IRISH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND
THE HOME-RULE BILL OF 1912

THESIS

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This thesis examines speeches made by Irish members of the British House of Commons concerning the Government of Ireland Bill (1912). The most significant source used was the *Parliamentary Debates* of the House of Commons, 1912 to 1914.

The organization of the Irish political parties is outlined in Chapter One. The next two chapters deal with their view of Irish history during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The fourth chapter focuses upon the bill in committee, and the fifth chapter examines the more general debate on the bill.

The conclusions of the final chapter suggest that advocates of the bill were motivated by Irish nationalism, while opponents were motivated by economic ties to Great Britain.
PREFACE

This thesis examines speeches made by Irish members of the British House of Commons concerning the Government of Ireland Bill (1912), commonly known as the home-rule bill. The most significant source used was the Parliamentary Debates of the House of Commons, 1912 to 1914.

The origins and organization of the two Irish political parties are outlined in Chapter One. The next two chapters deal with their view of Irish history during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The fourth chapter focuses upon the bill in committee, and the fifth chapter examines the more general debate on the bill. The conclusions of the final chapter suggest that advocates of the bill were motivated by Irish nationalism, while opponents were motivated by economic ties to Great Britain.

This results in some of the material in Chapter Five preceding Chapter Four chronologically, while the remainder of the material in Chapter Five follows chapter four chronologically. It was the decision of the author that the advantages gained by following this procedure outweighed the inherent disadvantages of a lack of strict chronological sequence. The final chapter contains the conclusions of the thesis.
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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE IRISH NATIONALIST AND IRISH UNIONIST PARTIES

In the space of twenty-nine years, from 1885 to 1914, three attempts were made to grant legislative home rule to Ireland by an act of Parliament. Two opposing Irish political parties emerged during this period as a result of that controversy. To be sure, the origins of the political dichotomy in Ireland can be traced far back in the substance of that country's turbulent history; but it was during the early part of the twentieth century, when the third attempt to acquire home rule was made, that the conflicting points of view were manifested in two formally established political parties. These were the Irish Nationalist party and the Irish Unionist party.

The origins of the Nationalist party, as an independent Parliamentary party, can be traced from the Home Government Association of 1870. Although there were defections from this nascent organization, in general it may be said that in 1873 the Home Government Association developed into the Irish Home Rule League. In the early 1880s, the bulk of the membership of that group joined the Irish National League, founded in 1881 by Charles Stewart Parnell. Parnell's talent for political organization was so effective, his leadership
so dynamic, that by 1885 he had organized the Irish Nationalist party into a political body that was firmly under his control.\(^1\)

Despite the fact that their first attempt to secure home rule, through the legislative efforts of Liberal Prime Minister Gladstone, had failed in 1886, the Nationalists continued to work enthusiastically for another chance. Under Parnell's leadership, the party maintained the public support of the British Liberal party and successfully advanced its political cause at home. By 1889, Parnell was clearly the most powerful individual in Irish politics.\(^2\)

As the political fulcrum of the Nationalist party, Parnell was able to balance and co-ordinate the home-rule movement from an unchallenged position. But in late 1889, Captain William O'Shea, a member of the Nationalist party, sued his wife, Katherine, for divorce. When that happened, the long standing affair between Parnell and Katherine O'Shea became public knowledge.\(^3\)


\(^3\)The affair between Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea was no secret in many political circles. The O'Sheas had been separated for years; Parnell and Katherine had been living together privately for quite some time and had had three children. For a more detailed account of the events surrounding this affair, see R. C. K. Ensor, *England, 1870-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), pp. 564-66.
The political repercussions of the scandal were explosive, shattering Parnell's power as the central figure of the home rule movement. Many British Liberals insisted that Gladstone instantly cease all dealings with Parnell; as a result, the Nationalist party's parliamentary support from the only major British party willing to sponsor home rule was seriously diminished. Reaction within the Nationalist Party was equally damaging. The majority of the members demanded that Parnell be removed as chairman, at least for the time being, because it seemed to be the only way to save the Liberal alliance. But Parnell, supported by several followers, adamantly refused to yield his position under any circumstances.  

The controversy quickly spread to the Irish countryside, dividing voters at the polls into Parnellites and anti-Parnellites. Parnell fought vigorously. The strain was overpowering, however, and on October 6, 1891, he died of a complete physical collapse. The struggle of internecine warfare on the Nationalist party proved almost fatal. In 1893, Gladstone's second attempt to enact home rule was defeated in the House of Lords, the Liberal party was unable to maintain a parliamentary majority, and the Nationalist party was bitterly divided.  

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5 Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, pp. 402-05, 413; Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, p. 196.
It took nearly a decade to repair the broken party. Finally, early in 1900, both factions accepted John Redmond, leader of the Parnellites, as chairman. Even with re-unification, there remained deep divisions among the Nationalists. This cleavage was not based strictly upon the Parnellite versus anti-Parnellite conflict; rather, it had more to do with a dispute among the anti-Parnellites over the broad issue of how limited Ireland's independence should be under home rule. Nonetheless, at the election of January 1910, the Irish Nationalist party returned a total of eighty-one members to Parliament. Although eleven of these eighty-one men stood apart on the ballot as "Independent Nationalists," they agreed to accept Redmond's titular leadership; but they conceded no obligation to support every point of his platform.⁶

Thus the Liberal party, now under the leadership of Herbert Asquith, was able to sponsor a third home-rule bill, confident of an undisputed numerical advantage. The balance of vote power was plainly in the hands of the Nationalist party.⁷ The composition of this political group was noticeably more middle class than the other parties. Only about half of them had attended institutions of higher learning and, except for a few cases, they came from smaller Irish colleges or


⁷Kee, *The Green Flag*, p. 461; there were 272 Liberals, and 272 Conservatives. The eighty-one Nationalists, along with forty-two Labour members, made the critical difference.
private schools rather than the principal British universities. Only about half of them had studied law, which was the traditional background of politicians; the others had followed working-class occupations, most prevalently journalism and teaching. Many were employed as local merchants or businessmen and farmers. Members of the landed aristocracy, or of families in which a Parliamentary seat was part of one's heritage, were rare in the Nationalist party.

Chairman John Edward Redmond, sixty-one years old at the onset of the debate, was the son of an M. P. He was a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and had held his seat in Parliament since 1881. Redmond had assumed leadership of the Parnellites after the former leader's death, and he had been elected to manage the party's affairs when the party was reunited.\(^8\)

The unofficial deputy chairman of the party was John Dillon, M. D., who had been sitting for East Mayo since 1885. He had been one of the organizers of the Irish land reform movement, known as the Plan of Campaign, during the 1880s, and as a result had acquired a police record of arrests and imprisonments. In 1891, Dillon had been one of the leading anti-Parnellites, but by 1912, he had come to be one of Redmond's closest associates in the party.\(^9\)

\(^8\) *Who's Who*, 1914, s.v. "Redmond, John E."

Another member who worked with Dillon during the plan of campaign and who stood with him in opposition to Parnell was William O'Brien. A working journalist, O'Brien had also acquired a long police record in his crusade for Irish rights. But in 1895, he dropped out of Irish politics in disappointment over the internal party conflicts. Then in 1898, he founded the United Irish League, an organization that helped to bring the two factions of the Nationalist party together. When he was returned to Parliament two years later, however, O'Brien set himself apart from Redmond as an independent Nationalist.10

The most independent member of the Nationalist party was Tim Healy. With more experience than formal education, he had worked as a railroad clerk, journalist, and barrister. In 1891, Healy had been Parnell's most vehement opponent; he had challenged Dillon for the leadership of the anti-Parnellites and had led the faction that split from the party to form the independent Nationalists.11

One of the younger and more promising members of the party was Joseph Devlin. The son of a publican, Devlin came directly from a working-class background. He was only thirty years old when he was elected to Parliament for the


first time. In 1906, he won the seat of his own constituency of West Belfast, a Nationalist section of the capital city of Unionism. In Parliament he was labeled the "real chief secretary of Ireland." Devlin excited the Unionists' ire, moreover, because he was an official in the Ancient Order of Hibernians, a strictly sectarian Roman Catholic fraternal organization. 12

Other Nationalists who made some important contributions to the debates should be noted. They include John Redmond's brother, William, and Tim Healy's brother, Maurice. Two other notable spokesmen were John Gordon Swift MacNeill, a direct descendant of Jonathan Swift, son of a protestant clergyman and dean of the faculty of law at the National University; Stephen Gwynn was an Oxford scholar who had published several books of the classics. Another member of the party who had participated in all three home-rule debates was Sir Thomas Henry Grattan Esmonde, an independent Nationalist sitting for Wexford; he was the grandson of the eighteenth-century Irish patriot Henry Grattan. 13

For the most part, these men acted as the primary party spokesmen and made virtually all of the major speeches; they

12 Who's Who, 1914, s.v. "Devlin, Joseph"; Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, p. 258; Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) hereafter cited as Debates (Commons) (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office), XXXVII (1912), 102, 115, 2169; XXXVIII (1912), 52.

were the men who actually played an active role on the floor of Parliament during the home-rule debates. In general, they were the most experienced members of the party, and most of them had been active in the home-rule movement or in the parliamentary party since the 1880s.

The opponents of home rule, members of the Irish Unionist party, suffered from organizational disunity for several years before finally achieving solidarity. For example, until 1885, the conservative political groups in Ulster consisted of a loose coalition of conservative clubs. In 1885, some leading Belfast conservatives founded the Loyal Irish Union, but its objectives were limited and its effect was weak.  

The following year, Unionists in the south of Ireland made public their heretofore secret organization, the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union. When the home-rule bill was introduced in 1886, northern Unionists were encouraged to join together with the southern group in order to strengthen the Unionists' position overall. The new association was called the Ulster Loyalist Anti-Repeal Union.  

