as I have done to the speech of my Noble Friend, last night, and to the speeches of the Honourable Gentlemen who followed him, I thought that I could discover two prominent points of objection: one, the number of real church purposes which you must leave uncompleted and still incomplete, before you can apply your surplus to the purposes of general education; the other, the low average amount of income assigned to the parochial clergy in Ireland. With respect to the first of these objections, certain Returns have been moved for by Honourable Gentlemen opposite, which I regret that there has not yet been time to prepare and deliver. I know that we have nothing to dread from any light thrown upon the subject; our argument—our great argument—resting upon the most fundamental maxims that affect or sustain human societies. The rightful tenure of property, and the legitimate wants of nations cannot be affected much, either one way or the other, by the nice calculations of an estimate, and the ingenious deductions

of an arithmetical balance-sheet; but I contend that both on the broad ground of principle, and according to the closest deductions of arithmetic, we stand on ground equally unassailable. What are the facts of the case? The Board of First Fruits in Ireland and the vestry-cess were formerly intended by the Legislature to provide, and to a great extent they practically did provide, for certain ecclesiastical purposes; and that at present the "General Fund" arising under the Church Temporalities Act, is made applicable to the following purposes:—

To provide things necessary for the celebration of Divine Service in the church or chapel of every parish.

To pay all parish clerks' and sextons' salaries.

To defray the expenses of building, enlarging, or repairing churches and chapels.

To fence and maintain church-yards.

To augment small livings to 200*l.* per annum, and to purchase house and land for augmented benefices.

To compensate the lay patrons of any livings that may be divided under the provisions of the said Act.

To defray the expenses of the Commissioners:—and

To provide for the maintenance of curates, heretofore provided for by vestry assessments under any Statute, law, or custom.

Now, in lieu of the sources of revenue of the Board of First-Fruits, which it merged into another Board, and of the vestry-cess, which it abolished, the Legislature thought fit to assign to the purposes to which these had hitherto ministered, certain other ecclesiastical revenues, which could not for a long time fulfil the purposes for which they were set apart—which could not meet them at all in the outset, without the assistance of the public treasury, but which were calculated to exhibit a considerable surplus in the course of time. It must be remembered by the House that all this transfer of expenditure and revenue was independent of the income of the parochial clergy, the tithes and the glebes, except so far as a graduated tax on their annual income above a certain amount was concerned. Now, does this Bill of ours interfere with this ecclesiastical fund? It does, to a certain extent, in one item—which is the tax upon clerical income; but not so much so as that income is interfered with by the present state of things; because at present absolutely nothing or next to nothing, is secured from that source. But if this Bill does interfere with this one item, does it, on the other hand, provide no compensation? The Noble Lord, the Member for North Lancashire, stated, last night, that the whole amount of personal income which the Commissioners had at their disposition to meet the permanent ex-

penditure of 69,000*l.*, was but 29,000*l.* It is true, that 29,000*l.* is the amount reported to have been at the disposal of the Commissioners last year; but the Noble Lord omitted to make any mention of what has occurred since last Session. Two bishoprics have since fallen in—Ossory, to the amount of 3500*l.*, and Cork, to the amount of 4300*l.*—together, 7800*l.* per annum. Moreover, the present Bishop of Ferns and Ossory has become liable to the tax, on succeeding to the temporalities of the See of Ferns on the demise of the late Bishop. The tax on ecclesiastical benefices, rated by the Commissioners last year at 750*l.*, has been increased by the Bishop of Killaloe becoming also subject to it, and by the several livings exceeding 300*l.* which fell vacant last year. The Commissioners, in their Report to the 1st of August last, state also, that appointments of clerks to three additional benefices, amounting to an entire sum of 597*l.*, have been suspended; and I am correct in stating that, since the date of that Report, the sinecure precentorship of Elphin, amounting to 263*l.*, has been also suspended; and the Tithe Bill provides for the suspension of another sinecure precentorship, that of Christchurch, to the amount of 1000*l.* for the last two years. So that, when all these circumstances are considered, not to speak of the interest arising from the temporary investments in stock of the moneys already realized from the sales of perpetuities, and which will be found for the half-year to amount to 1540*l.*, the accession of income under these additional sources, for the present year, may be fairly estimated at 5200*l.*, making in all, with the 7800*l.* mentioned above, for the present year, 42,000*l.*; but this is exclusive of any moneys that may arise from the sale of perpetuities within the present year. And when the House hears that no less a sum than 166,151*l.* has been realized from this source alone to the 25th of May last, that is to say, within the last two years, for within the first six months the Commissioners sold nothing—while, in their First Report, for the year ending August 1835, they state they had only sold 2365*l.*—it will scarcely be thought, that the progress of this source of income can be looked upon at present as either slow or inconsiderable, and it is not unreasonable to calculate on a further accession of annual income within the present year from this source of revenue also.