But Irish conservative unity still had to wait until another problem was resolved. The Grand Orange Lodge of Northern Ireland, although it was not a formal political party, already had established an effective constituency structure by which it exercised influence; and it simply

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would not have political power transferred to another body. It took until 1891 before a satisfactory arrangement was made between the Orange Order and the Ulster Union; the new organization was named the Irish Unionist Alliance. The political party that was derived from the Irish Unionist Alliance and that sat at Westminster in 1912 was the Irish Unionist party.16

Within the House of Commons, the Irish Unionists were a small group of sixteen men. The man chosen to lead the Unionists in the fight against home rule was a distinguished English barrister, the right honorable Sir Edward Carson. Irish by birth, he, like Redmond, had attended Trinity College and he held now the traditionally Conservative seat for Dublin University. Carson was asked to direct the anti-home rule struggle in 1910 after the Liberal party's victory at the polls, for it was known that the Liberals intended to sponsor home rule. His impressive legal background included his experience as solicitor-general of Ireland and solicitor-general of the United Kingdom.17

The second most powerful politician among the Unionists was the representative for East Down, Captain James Craig. Born in 1871, the son of a wealthy whisky distiller, Craig

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had served with the British army in South Africa, was a charter member of the Belfast Stock Exchange, and had held his seat in East Down for six years. As a prominent member of the Ulster Unionist Council, it was on his family estate of Craigavon that the "Ulster Covenant" rally of 1911 was held; this document was signed by a purported 200,000 people who pledged to resist home rule forever. 18

The junior member for Dublin University, James H. Campbell, was another important Unionist spokesman. He too had served as solicitor-general of Ireland as well as attorney-general. As a student at Trinity College, Campbell had been a gold medalist in the classics, oratory, history, and the law. He had been sitting in Parliament since 1898. 19

It was characteristic of the Unionist party (and quite uncharacteristic of the Nationalists) that a number of its members had served in the British government in various official capacities. William Moore had been a member of the Antrim grand jury; also, he was one of the founders of the Ulster Unionist Council. Andrew Horner, M. P. for South Tyrone, was crown prosecutor for county Cavan. The Unionist party whip, Sir John Lonsdale, had been high sheriff for county Armagh in 1895 and now sat for that constituency. 20

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19 Who's Who, 1914, s.v. "Campbell, James Henry M."
20 Who's Who, 1914, s.v. "Moore, William"; "Horner, Andrew L."; Lonsdale, John B."
Overall, the members of the Irish Unionist party were a more homogeneous group than the Nationalists, and had entered politics by pursuing the more conventional professions of law and government service. Because their party was small, more of them actually took the opportunity to actively participate in the debate. Except for the two representatives from Dublin University, they all spoke for constituents who lived in a particular part of the country; from their point of view, Ulster was an island within an island.

The Government of Ireland Bill of 1912, as the home rule bill was officially known, was introduced on April 11, 1912. After two successful readings in the House of Commons, it was sent to a Committee of the Whole House; it was then read for a third time and passed on January 13, 1913. The bill was defeated in the House of Lords, but because of the Parliament Act of 1911, the upper house could no longer veto home rule; the bill returned to the Commons in May 1913. The Government of Ireland Bill was once again passed in Commons.21

But the sponsors feared that to send the bill to Buckingham Palace for the royal assent would incite civil war in Ireland. On March 5, 1914, an amendment was attached to the original legislation that would allow some specified part of Ulster to be excluded from the legal effects of home

21Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1399; XLVI (1913), 2406; LV (1913), 168.
rule. When war was declared in August 1914, the home-rule bill had yet to be put into effect, and the exclusion amendment was as yet unsettled. On September 15, 1914, Prime Minister Asquith decided to place the home-rule act on the statute book; he then asked for an immediate and indefinite suspension to be put on home rule. The Government of Ireland Act of 1912 never progressed beyond that point.\footnote{Debates (Commons), LIX (1914), 633; LXVI (1914), 882-83, 920, 1017-20.}
CHAPTER II

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND AS VIEWED BY IRISH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

The purpose of the home-rule bill, in its broadest and simplest form, was to return to Ireland some kind of local autonomy. In 1801, the Act of Union had eliminated the Irish Parliament, which had gained its greatest measure of independence in 1783, and had once again placed Ireland under the administrative control of Britain. Irish Nationalists argued that local control was the right of the nation; they used the phrase, "Ireland a Nation," and they were intent upon achieving that goal. Irish Unionists demanded that they be allowed to remain under the direct administrative control of Britain, with no change in the arrangement of 1801.

During the debates from 1912 to 1914, the history of Ireland and of Anglo-Irish relations was reviewed by each side to support their point of view. These historical examples were not complete nor were they always accurate, but they did indicate what the speaker thought about the history of his country. The eighteenth century was one that received a lot of attention from Irish members of Parliament, particularly the twenty years just prior to the Act of Union.
One of the keynote topics discussed was the question of religion during the eighteenth century. Sir Edward Carson called the religious issue "the broad dividing line" of Irish history. The Reformation had failed to cross the Irish Sea, so the Irish people remained Roman Catholic, unable to be loyal to the Church of England, and unwilling to submit to its nominal head, the King. Thus the state church of Britain came to be viewed as a foreign institution. As Carson accurately observed, Protestantism implied British occupation in Ireland.¹

It was primarily members of the Nationalist party, however, who addressed themselves to this question and asked their northern countrymen to look again at the religious issue in the eighteenth century. They had two basic reasons for doing so. For one thing, they wanted to allay Protestant fears that home rule would mean Roman rule; for another, they were anxious to promote the theme of the unity of all Irishmen, regardless of religious preference. They therefore stressed their belief that the two religious groups were neither unalterably opposed to one another nor irreconcilable. They had, in fact, claimed Nationalists, worked together in the past for a common cause. Nationalists pointed out eighteenth-century Irish political and military leaders who were Protestants, but who still took up the banner

¹Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) hereafter cited as Debates (Commons) (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office), XXXVI (1912), 1440.
of Catholic causes. In this spirit, Nationalist party chairman John Redmond declared that "the most trusted and powerful and the most idealized leaders of the Irish people have been protestants." ²

That religious toleration, rather than oppression, had a long history among Irishmen was one of the arguments used by Nationalists. For instance, Redmond cited the statement of William Lecky, the Protestant historian, who wrote that intolerance was not an Irish characteristic. Redmond also observed that John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, had made note of the tolerant spirit of Catholics in the journal of his tour of Ireland in 1773. ³

Some Nationalist speakers carried the idea of religious tolerance on the part of Catholics even further than Redmond. John Gordon MacNeill, the member for South Donegal, claimed that there were three times in Irish history when Roman Catholics held the upper hand; these were in 1641, 1688, and 1798. Yet "on no occasion," he said, did Catholics persecute Protestants.⁴

The dates he mentioned represented three significant political revolutions in Ireland. The first two were connected with the civil war and with the Glorious Revolution in England. The year 1798 was the date of the Irish insurrection. Each revolution involved to some extent

² *Debates* (Commons), XXI (1911), 1105.
³ *Debates* (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1445.
⁴ *Debates* (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 2113.
religious issues, and in each case there was some degree of sectarian conflict. It would be difficult to justify, however, MacNeill's implication that a strong and united Catholic front had actually maintained firm political control in Ireland. His real point seemed to be that Roman Catholics had not conducted an organized persecution against Protestants when they could have done so.\(^5\)

Nationalist spokesman John Dillon denied that the history of relations between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland was a record of hatred. It was entirely wrong, he said, to believe that only animosity had existed between the two religions since the Battle of the Boyne.\(^6\)

The event chosen by Dillon as an example was a very significant one in the history of Irish religious confrontations. In 1691, a decisive battle was fought on the river Boyne between the Protestant forces of William III and the Catholic forces of James II. William III's victory at the Boyne soon led to the signing of the Treaty of Limerick and to the recognition of Protestant political supremacy. Penal laws, designed to subdue Roman Catholicism, were later passed; by 1704 laws were passed that practically prevented

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\(^5\) MacNeill's statement that there was no religious persecution practiced during these revolutions should be considered in light of other evidence; see J. C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923 (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), pp. 83, 144, 263-64.

\(^6\) Debates (Commons), LIX (1914), 2297.
Roman Catholics from inheriting property and that banned them from holding public office by the use of a sacramental test. In 1727, Catholics were officially excluded from the parliamentary franchise.\(^7\)

Yet in spite of penal laws and discrimination against Catholics, claimed Dillon, a spirit of freedom and friendship prevailed among both Protestants and Catholics in Ireland. This unity was evident, he argued, when Henry Grattan, Protestant leader of all Irish patriots, called for an independent Irish parliament in 1780.\(^8\)

The more relaxed relationship between the two Irish religious groups did not occur with quite as much dramatic suddenness as Dillon implied in his speech. To a large extent, the penal laws had gone unenforced as Protestant fears of a new Catholic uprising eased. The lesson Dillon wanted to present was that when Grattan delivered his declaration of independence, he spoke for a united Irish population, including Catholics who had almost no political privileges.\(^9\)

Furthermore, Dillon continued, when the Irish Volunteers, which was an exclusively Protestant organization, assembled at the Protestant church in Dungannon in 1782 to pledge

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\(^8\) The date of Grattan's speech printed in the *Debates*, 1708, is an obvious misprint: *Debates* (Commons), LIX (1914), 2297.

military support for Irish independence, they had the support of Roman Catholics notwithstanding the fact that Catholics were not even allowed to enter the door of the church. The Irish Volunteers also supported a resolution declaring liberty for Catholics.¹⁰