I will now, with the permission of the House, proceed to place clearly before them the real state and prospects of the Ecclesiastical Fund, by shewing the amount in the hands of the Commissioners, when all the sources of revenue, as contemplated by the Church Temporalities'

Act, the Amendment Act, and the present Tithe Bill, shall have been realized, contrasted with the sources of revenue, as estimated by Earl Grey, to arise under the Church Temporalities' Act alone, as follows:—

I. Church Temporalities Act, 3 & 4 Will. IV c. 37.

Revenues as at present contemplated to arise from

1. Produce of suppressed Sees	£50,780
2. Reduction of the bishopric of Derry, immediate and prospective	6,160
3. Future reduction of Armagh See	4,500
4. Glebe-house loan instalments, repayable for the next fifteen years	7,500
5. Tax on continuing bishoprics	4,600
6. Tax on incumbents of benefices	7,300
7. Interest at 4l. per cent. on 1,050,000l., to arise from sale of perpetuities	42,000

N.B. Of the 1,200,000l. calculated to arise from sale of perpetuities by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (but estimated by Mr. Finlaison, the Government actuary, to amount to 1,507,050), there has been realized and disbursed by the Commissioners 150,000l.; but the interest of the residue thereof, amounting to 1,050,000l., will, at the rate of 4l. per cent., produce an annual permanent sum, as above specified.

8. Income of benefices, suspended under the non-celebration service clause, for the three years to February, 1833

Nil.

II. Act to alter and amend Church Temporalities Act, 4 & 5 Will. IV., c. 90.

9. From 38 dignities, without cure, and 49 prebends, without cure of souls, after deducting the expenses of collection, and making other abatements, deductions, and allowances	8,000
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N.B. This Act provides, that in the case of any person holding any dignity or office under the rank of an archbishopric or bishopric, and not having cure of souls in any parish appropriated thereto, the appointment to such dignity or office may, on the next avoidance, be suspended, which is the case of the aforesaid 38 dignities and 49 prebends

£130,840

III. The present Tithe Bill.

10. The 77th clause saves existing interests, but vests the property belonging to minor canons and vicars choral in the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (some of which offices are reported by the Revenue Commissioners to be complete sinecures); and after providing for such of these offices as have duties, and are necessary to be upheld, authorizes the surplus arising from such estates, amounting to an entire sum of 22,624l., to be carried to the general fund, which surplus is estimated to amount to	4,000
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11. The 79th clause provides that the sinecure tithes disappropriated from all dignities (having cure) may, instead of being given to the vicars or perpetual curates, if otherwise sufficiently endowed, be carried to

Carried forward . . . £134,840

Brought forward . . .	£134,840
the general fund, under the administration of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; the revenue arising from which, after making all necessary deductions, abatements, and allowances, is estimated to amount to . . .	4,300
	<u>£139,140</u>

I. Church Temporalities Act, 3 and 4 Will. IV. ch. 37.

Revenues as estimated by Earl Grey to arise from—

1. Produce of suppressed Sees	£50,780
2. Reduction of the Bishopric of Derry, immediate and prospective	6,160
3. Future reduction of Armagh See	4,500
4. Glebe-house loan instalments, repayable for the next fifteen years	8,000
5. Tax on continuing bishoprics	4,600
6. Tax on incumbents of benefices	41,800
7. Interest at 4l. per cent, on 1,000,000l. to arise from the sale of perpetuities	40,000

N. B.—Under the Church Temporalities Act, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have the power of applying the principal arising from these sales to meet their present exigencies, which precludes the possibility of realizing eventually an annual permanent income from this source.

8. Income of benefices suspended under the non-celebration-service clause, for the three years to February, 1833. Nil.

II. Act to alter and amend Church Temporalities Act, 4 and 5 Will. IV. c. 90.

9. Not provided for under the Church Temporalities Act Nil

III. The Present Tithe Bill.

10. Not provided for under the Church Temporalities Act Nil

11. Not provided for under the Church Temporalities Act Nil

£155,840

Revenues as contemplated to arise from the combined Provisions of the Church Temporalities Act, the Amendment Act, and the present Tithe Bill, amount to 139,140l.

Application of this Revenue.

The charges which the foregoing fund of 139,140l. is designed to meet will be as follow:—

1. When the churches shall have been put into complete repair, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners report that the future repair of them will require an annual sum of	£25,000
Other expenses formerly defrayed by vestry cess, they state, will require	35,000
2. Expenses of the Commission	10,000
3. Interest on 100,000l. advanced the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in the way of loan, at 4 per cent.	4,000

Carried forward £74,000

	Brought forward . .	£74,000
4.	Building of churches, as estimated by Earl Grey .	20,000
5.	Building of glebe-houses, as estimated by Earl Grey .	10,000
6.	To repayment of the loan of 100,000 <i>l.</i> by annual instalments, for five years, of	20,000
		<hr/>
		£124,000

There will remain, therefore, to meet deficiencies in the items as above specified; for the other objects of the Commission; and for the additional clerks which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are authorized to employ to carry the provisions of the Tithe Bill into effect, a residue of 15,140

£139,140

Revenues as contemplated, by Earl Grey, to arise from the provisions of the Church Temporalities Act alone amount to 155,840*l.*

Application of this Revenue.

The charges which the foregoing fund of 155,840*l.* was designed to meet, are stated by Earl Grey to be as follow:—

1.	The Church cess, including the repairs of churches, estimated at	£60,000
2.	The augmentation of small livings to 200 <i>l.</i> each	46,500
3.	The building of churches, being the average expenditure of three preceding years	20,000
4.	The building of glebe-houses, which his Lordship considered very necessary, as not one-half of the benefices were provided therewith	10,000
		<hr/>
		136,500
5.	The expenses of the Commission, estimated at	6,000
		<hr/>
		142,500

There remained, therefore, to meet deficiencies, in the amounts as above estimated, and for the other objects of the Commission, a residue of 13,340

£155,840

being nearly 2000*l.* a-year less than we may now calculate upon. The characteristic and distinguishing feature between the contemplated measures and the provisions of the Church Temporalities Act is, that the necessity of appropriating 46,500*l.* for the augmentation of small livings, as contemplated under the Church Temporalities Act, will not arise under the provisions of the proposed Tithe Bill; so that not only a larger residue will remain for the building of churches and glebe-houses, and the other objects of the Commission, but a provision is made for enabling the Commissioners to repay the debt of 100,000*l.* due by them to the public. When I said that the Noble Lord opposite dealt rather hardly with his own measure, I feel

that in one respect I am bound to defend that measure from its Noble Author, as well as the Commissioners who act under it from the oblique reprehension of my Noble Friend, the Secretary of State; because it must be remembered that when they began their operations, they found an arrears of vestry-cess for the last three years, which had thus accumulated during those halcyon and golden days when the Church was under the peculiar care of the Noble Lord the Member for North Lancashire.

After the statement which I have laid before the House, I feel myself in a position to contend that, by the operation of the present Tithe Bill, the financial concerns of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the objects contemplated by the Church Temporalities Act, are, to say the least of it, in no degree deteriorated or curtailed. My opinion is, that they will be considerably aided and improved. With the purposes of that Act this Bill in no way interferes, or interferes only to improve. Indeed, so strict is its abstinence from all interference, that, where funds are still to be deducted from sinecure dignities, where, by the peculiar province of the Church Temporalities Act, we do not propose to carry this new surplus to the Consolidated Fund for the purposes of education; but it is to be carried to the account of the Ecclesiastical Fund. If, therefore, beyond the pale and province of the Church Temporalities Act—as the tithes and glebes of the parochial clergy ever have been—the Legislature thinks it can properly deduct further surplus revenue, I contend that it is its right, and may be its duty, to inquire whether or not more national, more equitable, more natural—I will even say, higher purposes, cannot be answered in a fresh distribution, than those already contemplated and provided for by the Church Temporalities Act. I say this because I feel that the one set of purposes provides only for the wants—and in their sphere and place most important and most indispensable wants I fully admit them to be—of a sect, or, if that term should be thought offensive or misplaced, of a segment of the population; the other set of purposes, without excluding that segment, provides for the equally important and indispensable wants of the whole people. I confess, while upon this topic, that having heard the whole speech of my Honourable Friend the Member for Weymouth with peculiar gratification; if there was one part I heard with even greater pleasure than any other, it was my Honourable Friend's friendly admonition, with respect to the mode in which the system of general education ought to be carried on. I fully agree with him, that it is quite incumbent upon us to take care that the whole plan of national

education should be conducted upon neutral and impartial principles. I am aware that several charges have been advanced against the mode in which the system has been worked. Some of these charges have, on representation made to the Board, and consequent investigation, been satisfactorily disproved; there are others for which there may have occasionally been some foundation. I believe that, where this has arisen, it has probably been in a large degree owing to the total withdrawal of Protestants from the management of the schools, which necessarily, in the nature of things, gives them too much of a tendency to the feelings and habits of the party who thus exclusively concern themselves about them; but the defects I believe to be principally owing to the very inadequate means which the Commissioners, as yet, have had of providing properly-trained teachers for the schools—though I believe this to be a source of abuse which is in the course of gradual abatement. I have, however, reason to think that several of the statements which have been put forth, as to the working of the system, are very far from well founded. I have heard to-day, upon authority on which I can rely, that one-twelfth of the schools in Ireland are in the Protestant county of Antrim, and one-fourteenth in the Protestant county of Down; and that in these schools a large proportion of the children are either Church of England or Presbyterian. This, however, I am quite ready to admit, that if the Legislature consents materially to enlarge and extend the system; and if the grounds of complaint or suspicion should still exist, then it will be quite fair to expect that either the Government or the Legislature should institute a searching inquiry into the subject.

The other prominent ground of objection to the Bill, at which I have already glanced, appears to be, the alleged low average amount of income proposed to be assigned to the future parochial clergy of Ireland. Upon this point, I will first observe, that I certainly feel that if I could put all antecedent and surrounding circumstances entirely aside, I could go quite along with, or even exceed, the Noble Lord and his friends in their views. I have no doubt that I could very creditably, and with great satisfaction to myself, divide the whole church revenue of Ireland, nay, twice as much, if it could be found, among the clergy of Ireland. As far as my own personal inclinations are concerned, I should be sincerely pleased if the whole clergy of the Established Church, present and to come—men who, for the most part, have hitherto been, and, I hope, ever will continue to be, well-educated, learned, able,

of refined habits, and of amiable dispositions—just as well off as myself in the world, which, to say the least, they well deserve to be. But the question is, does the position of the Irish Church permit it to be made this depository of easy and abundant comfort? And then comes the question, do the incomes, proposed by this Bill, fall so very far short of those in other contemporary churches?