Eleven years later, the Irish Parliament did, in fact, pass an act that gave Catholics the parliamentary and municipal franchise on the same terms as Protestants; Catholics were not, however, allowed to sit in Parliament under this act. But John Dillon contended that this was the first step toward full political freedom for Catholics; this was prevented, he argued, by British interference in 1801.¹¹

Dillon offered more evidence to support his point that there was little religious animosity in eighteenth-century Ireland. In 1793, the Catholic Convention, an Irish Catholic body that had no real political power, decided to send a delegation with a petition for Catholics' rights directly to George III. Dillon remarked that the delegates were invited to pass through Belfast by the Protestants of that city, and that upon arriving, their coaches were cheered by Protestant crowds.¹²

His interpretation was not false, but it was somewhat overly dramatic. A bill was passed in the Dublin Parliament

¹⁰Debates (Commons), LIX (1914), 2297-98.
¹¹Debates (Commons), LIX (1914), 2298.
¹²Debates (Commons), LIX (1914), 2298; the date of the Catholic Convention's petition is inaccurately printed as 1795.
in 1792 that granted some privileges to Irish Catholics. For instance, it removed the disabilities attached to religiously mixed marriages, admitted Catholics to the practice of law, and lifted restrictions upon Catholic education. But a proposal to allow Roman Catholics the county franchise was defeated.\textsuperscript{13}

It was then that the Catholic Convention in Dublin decided to disregard the normal channel of representation through the office of the lord lieutenant, and to apply directly to the King. The effect of the petition, however, was diminished because British Prime Minister William Pitt had already drawn up a Catholic relief measure. Thus the bill that passed in the Irish Parliament in 1793 was of British rather than Irish origin.\textsuperscript{14}

Dillon's interpretation led him to the conclusion that the abrogation of the Irish Parliament in 1801 had destroyed religious cooperation in Ireland and had led to a renewal of discrimination against Catholics. Britain's subjugation of Ireland, he said, brought to an end the conditions that had existed for fifteen years when Protestants and Catholics "shook hands, were friends, and bore arms together in the common cause of Irish liberty." His opinion reflected a common Nationalist attitude that without

\textsuperscript{14} Beckett, \textit{The Making of Modern Ireland}, p. 250.
British interference, there could be religious peace in Ireland.  

The theme of religious unity in eighteenth-century Ireland was used by a number of Nationalist spokesmen. The Nationalist member for North Wexford, Sir Thomas Esmonde, argued that a majority of Ireland's patriotic leaders at this time came from Ulster and were, therefore, Protestants. He also contended that the people of Ulster had been as much a part of the insurrection of 1798 as the rest of the country, and that they had been just as vigorously opposed to the Union of 1801 as the people of the south.

Esmonde's basic contention was not erroneous. In 1782, the Irish Volunteers had met in Dungannon, which was located in the heart of Ulster. The Volunteer's platform had demanded that Ireland be given unconditional authority to manage its own affairs independent of British influence. Another patriotic group, the Society of United Irishmen, was founded in Belfast in 1791 by the Irish patriot, Wolf

\[15\] Debates (Commons), LIX (1914), 2298.

\[16\] The province of Ulster was composed of the nine northern Irish counties. During a long and complex history of planned Protestant settlements in that area in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they had become a stronghold of Protestants; this was particularly true of the four northeastern-most counties of Londonderry, Antrim, Down, and Armagh. The term Ulster was often used as a less emotionally-charged euphemism for Protestant, but they usually meant the same thing. That most of the Irish leadership came from Ulster at this time was more a consequence of the fact that only Protestants had enough political power to provide it.

\[17\] Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1491-92.
Tone. Although a Protestant himself, Tone sought to enlist both denominations in his alliance.18

Irish patriotic feeling, based upon nationalism and not seriously divided by religious differences, began to spread over the country during the 1790s. This gave the British authorities in Ireland and in England some concern that Irish nationalism might get out of hand, particularly when the patriots organized military detachments. When the arrest of most of the Irish leaders brought no satisfactory result, the government sent General Lake to Belfast with extraordinary powers to restore British authority.19

Tensions between British and Irish intensified in the north and in the south, and in May 1798, the Irish revolted. As Esmonde pointed out, most of the Irish resistance came from Protestants; ironically, there were some occasions in which Catholics made up a majority of the government troops.20 Nonetheless, Nationalist speakers viewed the insurrection as a symbol of Irish unity. West Belfast member Joseph Devlin referred to "the plains of Down and the glens of Antrim," where the final battles took place, as Irish patriotic monuments where Protestant and Catholic blood was shed for a common cause.21

21 Debates (Commons), LIX (1914), 2285.
Not all members of the Nationalist party, however, shared the opinion that Ulster led the fight for Irish freedom. Tim Healy, an independent Nationalist, insisted that instead of the north of Ireland supporting the south, the south had sustained Ulster's existence for much of the eighteenth century. He argued that it had been William III's design to destroy the Irish linen industry, a basic part of the north's economy. Throughout the century, he stated, the linen industry was subsidized by the Irish Parliament at the rate of twenty thousand pounds annually. The credit for prosperity in the north, in Healy's opinion, should have been given to Dublin.22

Healy's pride in the south of Ireland was sincere, but his historical example was misleading. In 1699, an act of Parliament had limited the export of woolen goods to English ports exclusively; it was the result of a great deal of commercial jealousy. Yet at the same time, Irish linen manufacture was encouraged, and it was strengthened in Ulster by William III's appointment of overseers of production to direct the operation of the industry.23

Healy also asserted that the so-called "Ulster custom" was sponsored in Dublin.24 Again, he was not strictly correct in his evidence. Briefly stated, the Ulster custom was an

22Debates (Commons), LX (1914), 1695.
24Debates (Commons), LX (1914), 1695.
arrangement that gave a land tenant certain liberties not available in other parts of the country. A tenant, for example, could sell his land when he moved to the highest bidder, so long as the landlord approved of the purchaser. In addition, it helped to reduce the likelihood of eviction without reasonable compensation. But it had no basis in law and was in reality no more than a vaguely-defined gentlemen's agreement that still left the landlord with the final decision. This custom did have some influence upon the success of the linen industry because it helped to keep capital in circulation.\textsuperscript{25}

Another topic that was frequently discussed during the debates was that of constitutional issues. The home rule bill proposed a reversal of the Act of Union, and Irish members often compared Ireland's constitutional status before 1801 with the situation after that time. To begin with, argued some Nationalists, British government in Ireland had never been good government.

Tim Healy criticized the system of grand juries as bodies of corruption that embezzled Irish money instead of providing municipal services, such as road repair, as they were supposed to do. Grand juries were administrative units, usually functioning at the county level, that were made up of the principal landlords of each county. During

the mid-eighteenth century, they used money allocated to them for road construction and repair projects; local citizens provided the labor, and were thus recipients of some of the funds. 26

From time to time, charges of mismanagement were directed against these grand juries. There is little to suggest, however, as Healy implied, that these bodies had any extensive control over local finances. His purpose for mentioning them seemed to be to emphasize his belief that any government that was not Irish-controlled was poor government.27

Another British administrative function that was attacked by Healy was the office of the lord lieutenant. The lord lieutenant had been the official royal representative in Ireland since the twelfth century. The member for East Cork maintained that before 1800, the lord lieutenant held all of the authority of a sovereign ruler over both civil and military matters.28

The office of the lord lieutenant was considered by some Nationalists to be a symbol of foreign domination, but he did not really have absolute authority; many times he functioned merely as an executive representative who did

26 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 243.
28 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 239.
not even reside in Ireland. Often immediate executive control was in the hands of a deputy, such as the chief secretary or one of the lord justices.\textsuperscript{29}

A more serious constitutional objection made to the Act of Union by Nationalist speakers was that Britain had usurped Ireland's Parliament with an unconstitutional document. To support this accusation, Sir Thomas Esmonde cited the Act of Renunciation of 1782, found in the \textit{Journal of the House of Commons}. According to the terms of this document, Ireland's right to be governed by an Irish parliament had been "established and ascertained for ever" and was declared to be "at no future time either questioned or questionable."\textsuperscript{30}

The Act of Renunciation had repealed an act passed in 1720, known as the "Sixth of George I," that had sanctioned the authority of the British Parliament over the Irish legislature. The legislation enacted in 1782 had been brought about largely because of Grattan's success in carrying his declaration of independence in the Irish Parliament.\textsuperscript{31}

If the Act of Renunciation had guaranteed Ireland's legislative independence, why had it been repealed twenty years later by the Act of Union? In answer to this question, Tim Healy used the evidence that had been presented in the House of Commons by Edmond Childers during the home rule

\textsuperscript{29}Beckett, \textit{The Making of Modern Ireland}, pp. 33-34.
\textsuperscript{30}Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1488-89.
debates of 1886. Childers had outlined four reasons why
Prime Minister Pitt had introduced the Act of Union. 32

The first important factor, said Healy, was the
Regency crisis of 1789, which had been brought about by
George III's fit of insanity. Pitt's parliamentary opposition,
led by Charles James Fox, favored giving the Prince of
Wales full royal authority; Pitt and his supporters objected
to that plan. The Irish legislature threw its support behind
Fox's party, and Pitt realized that separate parliaments
in Ireland and in England could cause serious instability
in the government if the sovereign were incapacitated.
Only George III's sudden recovery prevented a more serious
situation. 33

A second influential factor in Pitt's decision was
the economic condition of that time. Believing that the
Irish were unhappy with the Anglo-Irish trade regulations,
Pitt had designed a commercial treaty that would have either
eliminated all tariffs or that would have made tariffs
favorable to Ireland. The measure was accepted by the
Irish Parliament in 1785, but they attached one crucial
amendment. Ireland's annual contribution to Imperial expenses
was to be suspended whenever Ireland's total revenue fell
short of its national expenditure. When this amendment
was returned to London, a counter amendment was added. By

32 Healy documented Childer's speech, which is found
in Debates (Commons), CCCV (1886), 1745.
33 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 239-40.
the time the bill was taken up in Dublin again, the whole proposal was lost in a storm of protest. After this, the Prime Minister decided that the only route to free trade lay in legislative union.34

Pitt's decision for union was also based upon questions of peace and war, treaties with foreign countries, and control of military and naval forces. Conflicting Irish and British foreign policy, reasoned Pitt, could involve Britain in alliances, wars, or treaties over which she had no control.35

A fourth factor influencing Pitt's decision, claimed Healy, had to do with the religious issue. The Prime Minister had thought that union of the two countries would act as a positive force upon Catholic rights. Catholic Emancipation, allowing Roman Catholics to hold seats in Parliament, would become an Imperial question rather than a local one.36

This last point, the nexus of religion and politics, was again introduced into the debate. A conflict between the two, maintained John MacNeill, had caused Lord Lieutenant Fitzwilliam, who was admired by the Irish, to be removed.