My Noble Friend opposite asked me, whereas there are at present 1385 benefices, how I proposed to reduce them to 1250? I find that there are of benefices in Ireland, without Protestants, 41; benefices with less than 5 Protestants—when I say Protestants I mean members of the Established Church—20; with less than 10 Protestants, 23; with less than 15 Protestants, 31; with less than 20 Protestants, 23; with less than 25 Protestants, 27; making, in all, 165. Now, in the second class of these benefices, namely,—with less than 5 Protestants—1 contains a single Protestant; 7 contain 2 each; 3 contain 3 Protestants; and 6 contain only 4. And, with respect to the remaining classes of benefices, if they be considered as consisting, not of individuals, but of families, and each family to consist of Protestant parents, and two or three Protestant children; the third class of benefices, as aforesaid, would contain about 2 Protestant families; the fourth class, about 3; the fifth class, about 4; and the sixth class, about 5, or, at the most, 6 Protestant families. Now, if such be the existing state of things in Ireland, it is submitted that the necessity will not arise of establishing, in every such benefice as aforesaid, a church, glebe, glebe-house, and resident minister, for the accommodation of two, three, four, five, or even six Protestant families, varying in number from ten to twenty-five Protestants, when, by the annexation of such benefices, or a part or parts thereof to the church of an adjoining benefice, as local circumstances may render most advisable, and the contiguity of the Protestant inhabitants may require, the spiritual wants of the Protestants may, by such annexation, be more conveniently, and therefore more effectually, provided for than by the erection of a church, and the location of a minister in an extensive parish, where the few Protestant families live at a remote distance from one another, scattered over a large extent of territorial surface, which in Ireland is not unfrequently the case; it being remembered that the question of contiguity, and all other local circumstances of the Protestants, convenience of the Church, &c., are proposed by the Bill to be referred, in the first instance, to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for their Report, and afterwards to the Eccle-

siastical Committee of the Privy Council, for their adjudication thereupon; and this not merely upon the next vacancy of each and every benefice, but upon every vacancy in future, should ulterior circumstances require the bounds and limits of the benefices to be modified and altered. If, therefore, the number of benefices, as at present existing in Ireland, be 1385, and the reasonableness of the preceding observations be admitted, there are no less than 165 benefices contained in the six classes of benefices as aforesaid; so that, if 1385 be reduced by 165, there will only remain 1220 benefices, for which provision will be required to be made by means of a church, glebe, glebe-house, and resident minister. But as some of the benefices consist of unions of two or more parishes, and as the parishes forming those unions may, from their extent, require to be erected into two benefices instead of one (as is the case at present), the convenience and contiguity of the Protestants to their respective places of worship being duly considered, provision has been made for the founding of 1250 benefices, conceiving that it may be advantageous to subdivide some of the existing benefices and to erect new ones. The principle of consolidating benefices has also been admitted by my Noble Friend in his plan.

The sources of revenue arising from parochial benefices, and the application of these revenues to the purposes contemplated under the present Tithe Bill, are these:—

I. SOURCES.

	Gross.		Net.	
	£	s.	£	s.
I. Amount of rent-charges	358,050		349,098	15
			after deducting 2½ per cent. for expenses of collection.	
II. Annual amount of revenue arising from parochial glebe lands	92,000		86,500	0
			after deducting the reserved rents, amount- ing to 5500 <i>l.</i>	
III. Amount of revenue arising annu- ally from ministers' money in twenty eight city benefices	10,300		9,270	0
			after deducting 10 <i>l.</i> per cent. for collection and losses from in- solvent houses.	
Carried forward	£460,350		£444,868	15

	Brought forward	£460,350	£444,868 15
IV.	Annual amount of the late primate, Primate Boulter's bequest, for the augmentation of poor livings	5,000	5,000 0 no deduction ; being the inter- est of monies vested in the public funds.
V.	Amount of revenue arising annu- ally from rents of houses and rent- charges in the two provinces of Ar- magh and Tuam	945	897 15 after deducting 5 <i>l.</i> per cent. for expense of col- lection.
VI.	Amount of annual stipends pay- able, in the way of endowments, by lay impropiators and lay corpora- tions to the perpetual curates serving in these impropriate parishes in the aforesaid provinces	797 15	797 15
VII.	Amount of the fund called Evans's Fund, payable to some of the clergy in the diocese of Meath	114 5	114 5
VIII.	Annual amount of interest arising from monies vested in the public funds or bequests in the said pro- vinces	185 10	185 10
		<u>£467,392 10</u>	<u>£451,864 0</u>

II. APPLICATION OF THE REVENUES.

To 675 benefices, containing more than 50 and less than 500 Protestants, to each of which may be assigned an income of 200*l.*, arising from rent-charge, and 45*l.* arising from 30 statute acres of glebe, valued at 30*s.** per acre ; thereby making the gross income required for benefices of this class amount to—

Rent charges	£135,000
Glebe lands	30,375

Total 165,375

To 211 benefices, containing more than 500 and less than 1000 Protestants, to each of which may be assigned an income of 300*l.* from rent-charge, and

* The value of the glebe lands is taken at 30*s.* per statute acre, as the glebes to be assigned the clergy will consist wholly of profitable land, rent-free, which is about the average acreable value of the profitable glebes in Ireland.