34 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 240; Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, pp. 237-40.
35 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 240.
36 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 240.
from office in 1795. Fitzwilliam had been sent to Ireland in 1795 with general instructions regarding Catholic relief demands. Later that year, Grattan had introduced a bill providing for a wide measure of relief for Roman Catholics. The bill passed the first reading with no serious objections from Fitzwilliam, indicating to the Irish that the government approved of the legislation.

Soon afterward, however, Fitzwilliam was instructed not to support Grattan's bill. But it was too late for the lord lieutenant to withdraw his tacit endorsement. Caught between his instructions and his actions in Ireland, Fitzwilliam was recalled by Pitt.

When drawing up his union scheme, Pitt had tried to include in it Catholic Emancipation. He was unable to overcome strong Protestant opposition and was obliged to settle for a vague assurance that Emancipation would be brought about as soon after union as possible. Catholics had to wait for twenty-nine years before they were allowed to sit at Westminster.

As a result, Pitt's promise was looked upon by some Irishmen a century later as a false hope used to trick

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37 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 2115-16.
Catholics into accepting the union. British policy during the eighteenth century seemed to be based upon corruption and bribery. The explanation for the Act of Union presented by Tim Healy demonstrated to some extent the changing nature of Anglo-Irish relations during the last quarter of the eighteenth century.41

Whatever the explanation for it, Irish Nationalists repeatedly expressed condemnation for the Act of Union. In John MacNeill's opinion, the Irish government sitting at the time of its passage should have resigned when the proposal was defeated in the Irish House of Commons. Instead, he said, all of those who voted against it were dismissed and bribes amounting to over one million pounds were offered to proprietors of rotten boroughs for votes in favor of union.42

The government's method of strengthening its position in the Dublin legislature in order to achieve the union was not quite as unethical as MacNeill's argument implied. After the violence of 1798, Pitt was convinced that a legislative union was the only solution to the Irish question. He had made this known to the members of the Irish executive.


42 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 2116.
and had discharged those who opposed it before the Government made its proposal in 1799.43

Moreover, the bill of 1799 recommended only that some formula of Irish and British union be considered. When it failed, there was no real constitutional reason for either opponents or supporters to resign.44 To this may be added the fact that a bill for union had passed in both houses of Parliament in London, and Pitt made it plain that the plan was going to be pursued. Thus Dublin was faced with a united opposition in London, and cross-channel politics were strong enough to carry the Government's scheme.45

Nevertheless, it was true that the Government found it necessary to offer peerages, places, and money as gifts to those who supported their plan in order to secure additional votes.46 MacNeill asserted that there were one hundred and twenty-eight nominee members who were instructed to vote for the union.47 Sixty-three of them refused and

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44 Collective responsibility, the principle that Cabinet members must publicly support all Cabinet decisions, was not an established tradition in Ireland.


47 Nominee members were men appointed by the borough-owner of a parliamentary seat to actually participate in the legislative body. They were expected, of course, to vote as instructed or resign.
immediately resigned; their places were then filled with others who were more cooperative. The "new parliament," he charged, was made up of English officials who had no land holdings in Ireland and who were paid sums of up to £30,000 for their favorable votes. According to MacNeill's figures, only seven Irish members who voted for the union were not paid to do so.48

Although he indicted British policy in general regarding the Act of Union, MacNeill pardoned some English officials for their part in it. The lord lieutenant, Cornwallis, disliked working with corrupt people, the speaker remarked. But he knew that his tenure in office was short and Cornwallis felt obliged to carry out his duty. That the lord lieutenant was unhappy with the situation was revealed in a letter, which MacNeill claimed to have in his possession, in which Cornwallis referred to himself in the words of Jonathan Swift.

His budget with corruption crammed
The contributions of the damned,
Which with unsparing hand he strows
Through Courts and Senates as he goes.49

In MacNeill's opinion, the Act of Union could not be justified legally or ethically. The Irish Parliament, he said, was about to reform itself. This reform was prevented when Britain dissolved the Irish Parliament, and

48 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 2116-17.
49 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 2117.
and in doing that, reform in both countries was "retarded for thirty years."\textsuperscript{50}

Other Nationalist speakers condemned the Act of Union with equal vigor. Sir Thomas Esmonde commented that it was "obtained by force, fraud, and by inconceivable bribery." John Fitzgibbon, member for the poor western county of Mayo, remarked that no Englishman could be proud of the method by which the union was obtained. Paraphrasing an unidentified source, Stephen Gwynn said that the Act of Union would have been thrown out of a court of law because it was "tainted with fraud and with violence."\textsuperscript{51}

John MacNeill was also of the opinion that Britain had justified its domination of Ireland by provoking the Irish into a civil war. England's suppression of Grattan's Catholic relief measure of 1795, he explained, had dashed Irish hopes of fair treatment and had threatened Roman Catholics with repression. This unrest produced civil strife which the British allowed to spread. Chief secretary Lord Castlereagh, charged MacNeill, knew of insurgent plots for more than a year before he took any action; when he militarily suppressed the rebels, which had resulted in the loss of seventy thousand lives, his actions seemed to be justified.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Debates} (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 2115.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Debates} (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1489; XXI (1911), 1169; XXII (1911), 87.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Debates} (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 2116.
That Lord Castlereagh had watched the radical developments through an organized spy system for a long time, and then had employed firm military power in response was true enough. But it would be difficult to prove historically MacNeill's charges that the British had deliberately instigated a revolution. Yet it is also true that there was little flexibility in the Government's policy of legislative union, and it was over this issue that Grattan had walked out of the Irish House of Commons in protest in 1797.\(^{53}\)

In general, Unionist party members had made no significant rebuttal to the Nationalists' attacks on the Act of Union. Unionists did, however, speak out more freely upon the positive results of it. Sir Edward Carson acknowledged that although Protestant Ulster had not wanted to yield to the union, after it was accomplished they were satisfied and desired no change. The connection with Britain, they claimed, had resulted in distinct advantages for Ireland.\(^{54}\)

One of these advantages, commented the representative for South Londonderry, John Gordon, was an economic one. Comparing the financial state of Ireland before and after 1801, he calculated that in 1791, the Dublin legislature owed a debt of about two and one half million pounds. By 1800, the debt had risen to over £26,000,000 and Lord Clare,\(^{55}\)

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\(^{54}\) Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1441.
the Irish lord chancellor, had pronounced Ireland on the verge of bankruptcy. Thus Ireland's economy, in Gordon's opinion, had been rescued by the Act of Union.55

Irish Unionists had little more to say regarding eighteenth-century Irish history. The reason for their silence regarding past history is not clear. In part, it was probably because they had not come to Westminster to discuss the nation of the past, but to defend the current arrangement regarding the present situation. That Roman Catholics had suffered from political oppression in the past they did not deny; that the Act of Union came about without the consent of the Irish people as a whole they did not refute. But that the century since 1801 had affected them deeply, they had no doubt; that was the point they wanted to make.

Members of the Nationalist party were intent upon reversing the Act of Union. To them it represented a turning point; it divided what they considered their free period from what they considered a time of subserviency. More than that, they discussed the eighteenth century because it represented bad times and good times for Ireland. During that century, they had been subjected to coercion, and they had enjoyed a large measure of parliamentary independence. When Nationalist speakers reviewed the history of Ireland, it was not always done with accuracy, but it was done to make a point. The point was that Ireland was at its best under its own government.