45*l.* from 30 statute acres of glebe, valued at 30*s.** per acre; thereby making the gross income required for benefices of this class amount to—

Rent-charges	£ 63,300
Glebe lands	9,495

Total 72,795

To 190 benefices, containing more than 1000 and less than 3000 Protestants, to each of which may be assigned an income of 400*l.* from rent-charge, and 45*l.* from 30 statute acres of glebe, valued as before; thereby making the gross income required for benefices of this kind amount to

Rent-charges	76,000
Glebe lands .	8,550

Total 84,550

To 51 benefices, containing more than 3000 Protestants, to each of which may be assigned an income of 500*l.* from rent-charge, and 45*l.* from 30 statute acres of glebe, valued as before; making the gross income required for benefices of this kind amount to—

Rent-charges	25,500
Glebe lands .	2,295

Total 27,795

And if to these be added the 123 benefices, containing less than 50 Protestants, to each of which may be assigned an income of 100*l.* from rent-charge, and 45*l.* from 30 statute acres of glebe, valued as before; making the gross income required for benefices of this kind amount to—

Rent-charges	12,360
Glebe lands .	5,535

Total . 17,835

1250 benefices requiring an entire sum of £ 368,350 0 368,350

99,042 10 83,514

To 190 curates for benefices, of the third class, containing more than 1000 Protestants, at 75*l.* per stipend, to be paid by the Commissioners of Land Revenue; the remaining fourth to be contributed by the incumbents . 14,250

To 51 curates for benefices, of the fourth

class, containing more than 3000 Protestants, at 75*l.* per stipend, to be paid by the Commissioners of Land Revenue; the remaining fourth to be contributed by the incumbents . . . 3,825

	18,075 0	18,075 0
Leaving a residue of gross and net revenue to the amounts of . . .	£80,967 10	£65,439 0

thereby making the average income of the 1250 benefices amount to 294*l.* 13*s.* 7*d.* per annum, subject only to 6*d.* in the pound, and the tax where the income exceeds 300*l.* a-year. This being the assigned income of the Irish clergy, let us now turn to the inquiry into the circumstances of the clergy of England; one striking particular of which has been already mentioned by my Noble Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department. I find by the Return of the English Ecclesiastical Commissioners, that the number of benefices in England and Wales returned to the Commissioners, including sinecure rectories, is 10,540*l.*; that the aggregate amount of the gross revenues of the incumbents of those benefices, in the several dioceses, is 3,197,225*l.*; that the aggregate amount of the net revenues of the incumbents of the aforesaid benefices, is 3,004,721*l.*; that the annual average for each incumbent upon the total gross income returned, is 303*l.*; and the annual average upon the total net income returned, is only 285*l.* Thus the net income of the English clergy is only 285*l.*, while the average income of the Irish clergy under this Bill will be 294*l.* 13*s.* 7*d.* I need not state that the duties of the English clergy must, under any circumstances, be more extensive than those of the Irish. But even this is not a fair view of the whole case, because in comparing the average net incomes of the English clergy with those of the Irish, under this Bill, it should be observed, in order to do equal justice in instituting the comparison, that when 285*l.* is reported to be the average net income of the English clergy, no deduction whatever is made from the gross incomes on account of the stipends paid to their curates, of which curates the Report of the English Commissioners states there are 5230 employed by the resident and non-resident incumbents, whose stipends amount to a gross sum of 424,695*l.*; so that if the average net incomes of the English clergy be struck, after deducting the stipends paid their curates, it will only amount to 244*l.* 15*s.* 8*d.*, instead of 285*l.*, as already mentioned; while the incomes of the Irish clergy

will, after deducting the proportion of stipend payable to the curates by the incumbents, average at 289*l.* 17*s.* 2*d.* under our proposed Tithe Bill.

There is another feature, touching the character of the revenues of the English clergy, as compared with those of the Irish clergy, under the proposed Tithe Bill, deserving of special notice. The English Commissioners report:—

That the pew-rents have been treated as ecclesiastical revenue, although a variable and uncertain source of income; that in those benefices which of late years came into existence under the Church Building Act, or by operation of other causes, the pew-rents (which are so variable and uncertain) constitute the sole or principal support of the minister; that the three years' average of income to 1831, may be considered as applicable to a continuing, though a variable income, and liable to reduction by the failure or defalcation of some of its sources, or by reduction of rent, or by fresh agreements, for the compositions of tithes.

And they also report:—

That there are a great many out-goings, which it has been impossible to take account of in the table, being only occasional, and not admitting of an average—such as calls for subscription towards drainage and embanking, &c.

The result, therefore, is, that the English clergy cannot calculate, with any degree of certainty, on the average amounts of their incomes, as before stated—owing to one source of their revenues—namely, the pew-rents, being uncertain and variable in amount, and which, in some cases constitute the only source of revenue; owing also, sometimes to a failure of the crops, reduction of rents, or fresh agreements for compositions of tithes, which are variable; and owing to occasional outgoings, which did not admit of any average being taken. In England, therefore, no small degree of uncertainty seems to characterize the receipt of clerical income, which many circumstances may contribute to reduce even below the average net amount, as already stated. But in Ireland how different will be the condition of the clergy, from the security and certainty which, under the proposed Tithe Bill, will attach to the receipt of their incomes in future. From and after a certain time in each year, the Irish clergy will be entitled to receive from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners a warrant expressive of the amount of rent-charge payable to them; a day, as convenient as may be, after the 1st of January, in each year, will be appointed and notified for discharging these warrants at the Bank of Ireland; and until they shall be discharged, the warrants will bear an interest of 1½*d.* per cent. *per diem* on the several sums therein expressed; and, lastly, the only