55Debates (Commons), XXI (1911), 1138.
CHAPTER III

NINETEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND AS VIEWED BY

IRISH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

The history of the nineteenth century served to intensify the feeling among Irish Nationalists that Ireland was governed by Britain as a conquered territory and held by force. Several Nationalist members portrayed the years of British rule over Ireland since 1801 as "one long record of disaster, death, misery, and eviction to the Irish people"; they characterized it as "one chapter of tyranny" for the country. The total effect, according to these men, was that members who represented the Nationalist point of view had become "an alien element" in the British House of Commons.¹

On the other hand, the past one hundred years had produced a strong bond of satisfaction between Irish Unionists and the British Government. The institution of the Act of Union had come to mean the beginning of a vital and irreversible connection between the two islands. Unionists responded to the Nationalists' claims of political suppression by insisting that all of the progress and

¹Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) hereafter cited as Debates (Commons) (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office), XXII (1911), 86, 597; XXXVII (1912), 143.
prosperity during the nineteenth century was a "direct consequence of Union."²

The event singled out by Nationalists as the one that best demonstrated British exploitation of Ireland during the nineteenth century was the so-called Great Famine. From about 1845 until around 1850, it precipitated an agricultural, economic, and political crisis that became symbolic of hardship in Ireland. To be sure, there had been times of economic strife before 1845; in both 1817 and 1822 conditions reached the point of a national emergency. But the famine of 1845 was the worst and lasted the longest.³

Nationalist speakers paid little attention to the specific causes of the famine, and they did not blame it directly on government policy. Unionist M. P. Charles Craig stated, without Nationalist rebuttal, that the union could not be held responsible for the disaster. It was due, he said, to "natural causes," and he added that "every country in Europe" had suffered some loss of population because of crop failures. If Ireland's misfortune was somewhat greater, he surmised, it was because there were no great industrial areas to absorb the displaced rural population.⁴

²Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 2121.
³J. C. Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 1603-1923 (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), p. 336; that Ireland starved due to a "potatoe famine" is only a partial explanation. Lack of diversity in the Irish economy and protectionist practices of the British government are some of the important aspects involved in this situation.
⁴Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 1758.
What Nationalist party members could not forgive was the way in which Ireland was treated by Britain in the course of the famine. One of the principal charges they made against the government was over the matter of taxation. Irishmen were forced to pay excessive taxes, they complained, while a million people lived under the threat of starvation. Tim Healy declared that England felt no shame in taking "millions and millions of money" from peasants caught in the throes of destitution. According to the calculations of John Dillon, and also of John Redmond, Ireland had contributed £8,000,000 to the British treasury from 1845 to 1849 in taxation from which Ireland received no benefit.\(^5\)

In addition to unjust taxation, the Nationalists alleged that the famine brought about a serious loss of population through massive emigration. While they did not attribute emigration directly to the British administration, they argued that Ireland had suffered unfairly. Joseph Devlin asserted that the youth of the country had been drained away by depopulation. He pointed out that while the populations of England, Wales, and Scotland nearly doubled during the decade of the 1840s, the population of Ireland was cut in half. Probably appealing to the Unionists, Devlin added that most of the emigration was from Ulster counties.\(^6\)

\(^5\) *Debates* (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1447; XXXVII (1912), 106, 242.

\(^6\) *Debates* (Common), XXXVIII (1912), 106.
In a more dramatic manner, John Dillon painted the bleak picture that emigration had turned Ireland into "a regular reservoir of old people." Sir Walter Nugent, in a moment of extremism, proclaimed that the policy of union had been to depopulate the country in order to turn it into "one big, vast grazing ranch." But in a more reasonable statement, Nugent expressed probably the most significant result of population loss; this was that it greatly reduced the tax base.  

Whether referring to taxation or population, the Nationalists' fundamental point was that Ireland had not been accorded just treatment by Britain during a period of extraordinary suffering. Some blame was cast directly at the Government of the time for perpetuating "the worst land system in Europe," and charged that it had caused centuries of poverty and distress. Land, indeed, was the key factor; and from about the middle of the nineteenth century, the land issue and land policy began to assume as much political importance as had the religious issue of a century before.

During the mid-nineteenth century, most of the land in Ireland was not owned by Irish residents, least of all not by those who lived upon it and were dependent upon it.

\[7\text{Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 106; XXXVIII (1912), 138-39.}\]

\[8\text{Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 106.}\]
There was a chance to remedy, or at least to ameliorate this defect after the worst of the famine conditions had subsided, claimed Tim Healy's brother, Maurice Healy. Around 1852, he said, three-fourths of the owners of Irish land had gone into bankruptcy because of the financial breakdown brought on by the famine. The land was then marketed through the Landed Estates Courts, often at low prices.9

This special land court to which Healy referred had been established by the Encumbered Estates Act of 1849 and, by 1857, had administered the sale of more than 3,000 estates. But due to the depressed economy, practically the only ones who had been in a position to take advantage of real estate sales were the land speculators. Consequently, as Healy pointed out, the Irish inhabitants of the land were more often than not unable to participate in land purchases. Thus not only were most agricultural tenants left landless, but in some cases were worse for it because the buyer was likely to have more interest in profits for himself rather than having the interest of the tenant in mind.10

That land policy was critical in the history of Ireland and that it had had decisive effects upon subsequent

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9 Debates (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 161-62.
Irish thinking was recognized by members of both Irish parties. The Unionist representative Charles Craig observed that had land purchase worked to the advantage of those who were dependent upon it for a livelihood, the source of much Irish disunity would have been removed. Political intrigues, however, had fouled many potential solutions.\footnote{11}

Maurice Healy, speaking for the Nationalist party, asserted that for the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century Parliament passed laws to make eviction of tenants easy; they then spent the final quarter of the century attempting to correct the injustice. Other Nationalists argued that due "solely" to the "bad land system and the bad government" to which Ireland had been subjected, an annual expenditure of nearly £1,000,000 had to be used to maintain peace and order. Another £180,000 was required to operate the Congested Districts Board each year.\footnote{12}

The land issue became an inseparable part of the Nationalist political platform around 1880. An organization called the Land League had been founded in 1879 by Michael Devitt; within a year Parnell had incorporated the policies of the Land League into his "New Departure" campaign, and

\footnote{11} Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912) 1483.

\footnote{12} Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 106; XXXVIII (1912), 161; the Congested Districts Board was an agency set up to deal with the extremely poverty-ridden areas of western Ireland.
the questions of Irish ownership of Irish land and of home rule became fused. This was a "revolutionary Movement," said John Dillon, that was denounced by Conservatives until the estates of Irish landlords became unsaleable. Only then did Conservatives endorse land purchase as a "Tory alternative" to further land legislation, claimed Dillon.\footnote{Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, pp. 385-86; \textit{Debates (Commons)}, XXXVII (1912), 96-7; Gladstone's Land Act of 1881 included three basic programs: fixity of tenure, free sale of a tenant's interest by the tenant, and fair rents. In short, it gave the tenant some right of property.}

Sir Thomas Esmonde agreed with Dillon that the "Unionist element" had condemned the Land Act of 1881 at first, but had later learned to use it to their own advantage. Esmonde's statement brought an immediate denial from Unionist M. P. William Moore. "Not a single Member from Ulster voted against the Land Act of 1881," said Moore. Esmonde replied that he was curious to know whether Unionists could convince the House that Ulster supported the Land Act, but he did not take issue with Moore's contention.\footnote{Debates (Commons), XXVI (1912), 1493; as a matter of record, representatives from the north of Ireland (although not organized at this time into a political party) did vote for Gladstone's bill.}

The last quarter of the nineteenth century was doubtlessly a period of significant change in Irish history, and members of both parties concentrated a lot of attention upon it. Several Nationalist speakers noted the difference in Anglo-Irish relations after 1875. John Redmond commented that since his first election to Parliament in 1881, he...
had observed "the most extraordinary transformation of the whole public life of this country" as well as a "miraculous change" in the Irish national cause.\(^{15}\)

Unionist speakers made similar statements. John Lonsdale declared that all Ireland had made progress during the past twenty years. Sir Edward Carson acknowledged that although Ireland had suffered before, a change had taken place and there had been a "succession of great things" since 1890, such as reforms in education and in land purchase.\(^{16}\)

But there was an essential difference in the two Irish points of view about the late nineteenth century. Had the improvement of Ireland's prospects come about because of the Act of Union and thus served to justify that union, as the Unionists claimed? Or did the improvement result from the Nationalists' demand for reform and thus confirm the need for abolition of the union?

In the minds of Nationalists there was no doubt that what Ireland had achieved during the previous thirty years had been gained through the national crusade to make an independent Ireland a reality. Prosperity in the early part of the twentieth century was the result of the rekindled Irish spirit since the 1880s. As one Nationalist member stated, "It was the revolt against Union that made Ireland prosperous. . . every measure we got, land,

\(^{15}\) *Debates* (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 96, 1744; XXXVIII (1912), 161-62, 238; LX (1914), 1664.

\(^{16}\) *Debates* (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 1431, 2121.
education, local government, they were the products of the home rule demand." According to this way of thinking, only when the Irish had resorted to effective agitation for Irish rights had they achieved progress.\footnote{Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 142; XXXVIII (1912), 162.}

The leaders of this movement, defended the Nationalists, were not irresponsible agitators. Many of them were elected members of the British Parliament by the Irish people. Some of those responsible for leading the cause, party speakers remarked, had been denounced as traitors by Britain and some were declared rebels. In order to secure freedom for Ireland, many people had been deprived of constitutionally-guaranteed liberties, such as freedom of speech, had been subjected to unlawful coercion, and were placed under a "system of government which was forcibly put upon Ireland against the will of the Irish people."\footnote{Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 143; XXXVIII (1912), 139.}

Some Irish Members of Parliament, the home rule supporters reported, had endured "months, some of them years of suffering." Tim Healy denied that there would have been a land act had not the Member for Cork, William O'Brien, "sacrificed himself" to secure the rights of Ireland. Sir Walter Nugent succinctly stated the attitude of many Nationalists. The lesson of the union and the lesson of history to Irishmen, he said, was that industry and honesty
were unrewarding; only violence and agitation could redress grievances. 19

To the Unionists, however, history had taught a very different lesson. Closely identifying Ireland's late nineteenth-century economic progress with that of Britain, they insisted that the liaison between the two countries had resulted in increased sources of income and in the expansion of industrial wealth. By this measure, they explained, it was evident that the union had been a positive accomplishment and had fostered consistent commercial advancement. 20

Sir Edward Carson informed his listeners that during the previous two decades, the university question had been settled, primary education had been vastly improved, and land purchase was quickly achieving success. Cities such as Belfast, he added, had taken advantage of these opportunities and had grown from a town of 16,000 to a metropolitan city of around 400,000 people. 21

It was particularly with economic progress that the Unionists were impressed. Their spokesmen quoted from lists of statistical data to demonstrate the union's economic

19 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 245; XXXVIII (1912), 139; O'Brien was convicted nine times for political offences and had spent more than two years in prison. At least seven other Nationalists serving in the 30th Parliament had been imprisoned, as well as many former M. P.'s not sitting at this time.