deduction, exclusive of the before-mentioned tax on incomes exceeding 300*l.* a-year, to which incumbents of benefices created under this Act will be subject, will be 6*d.* in the pound on the amount contained in the warrants, as it is intended, as part of the proposed measure, to exonerate the clergy from all other charges and outgoings; such as glebe-rents, schoolmasters' salaries, expenses of collection, procuration fees, synodals, &c., except the exhibits fees payable at visitations. Independently of the excess of the average gross and net incomes of the Irish clergy under the proposed Bill, over and above those of the English clergy, if the certainty of the amounts of income, and of regular periodical payments of the Irish clergy be alone considered, they are of themselves most important advantages, which cannot be lightly esteemed, and which ought not to be underrated in the eye of the clergy, the Legislature, and the English public. In reference to Scotland, I have not been able to procure such precise Returns, as to the average incomes of the Scottish clergy, as those which I have stated from England, and Wales, and Ireland. I have, however, after making inquiry in various quarters, ascertained that the average income of the Scottish clergy is estimated as varying from 170*l.* at the lowest computation, to 240*l.* a-year at the highest.

I will now proceed to submit to the House a statement of the average of population and number of benefices :—

	Population.	Number of Benefices.	Average of Souls to each Benefice.
England and Wales.—			
Population	14,500,000		
Deduct for Dissenters, &c., one-fourth	3,625,000		
	10,875,000	10,718	1,014
The Bishop of London states the number of the Established Church as three-fourths, Lord Grey thought it much less.			
Scotland.—No deduction is made	2,500,000	900	2,777
Presbyterians—Ulster.—(The gross number in Ireland is 642,356)	500,000	200	2,500
Established Church in Ireland	852,064	1,250	681

The following will shew the general results of the foregoing statement:—

	Number of Benefices.	Average to each Benefice.			
		Income.	Population.	Acres.	Square Miles.
England and Wales .	10,718	£. 285	1014	3,460	5
Scotland	900	240	2777	21,048	32½
Presbyterians of } Ulster	200	155	2500	25,547	40
Established Church } (Ireland) }	1,250	294	681	16,350*	25*

* Lord Stanley stated the average Protestant population to 1250 benefices to be 700; the acres about 10,000, and about 15 square miles. Lord Morpeth followed his statement; and the inaccuracy which was remarked upon afterwards by Sir Robert Peel, has been here corrected.

Thus the Irish clergy will, by the proposed Bill, be paid better, and have less duty to perform, than the clergy in any other part of the empire. It appears, by the Report of the Public Instruction Commissioners, that there are in Ireland 859,064 members of the Established Church. Provision has been made for 1491 incumbents and curates of parochial benefices. Rejecting fractions, there will be one minister for every 576 Protestant individuals, exclusive of Bishops and other dignitaries of the Church; and supposing each family to consist only of Protestant parents, two Protestant children, and one Protestant servant, there will be a minister of the Church for every 115 Protestant families. Now, I think that these are very fair and valid grounds for arguing that the amount of the income enjoyed by the clergy of the Established Church in Ireland, considering the far smaller extent of their duties, and the comparatively limited number of their flocks, should not amount to as much on an average as that of other established churches, where the duties are more onerous, and the number of the flocks is greater; but in my much-abused and calumniated Bill—in the Bill drawn up by the arch enemy of mankind, according to the Honourable Member for Nottinghamshire—the amount exceeds the average amount in any of the other churches; while the extent of the duty will be less, and there will also be a great deal less inequality in the distribution of the income. I do not speak of the Catholic clergy of Ireland, because it

is well known to the House that they, like most other Dissenters, receive nothing at all from the State; but when we are told with so much perseverance of our niggardly dealing with the ministers of the Gospel, I think it is not quite fair to put out of consideration that to those ministers of the Gospel who have most of the work on their hands, both this side of the House and the other are content to assign just nothing at all.

I do not know whether there are other material points which I have not noticed. My Noble Friend stated as a great reason for not alienating any surplus from the immediate uses of the Established Church, that there are 505 benefices in Ireland without glebes. This Bill will provide a glebe for every benefice. He states the number of chapels and churches at 1594, and says we are not warranted in reducing the benefices to 1250. Now this includes chapels in cities and towns, and it is known that there are only 1777 benefices in Ireland which have churches. As regards the arrangement of the benefices, a discretion is proposed to be vested by my Noble Friend in the Privy Council. We have endeavoured to frame our measure so as to make it as little offensive as possible to the Protestants of Ireland. We propose to refer all matters for decision to the judgment of a Committee of the Privy Council, to be appointed not by the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, but by his Majesty, he being the head of the Church, and we have limited the members of that Committee to members of the Established Church; whereas my Noble Friend proposes, in certain cases, to vest the same responsibility not in a Committee—not in a selected Committee—but in the whole Privy Council; and that Privy Council may at any time consist, not exclusively, as our Committee, of members of the Established Church, but even of a majority of Roman Catholics. By the way, since we are reproached for the investment of so much authority in the higher functionaries of the State, one would have thought that the recent proceedings of our opponents had shewn they did not entertain so very just a feeling upon this head.