20 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 1757, 2121.

21 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 1441.
benefits. Imports and exports alone, commented John Gordon, amounted to £125,000,000 by 1910. Half of this was accounted for by the Ulster cities of Belfast and Londonderry. Investments in Irish Join Stock Banks had climbed since 1893 from £34,000,000 to £56,000,000. Deposits in Post Office Savings Banks had risen from £4,000,000 to £12,000,000; by 1909 over £11,000,000 had been deposited in Irish Savings Banks. Unionists reminded the members present that more than one-third of these savings were held in the Ulster counties of Antrim, Down, and Londonderry.\(^2\)

The Unionists' firm support of the legislative union with Britain was firmly grounded in economic association. Their argument was largely based upon the premise that Ireland's financial position had been improved by its connection to England, and that this condition was dependent upon the maintenance of that connection. Any change in this arrangement, such as home rule, would bring fiscal ruin upon the nation, Unionists believed. If the financial schemes embodied in either of the two prior home-rule bills had been adopted, they thought, Ireland would have gone into bankruptcy.\(^3\)

Opposing the Unionists' economic interpretations, Irish Nationalists focused their attention upon the amount

\(^2\)Debates (Commons), XXI (1911), 1139; XXXVII (1912), 238, 1757-58.

\(^3\)Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1430; XXXVII (1912), 284.
of money that had gone out of the Irish economy. As they had done earlier, Nationalists reviewed British taxation practices which they blamed for Ireland's misfortune. John Fitzgibbon of South Mayo expressed this attitude in a dramatic fashion when he said, "the predominant partner has fatted and grown rich and Ireland has grown poor."  

Home rule supporters also buttressed their arguments with statistical evidence. Since 1801, claimed John Dillon, Ireland had contributed £315,000,000 toward the general expenses of the empire. John Redmond made a higher estimate; he maintained that £325,000,000 had been given by Ireland for national defence in Britain. Joseph Devlin cited the findings of Gladstone's Royal Commission of 1893 to support his calculation that Ireland was paying £3,000,000 per year in excess of the amount provided for by the Act of Union; the total overpayment, Devlin remarked, amounted to £400,000,000.  

This kind of debate demonstrated clearly one of the basic schisms that had developed between the two Irish groups. While Unionists regarded the connection with

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24 Debates (Commons), XXI (1911), 1169.

25 Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1447; XXXVII (1912), 106; XXXVIII (1912), 108; Devlin's figures do not total accurately. Even if overpayment at the rate he suggested had gone on for 110 years, the total would have been only £330,000,000; he may have added the £70,000,000 for a more dramatic effect.
Britain as the source of progress and as an essential element in the future of Ireland, Nationalists looked upon it as the fundamental cause of Irish distress and claimed that they had been cheated of fair treatment. The Nationalists demanded therefore that their status be modified by home rule in a way that would balance past grievances and that would give equality to Ireland. This line of thinking on the part of the Nationalist party led to another major question about home rule. Were they asking for constitutional reform or for national independence? Was their demand for equality only a ploy to obscure their real desire for complete separation from the United Kingdom?

Even though this was the third occasion upon which a home-rule bill had been put before the House of Commons, the Nationalist party's ultimate objective had not been made very clear. That they wanted self-government was unquestionable, but what the limit to that autonomy would be was rather vague. Parnell had been somewhat of a man of mystery and his motives concerning Ireland's national status were unclear to many. Upon assuming chairmanship of the party, Redmond strove to explain the former leader's attitude.

Redmond argued that Parnell had not been a "separatist in disguise," that he had not promulgated complete national sovereignty for Ireland. What he had demanded, said Redmond, was legislative independence; that is, Nationalists advocated the establishment of a body elected by Irish citizens to
administer strictly Irish affairs. Parnell had made this known, Redmond continued, before the Parnell Commission of 1889. Parnell had accepted the idea of a subordinate parliament for Ireland and had declared that the recognition of Irish nationality under these conditions would cause Anglo-Irish relations to be "bound by ties sacred because voluntarily assumed." 

The opposition argued that the contrary was true. Parnell had been a determined separatist, Unionists countered, who had sought to break every connection with England. Unionist speakers often quoted passages from a speech delivered by Parnell in 1885 upon which they based their interpretation of the Nationalists' intentions. Parnell had insisted that Ireland be granted "the full right to manage our own affairs" as well as the right "to make our land a nation . . . [free] from outside control, and the right to shape our own destiny amongst the nations of the world." 

Redmond responded to these statements in part by citing the opinions of other nineteenth-century Irish leaders. Home rule actually had its origin, claimed Redmond, in an earlier Irish patriot, Daniel O'Connell. In 1844, O'Connell had written that an imperial federal system had more advantages to offer than did repeal of the Act of Union.

26 Mistakenly dated 1899 in the Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1444.
27 Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1444-45.
28 Debates (Commons), XXI (1911), 88; XXXVII (1912), 109.
Support for this plan, however, and the machinery needed to put it into a workable form had been disrupted by several calamitous events, said Redmond, such as O'Connell's clash with the more militant "Young Ireland" group, the urgency of the famine, and finally O'Connell's death in 1847.²⁹

A federal scheme also had been the basis for the platform of Isaac Butt's Home Government Association. Butt had been attempting to gain for Ireland, Redmond quoted him as saying, "the right of legislating for and regulating all matters relating to the internal affairs of Ireland, while leaving to the Imperial Parliament the power of dealing with all questions affecting the Imperial Crown and Government." This same basic concept had been retained by Parnell, Redmond added, and it was still the basis of the Nationalist Party's platform.³⁰

In this analysis, Redmond wished to make it clear that the continuation of ties with Britain in a federal system of government, as opposed to complete separation, had been the consistent policy of the Irish Nationalist movement. Other Nationalist spokesmen carried on the same line of reasoning and contended that the home-rule concept had been distinctly formulated even before Parnell had organized the party. Support for the idea, they argued, had gained

²⁹Debates (Commons), LX (1914), 1658.
³⁰Debates (Commons), LX (1914), 1658-59.
strength through the nineteenth century and had remained firm even under great duress and strain.  

As evidence, Nationalists pointed to the current demand for home rule in spite of the policy of the British Conservative leader Lord Salisbury in 1886 to "give Ireland but thirty years of resolute government, and home rule will not be heard of again." When Conservatives were in power during the land agitation crisis of 1886-87, Irish M. P.'s had been imprisoned and public meetings were suppressed. After coercion had not worked, Nationalists argued, the chief secretary for Ireland, Gerald Balfour, had attempted to smother Irish claims with conciliatory measures. And to make matters worse, they continued, the Nationalist party had suffered a tragic internal split. But still the Irish had insisted that their internal affairs be governed by their own representatives in their own legislature.

Unionist speakers traced an exactly opposite trend in the home rule movement. They maintained that home rule had proved undesirable. The Unionists' argument differed from the Nationalists' case, however, in that they based their claims upon the opinion of the British electorate rather than upon Irish public opinion. They contended that the electorate had twice in the nineteenth century rejected

31 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 142; XXXVIII (1912), 601.
32 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 94; XXXVIII (1912), 114.
home rule. Sir Edward Carson considered this a valid judgement since, regardless of various schemes and proposals, these were the "only occasions" that the issue had been put into "concrete form." Members were reminded by Unionist spokesmen that the voters had defeated Gladstone's Government in the election of 1886 on the home-rule issue, and had upheld the rejection of the second bill by the House of Lords in 1893. At the next election, the Unionist party was returned to power "with the greatest majority they ever had." Charles Craig believed that whatever popular support there had been for home rule had been gained by default. He doubted that home rule would have become a serious question had not Parnell linked it to the land reform question; thus Parnell had benefited from the endorsement of those who actually were seeking redress of a different circumstance.3

As important as the land issue and the federal issue were in this discussion, the question of religion still divided Irishmen's opinions of the nineteenth century as forcefully as it had divided opinions of the eighteenth century. In Ireland, the practice of religion involved more than a weekly ceremony; it involved a conviction by which one regulated one's daily affairs. Protestant or Roman Catholic, one measured his judgements against the tenets of his religious persuasion, and almost no aspect of daily life was excused from this proposition.

33 Debates (Commons), XXI (1911), 1131, 1136; XXXVI (1912), 1428; XLVI (1912), 2145-46.
The field of education, for example, was highly susceptible to religious overtones. Because of the influence teachers could have over young minds, Catholics had insisted that courses of study which were particularly subject to religious judgements, such as philosophy, history, or the biological sciences, had to be taught by Catholic instructors. The burden of this problem came to bear upon the British government quite heavily because they were responsible for providing public education. The dilemma at Westminster was how to furnish equitable education while avoiding state-supported denominational schools. A partial solution at the elementary level had been put into effect in 1831 with the establishment of national grammar schools on a non-sectarian basis. Even with this, some Nationalists criticized the government for trying to "divert the population" from Catholicism.34

The university question, which involved the same basic problems, had dragged on for the last half of the nineteenth century and was still fresh in the minds of Irish representatives. It was not until 1908 that the Universities Act established two new public universities, the National University in the south and Queen's University in the north. Although neither was denominational by statute, they functioned as such in practice. The Nationalists claimed that it had taken 103 years to have this one question satisfied; the

34 Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, pp. 312-13; Debates (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 162.
Unionists charged that Parliament had been "tricked" into passing the act. 35

Another topic that was influenced by the religious question was the administration of municipal government. Expanded Catholic political power at the local level created concern among Protestants. Unionists pointed out, for instance, that in Dublin from about 1852 to around 1880, the Dublin Corporation had operated on the agreement that the Lord Mayor would be a Protestant one year, and a Catholic the next. During that time, they contended, the Corporation had been two-thirds Protestant. But after the Nationalist Catholic majority was seated, complained Unionists, no Unionist had been chosen Lord Mayor, and only two since 1880 had been Protestant, both of whom were home rulers. 36

A similar Unionist indictment was levied against the Nationalist majority on the Board of Guardians at Newry, in county Armagh. Prior to 1898, Unionist spokesmen claimed, the Unionist majority had appointed nine Protestants and five Catholics to various offices. After 1898, however, nineteen of twenty-one appointments had gone to Catholics. Unionists admitted that Protestants had held a majority of the appointive positions when the Unionists were in power; but they argued that they had treated the Catholics fairly.