My Noble Friend selected some particular instances to shew the working of the present ecclesiastical scheme in Ireland, by way of sets-off to my instances of last year: he described the Firecall Union as consisting of six parishes, having a Protestant population of 1115 persons, with five clergymen, and a joint income between them of about 315*l*. Now, it is true that this union does consist of six parishes—that its total population is 1115 persons—that there is a vicar and four curates; but instead of the in-

come being 315*l.* a-year, the income is no less than 1800*l.* and upwards; for, exclusive of the 315*l.* arising from tithe compositions, there are no less than 2039 acres, plantation measure, in this union,—namely, 593 acres in Lynally, 528 acres in Killaghey, 453 acres in Ballyboy, 465 acres in Drumcullen and English parishes. But observe that, instead of this being a joint income between the five clergymen, the whole of the revenue is taken by the vicar, who is obliged by law to pay a stipend of only 75*l.* a-year to each of his four curates. And what effect will the provisions of our Tithe Bill have on this union? It will be competent, if deemed advisable, to erect each of these parishes, with the exception of one which has not any church, into a separate benefice; and as each of the four benefices will then contain more than fifty and less than 500 Protestants, to assign to each incumbent an income, in rent-charge, to the amount of 200*l.* per annum; and, in glebe-land, to the amount of 45*l.*—so that, instead of one incumbent swallowing up all the revenues, there will be four incumbents, whose joint income may amount to 980*l.*, divisible in equal portions; and which will be an arrangement far more eligible both for the ministers and the Protestants than the existing one.

My Noble Friend described the Archdeaconry of Dublin as consisting of the parishes of St. Peter and St. Kevin, having a population of 10,114, and including three perpetual curacies,—Rathfarnham, with a population of 890; St. Mary, Donnybrook, with a population of 3500; and Tawney, with a population of 895, making a total of 15,599 members of the Established Church, that is, a benefice employing sixteen clergymen and eleven churches, and yet it is said to be treated as a mere single benefice, by myself. Why, it is true that it has been suffered to continue as a single benefice up to the present time; but this is one of the very points which the Ecclesiastical Committee of the Privy Council will have to take into consideration, namely—whether it should be suffered to continue a single benefice, or whether a more eligible distribution of the component parts of it might not advantageously be made. The present Bill proposes to correct the very abuse which has been suffered to exist up to this moment, of which my Noble Friend complains, and to do that with the most advantage to the Protestants, due regard being had to the ministerial duties of the future incumbents, to assign them a proportionate provision. The whole emoluments, arising from minister's money, tithes and glebe, is now taken by the archdeacon, who is obliged by law to pay to each of these sixteen cu-

rates a stipend of only 75*l.* per annum ; not one of these curates are perpetual curates, as my Noble Friend conceives, they are mere stipendary curates, and by them the whole duties of this extensive benefice are discharged, the archdeacon himself having another benefice in the county of Kildare, where I believe, he resides for the most part ; and with respect to this benefice the Committee of Council will have the like power as before, of considering whether a more eligible arrangement might not be made, and of appropriating the income of the several incumbents, in regard to the duties which they may have to perform.

Another case which my Noble Friend cited was the town of Belfast, a single parish containing 17,942 Protestants, while the income derived by the incumbent is just 300*l.* a-year, and no more. Why this, and all other city benefices, are the very cases to which the provisions of the Tithe Bill so peculiarly apply. Should the remission of 30*l.* per cent, take place, without any other change in the constitution of this benefice, the incumbent of Belfast would have only 210*l.* a-year, and yet be obliged to support two curates ; and supposing each curate to be paid the legal stipend of 75*l.* a-year, all the incumbent would have to himself would be 60*l.* a-year ; whereas, under the provisions of the Tithe Bill, the Committee of Council may, and ought to assign him the *maximum* income of 500*l.* rent-charge, and 45*l.* glebe ; and besides, they ought to allow him a stipend of 75*l.* for each, and as many curates as they may consider so large and important a Protestant population to require ; so that the income of this benefice, instead of being 210*l.*, with two curates' stipends to be provided thereout of 75*l.* each, might be made, under this Bill, worth 695*l.*,—namely, 545*l.* to the incumbent, and 75*l.* to each of his curates, the incumbent providing the remaining 25*l.* to each curate out of his own income.

There is one plea constantly urged against our proceedings and arguments, the validity of which I do not mean to evade—it is, that the force of our own reasonings and principles would prevent us from stopping where we are, and would compel us to go much further. I never have pretended to say that our measure meets the whole case, or sounds the entire grievance—all I assert is, that having to deal with a condition of affairs, which is involved, complicated, and disordered, with a state of things established by long prescription and practice, surrounded with difficulties which must be met and overcome, we come forward to suggest, not what, according to first principles or by

strict reasoning, may be right and regular, but that which suggests itself to us, under the present circumstances, as an available palliative and a reasonable compromise; and for doing this we are met with a loud outcry and an angry resistance, and imputations of all improper motives and all unworthy subserviency. And thus it is that, in self-defence, in vindication of not only our own character, of our conduct, but of the far more important principles to which we are attached and wedded, that we are forced to state the whole case, and to put the plain issue between the Irish Church and the people. I need do no more than refer to those who are the most unfriendly to our own views. A writer in the last *Quarterly Review* is good enough to remind me, that we have a Return of 241 parishes in Ireland, which shews that the Protestant landed property in Ireland amounts to 2,023,257 acres, while the Roman Catholic landed property is but 71,404 acres; that the Protestant tithe-composition amounts to 82,531*l.* 9*s.* 10*d.*, and the Roman Catholic to 2337*l.* 2*s.* 5*d.* So that if these Returns approximate towards the truth, the Protestants possess nearly nineteen-twentieths of the whole property of the country; “and notwithstanding the lowness of their numbers,” modestly continues the reviewer, being, I presume, a Protestant, “they possess, in the same proportion, greatness and superiority amongst mankind.” But leaving the property, and coming to the population of Ireland, we find that the whole amount of it is 7,943,940 persons, among whom no more than 852,064 belong to the communion of the Established Church. Now for what class of this people, therefore, must it be that the State provides spiritual instruction and spiritual consolation? The rule of life, and the hope after death—all that is most essential for the good of mankind—and that it is deemed essential the existence of an Established Church is the best proof. But for whom does it provide these things—I do not say in theory, but in practice? it provides them for the property, for the acres, for the mansion houses, for the rich, for the few; and it provides them not, or provides them so as they cannot be of any avail, for the many, for the cabin, for the poor, for the people. Can I then wonder, Sir, that such a state of things does not prosper? At this moment it produces dissatisfaction and disturbance, and places the Church itself in a state of pressing, of imminent, and of deadly danger? And then it is—when we come forward, willing to lend our best assistance, to remove the more obvious points of weakness, to shorten that length of exposure, the very extent of which supplies the chief invitation, and main facility to

attack the strength of the citadel upon fewer indeed, but upon better-ordered, and better garrisoned points,—then it is that the cry of treachery is raised, and every exertion made to confound the timely warning of the auxiliary with the rancorous machinations of the foes. I never have pretended, on this subject, that should we succeed in carrying this, or any similar measure, it would secure universal acquiescence, put down all opposition, or entirely lull those energies of the Irish people which an Honourable Member opposite so much wished to see evoked from their present distressing state of lethargy. In nothing so liable to change as the public opinion of nations, in nothing where the step to be taken is avowedly one of experiment and compromise, and especially where we stop short of the limits to which we think that, conformably with the premises it might have been carried, or to say it in one word, in nothing human can, or dare we, guarantee that our proceedings shall be final; it is enough for me that some such measure appears to be demanded by the surrounding circumstances of the times, and to offer the best chance of settlement to the community, and of preservation to the Established Church. I cannot, indeed, hide from myself the conviction that I gather from the past history of this question, and the state of men's minds in Ireland, that the Church can only be maintained there in its present extent, and on its present footing, by blood, a price far too costly; forbid it, I should say, for the truths of religion, or for the grounds of truth, I would not so blaspheme the memory of confessors and of martyrs; but it is a price too costly, not for religion, but for an establishment—not for the spirit, but for the forms of religious worship—too costly, moreover, to purchase these decent and becoming results of an establishment, the learned leisure and refined habits of the clergy—results which no one can be less disposed to undervalue or disparage than myself, in other circumstances and on a more propitious soil; but situated as the Church of Ireland is—viewing her in her most favourable and exalted aspect, and with the eyes at present only of a Protestant and a Churchman, as seated upon a height in an unfriendly land, to hold out the beacon of Gospel-truth, and to win those whom she considers in darkness, in error, and in hostility, without being able to breathe a freer air and drink a purer light within her heaven-built precincts,—while I know that every imperfection must be exposed to the most keen-eyed criticism, and that for all superfluous and even all legitimate purposes the contributions on which she exists, arising from a population who neither profess her doctrines nor benefit by

her services—cannot but be defrayed with grudging and reluctance. I say, that for the success, the credit, and, perhaps, existence of a Church thus situated, it is not enough that she should put away from her (as to a great extent she has already done) the trappings of her altars, or the pomp and luxury of her prelates and her ministers, but that she cannot hope to retain, either with consistency or with safety, more of her present revenues than is sufficient to secure the due administration of the offices of piety, and to invite to her ministry men who will be attracted and constrained to the task by the love of it, and by no other motives whatever. The Bill I have introduced to the House has it in contemplation, and will I believe be found, in its effect, to accomplish these salutary objects, and therefore I invite a full consideration of it. As I have before intimated, I tender it to the House as a palliative of serious evils, which the substitute proposed by my Noble Friend is not, because it leaves the same evil so long complained of still in existence;—I tender it as a compromise of the most enormous difficulties, which the substitution of my Noble Friend is not, because it makes no compromise at all, but insists upon retaining the funds of the Church exclusively for Church purposes;—I tender it as an acknowledgment of the consideration due to the bulk of the people of Ireland, which the substitute of my Noble Friend cannot be, because it leaves their wants and wishes totally out of the question;—I tender it as what it ought to be, as what I hope it is, and as what my Noble Friend is equally desirous that his should be, a humble instrument of subordinately contributing to a zealous and efficient administration of the Protestant religion, and to the still higher objects of general charity, piety, and faith.

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