35 Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, p. 421; Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1481; XXXVIII (1912), 162.
36 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 114.
Unionists feared that when the situation was reversed, Nationalist Catholics would abuse their power and upset the established balance of patronage.  

At the end of the nineteenth century, therefore, the balance of power between Nationalists and Unionists had begun to shift noticeably. Of the various reasons for this change, several acts of Parliament affecting the franchise and cohesion within the Nationalist movement were among the most significant. For Nationalists, this change promised a new hope for their cause. After more than one hundred years of British administration, Nationalists felt that they had not benefited. They had gathered from the experience only inequitable taxation, unjust treatment, and oppressive coercion. Only with difficulty, Nationalists claimed, had they gotten fair treatment, a small measure of local government, and the beginning of the return of Irish land to Irishmen; only with home rule would they progress to the satisfaction of their demand for Irish control of the Irish government.  

The changes of the last two decades of the nineteenth century aroused in Unionists forebodings of the collapse of the balance of power in Ireland and threatened a storm of revenge from the Nationalists. Unionists voiced their anxiety that the Nationalists' call for reform might

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37 *Debates* (Commons), XXI (1911), 1134.
be transformed into a shout for revolution. In their opinion, home rule could invite disaster for the economy and social upheaval for the population.
CHAPTER IV
THE HOME-RULE BILL OF 1912 DURING
THE COMMITTEE STAGE

When the British Liberal party won Parliamentary
majorities in both of the 1910 elections, it was no secret
that Prime Minister Herbert Asquith had had to depend upon
the support of the British Labour and Irish Nationalist
parties. Also known was the fact that he had received support
from the Irish specifically upon the condition that a home
rule bill be introduced and sustained by the Liberals.
That arrangement had placed the Irish Unionist party at a
disadvantage from the very introduction of the home rule
bill. They were but a minority of the members representing
Irish constituencies, as there were only seventeen Unionists,
compared to eighty-one Nationalist members. Even their
association with the British Conservative party and the
sympathetic alliance of Liberals who did not support home
rule could not overcome the Nationalist-supported Liberal
majority. With the enactment of the Parliament Act of 1911,
the Conservative-dominated House of Lords lost its absolute
veto power and now could do no more than delay unfavorable
legislation.

In addition to being in the Parliamentary minority,
Irish Unionists were faced with a bill that threatened to
exclude them from participation in the British Parliament. While denouncing home rule as unfair, unprecedented, and unconstitutional, while assuring their opposition that it could never function, Unionists had to reckon with its potential adoption. They were compelled to take an active role, even though it was a negative role, in discussing the details of the home rule bill.

Thus the Irish Unionists' struggle was defensive, a kind of rear guard action designed to impede as much as possible a bill they seemed unable to stop. The situation was quite different for the members of the Nationalist party. They seemed to be able to watch the proceedings with patience and confidence, sometimes assuming an almost insouciant posture, as the Liberal Government's spokesmen maneuvered the bill through Parliament. This atmosphere of self-defense on the part of the opponents of home rule and of aggressive confidence on the part of its supporters manifested itself throughout these lengthy debates. This was strikingly apparent when the home rule bill was put before a Committee of the Whole House. Here the individual parts of the bill, divided into clauses, were examined separately as they were formed into the final act.

There were forty-eight clauses, each sub-divided into paragraphs, in the original measure presented to the Committee. The procedure followed was to present each clause to the Committee separately. Then each suggested
amendment to that clause was debated; that was followed by a vote upon the amended clause.

During these Committee hearings, which lasted from June until December 1912, at least half of the Committee's time was spent considering the first two clauses. This much time was devoted to debate upon these clauses for two main reasons. They were the most vital articles in the home-rule bill. The first clause provided for the establishment of an Irish Parliament and the second defined the legislative powers of the new government. These clauses, therefore, encompassed the fundamental concept behind home rule, i.e., the legal establishment of an Irish legislature with lawmaking powers.

A second reason why debate upon most of the bill was telescoped into a short period of time was the result of a procedural change. On October 14, 1912, after the debate over the second clause had been closed, a "closure" or "guillotine" ruling was adopted. This regulation set out a specific schedule for debate upon the remainder of the bill. Under the terms of this ruling, only twenty-five

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1Parliament adjourned for vacation from early July until mid-October, thus leaving only three and one-half months of actual debate time.

2Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) hereafter cited as Debates (Commons), XXXIX (1912), 744; XL (1912), 1189-90.
days of debate were allotted for completion of the Committee stage. The schedule also required that the house adjourn by 10:30 P. M., and this allowed just over six hours for each day's business. Furthermore, the Speaker of the House was empowered to determine which amendments would be considered for discussion.3

When the debate on clause one began, the opening maneuver of the Unionists was to attempt to delay home rule from going into effect until the Irish legislature actually met in public session. Unionists thought that they could delay the opening of the Irish legislature indefinitely through the skillful use of political tactics. Failing to collect enough support to carry that amendment, Unionists tried another tack to remove them from the effects of home rule. An amendment was introduced that proposed to exclude the most solidly Unionist counties from the legal effects of home rule; the counties affected were Antrim, Armagh, Down, and Londonderry.4

Speaking as the leader of the Unionist party, Sir Edward Carson made it plain that he supported only the basic principle of exclusion because it seemed to be the only way to remove Ulster from the threat of home rule. He did not accept it as a compromise solution, Carson pointed out, 3

3Debates (Commons), XLII (1912), 812-16.

4Debates (Commons), XXXIX (1912), 771; these counties are located in the northeastern-most corner of Ireland. Belfast is located in Antrim; even today in the Republic of Ireland, Londonderry is called by its original name of Derry.
because he opposed home rule for any portion of Ireland. Other Unionist speakers substantially agreed that exclusion of certain Ulster counties offered a viable alternative. Stating that Ulster sought no special treatment, J. H. Campbell said Ulster requested only that they be allowed to remain under the supervision of the Imperial Parliament. William Moore emphasized that there were marked differences between the north and the south of Ireland, and marked similarities between Ulster and England. Charles Craig was more militant in his attitude, declaring that he would vote for the amendment because it accomplished by "legal and Parliamentary methods exactly the same thing which we propose to do if the Bill is passed into law by arbitrary, and what you may be pleased to call unconstitutional methods."  

Opposing the exclusion proposal, Nationalist party chairman John Redmond denied that there was any homogeneous character to the four counties that would justify a separate status. Using election statistics to prove his point, Redmond tried to show that the number of votes cast for home-rule candidates in constituencies where Unionists were a majority equaled more than the total Catholic population for that county. He concluded, therefore, that not all Protestants were opposed to home rule.  

5 Debates (Commons), XXXIX (1912), 1065-79, 1090-91, 1114-16, 1543.  

6 Debates (Commons), XXXIX (1912), 1082-86.
Joseph Devlin rejected the amendment, he claimed, because it was an insult and an affront to the majority of the population to think that Catholic Irishmen were unable to practice democratic self-government. William O'Brien argued that while he was a strong advocate of deference to the Protestant minority of Ireland, exclusion of Ulster was one step that he could never take.⁷

Although giving Ulster a chance to opt out of home rule had been unofficially discussed before, this was the first time that the proposal had been placed formally before the House of Commons. The amendment was introduced by the British M. P. from Cornwall, T. C. R. Agar-Robertes, and was perhaps no more than a tactical testing device. At any rate, it was defeated by sixty-nine votes in a nearly full division lobby of 571 members.⁸

Unable either to delay home rule or to disassociate themselves from it, Irish Unionists attempted to dilute the strength of the bill by restraining Ireland's autonomy under home rule. One way to do so at this stage was to change a word or phrase in a paragraph in such a manner as to alter the nature of the clause. For example, an amendment was proposed to refer to Ireland's new governing body as the Irish "Legislature" rather than as the Irish "Parliament." This was necessary, commented Unionist John Gordon,

⁷Debates (Commons), XXXIX (1912), 1154-57, 1513-17.
⁸Debates (Commons), XXXIX (1912), 1570-1574.
so that there would be no confusion between the subordinate assembly in Dublin and the Imperial Parliament at Westminster. The potential confusion was probably ideological rather than geographic, but according to William Mitchell-Thomson, the word "Parliament" conveyed a false sense of independence and a dangerous impression of authority.9

A similar amendment suggested that the lower house be referred to as the "legislative assembly" instead of the "House of Commons." Again, the use of the latter term, in the opinion of Charles Craig, should be reserved exclusively to the British Parliament. And an amendment of the same kind, requesting that the term "His Majesty the King" be excluded from references to the Dublin government, was supported by Carson. The use of such a phrase, he explained, would create the effect of a sovereign parliament. A phrase explicitly stating that the Irish parliament was to be "subordinate" was included in a further amendment. As proof that these clarifications were necessary, Charles Craig quoted a few phrases from speeches made by Redmond and Devlin outside of Parliament (especially in the United States) to show that they had intentions to promote Irish independence.10

In their summary arguments against the unamended clause, Unionist speakers asked that it be rejected. They re-stated

9Debates (Commons), XXXIX (1912), 1588-89, 1592-94.
10Debates (Commons), XXXIX (1912), 1609-10, 1753-55; XL (1912), 837-40.
their belief that because it was not positively stated that the Irish parliament was to be subordinate, the clause would be used as the justification for a sovereign government. Four Irish Unionists rose to speak against the clause. John Redmond was the only Nationalist speaker to oppose the amendments, which he did on only two occasions. The first clause was accepted without amendment, 316 to 224.\footnote{Debates (Commons), XL (1012), 4809, 62-4, 1030-43, 1183-90.}

The second clause of the home-rule bill set forth the legislative powers of the Irish parliament. As before, the first amendments to be introduced were designed to delay the operation of the clause. William Mitchell-Thomson, for instance, asked to have the exact composition of the membership of the Irish legislature legally defined before empowering it to make laws. Like other delaying tactics, this one too failed.\footnote{Debates (Commons), XL (1912), 1192-93.}

Movements were made then to curtail the autonomy of the new government. Still insisting that the inferiority of the Irish parliament had to be legally insured, Unionists supported an amendment stipulating that the government could act only with approval of the King; in effect, this would have meant approval of the British Parliament. They also wanted to insert a phrase stating that the Irish had "power 'only' to make laws exclusively for Ireland," which
would have subjected nearly all Irish legislation to Imperial review. None of these amendments were accepted.13

Included within the second clause were two issues in which some Nationalists, namely the independent faction, took a more active interest. One of them dealt with the regulation of Irish trade. Under the terms of the original paragraph, trade was not to be regulated by Dublin if the trade extended beyond Ireland; it was proposed to lift that trade restriction. Avidly agreeing with the amendment, Lawrence Ginnell of West Meath characterized Irish trade limitations as "the greatest curtailment of self-government" that he knew and he protested that "alien control can never be a substitute for native control."14

Why should Ireland be denied some control over the marketing of its own products, asked John Boland, junior whip of the Nationalist party? The already unfavorable trade situation would only become worse, he claimed. Tim Healy commented that he was surprised that none of the Ulster members had expressed an opinion on a matter which seemed to be particularly germane to their interests. Healy was answered immediately by Charles Craig who said that the Unionists of Ulster saw no reason to make any change in the present system. Craig contended that the condition

13 Debates (Commons), XL (1912), 1242, 1254; XLII (1912), 1089-92.
14 Debates (Commons), XLII (1912), 1151-52.
of commerce in the north of Ireland would be most unfavorably affected by the loss of British regulatory power. Captain James Craig argued that this amendment would place in a position to regulate trade not qualified commercial businessmen, but farmers who opposed northern commercial interests.\(^\text{15}\)

This amendment to extend Irish trade authority was not successful because the political dynamics of the debates made it unworkable. The idea was supported by only one faction of the Nationalist party. Unionist speaker William Moore suggested that the main body of the Nationalist party opposed it because it was not a part of the political machinations that Redmond and the Liberals had engineered.\(^\text{16}\)

The other aspect of home rule covered in the second clause in which independent Nationalists were particularly interested was the land purchase issue.\(^\text{17}\) As the bill was written, land purchase was a power reserved to British control. William O'Brien, an activist in land legislation since the 1880s, introduced an amendment to turn over the administration of land purchase to Ireland three years after home rule went into effect. He wanted to bring Irish land administration under Irish control as soon as possible.

\(^{15}\) *Debates* (Commons), XLII (1912), 1148-49, 1154, 1156-58, 1162-63.

\(^{16}\) *Debates* (Commons), XLII (1912), 1159-60.

\(^{17}\) The land purchase paragraph dealt with administration of the agency through which tenants could borrow money to buy the land upon which they lived, in effect, with the eradication of landlordism. See above, pp. 4-7 of Chapter III.
in order to stop the flow of Irish money into British coffers.\textsuperscript{18}

As O'Brien explained it, there were three classes of tenants in Ireland. One group was made up of about 175,000 tenants who would never be able to purchase land within their lifetimes simply because there was not enough time for the administrators to consider every case. In the meantime, these tenants were paying around £1,500,000 in rent annually. Another group of 120,000 people had begun land purchase proceedings, but since the British government had not yet allocated the money to insure payment to the owners, they were still paying rent at a rate of about £500,000 per year. In the third category, O'Brien continued, were agricultural laborers who were so poverty stricken that land purchase for them was out of the question. Nevertheless, about 25,000 of these tenants awaited cottages and an acreage allotment that had been promised to them.\textsuperscript{19}

Irish Unionists, of course, adamantly opposed any plan to extend Irish administrative control. How could an unknown, untried government expect to be trusted with the sensitive duty of land redistribution, asked Carson? Without the help of the British treasury, he felt, Ireland would never be able to resolve effectively this question.

\textsuperscript{18} Debates (Commons), XLII (1912), 1265.

\textsuperscript{19} Debates (Commons), XLII (1912), 1265-66; Beckett, \textit{The Making of Modern Ireland}, p. 407 contradicts some of O'Brien's data.
It should be borne in mind that land purchase had become one of those issues, like patriotism or aid to war widows, that politicians were hesitant to oppose. Charles Craig was quick to make it clear that Unionists did not at all object to land purchase; they only feared that it would be disrupted by poor administration.\textsuperscript{20}

The official Nationalist party position, presented by Redmond, was that land purchase should be a reserved power, but that the Irish government should be allowed a modicum of control over land-related matters. For instance, local administration could deal with such problems as adjustment of interest rates, acquisition and distribution of land, and restoration of evicted tenants.\textsuperscript{21}

The discussion over land purchase demonstrated fairly well the three different attitudes of the Irish representatives. Irish Unionists had confidence exclusively in the British government. The independent wing of the Nationalist party wanted to establish Irish control over all Irish affairs as soon as possible, even if their ability to administer them were uncertain. More or less in the middle was the main body of the Nationalist party who wanted to set up a federal cooperative administration with Britain. As with the amendment concerning Irish trade, this one also was

\textsuperscript{20}Debates (Commons), XLII (1912), 1278-80, 1291.
\textsuperscript{21}Debates (Commons), XLII (1912), 1283-87.
withdrawn for lack of support. Redmond was able to relieve some of the awkwardness of opposing members of his own party by criticizing Unionist spokesmen for attempting to use land purchase as a lever against home rule.  

Irish Unionists were not at all satisfied with the home rule bill's provisions for dealing with Irish land. They voted for amendments designed to keep such matters as rent-fixing and control of the Congested Districts Board out of Irish hands. Godfrey Fetherstonhaugh, Member for North Fermanagh, warned that in a parliament dominated by tenants, landowners would be forced to charge rents in accordance only with the wishes of tenants. William Mitchell-Thomson said that since more than half of the land in Ireland was administered by the Congested Districts Board (about 7.5 million acres of a total land area of around 13 million acres), land purchase in reality would be under Irish auspices if the Irish were allowed to maintain control of the Board. Both of these amendments lost.

One other amendment to the second clause which dealt with a topic unique to Ireland, and therefore attracted Irish debate, was the use of English as the "official" language of Ireland. Granted that Scotland and Wales

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22 *Debates (Commons), XLII (1912), 1284, 1296-1300.*

23 *Debates (Commons), XLII (1912), 1338-40, 1351.*
also had a Gaelic tradition and some non-English speaking population, it was Ireland that had the most widespread Gaelic-speaking population. Irish Unionists feared that the new government, intent upon emphasizing the national traditions, might make Gaelic a shibboleth for entry into the civil service, appointive positions, or into a university.24

In fact, charged John Gordon and William Moore, knowledge of Gaelic was already a prerequisite at the National University. Two Irish Nationalists, Thomas O'Donnell and John Boland, quickly responded to these comments. O'Donnell explained that the wording of the paragraph did not establish Gaelic as an official national language; it simply would be available as an alternative tongue to the 50,000 or so Irish people who spoke Gaelic normally in their daily affairs. Answering criticism about the language requirement at the university, Boland, one of the sponsors of that requirement when the National University was chartered, reminded Unionists that the announcement of the requirement had been made years prior to the opening of the school. Furthermore, he said, other Irish institutions did not have such a requirement, so it could not be charged that anyone was denied an education because of the Gaelic language prerequisite.25

24Debates (Commons), XLII (1912), 1995-96.
A topic that was discussed not only in connection with the second clause, but that had the whole of the third clause devoted to it was that of religious safeguards. Of all of the issues, this was one about which Unionists were highly defensive; they felt that they had to protect both their spiritual beliefs and their material property. Introducing an amendment to reserve Trinity College, Dublin, and Queen's University, Belfast, to Imperial control, J. H. Campbell protested that there were no safeguards in the home-rule bill for nonconformist churches, schools, or charitable institutions. Campbell was apprehensive that institutions of a public nature which operated under an Act of Parliament or a Royal Charter, such as the University of Dublin, might be "put in a position where it would afford the temptation to the Members of this new Parliament to experiment upon it." He was concerned that the Dublin government might use "public monies for denominational professorships" at the university, and the denomination that he supposed would benefit was the Roman Catholic Church.\footnote{\textit{Debates} (Commons), XLII (1912), 1764-67.}

Campbell offered two pieces of evidence to support his contention. One was a statement made twenty-five years before by the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. William J. Walsh, who stated that Trinity College (part of
the University of Dublin) was an affront to Catholics. Archbishop Walsh was still the most influential cleric in Ireland, said Campbell, and he had not since rescinded his sentiments. The other piece of evidence Campbell pointed out was the continuing growth of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. In his opinion, this order had "captured the whole political machinery of the Irish party" and it was the real power behind John Redmond's leadership.\textsuperscript{27}

In rebuttal to Campbell's charges of malicious intent toward Protestant institutions on the part of the Catholic hierarchy, Redmond explained that the appeal by the Archbishop was for equality for Catholics, not for destruction of Protestant schools, at a time when there was no educational equality for the Catholic community. Redmond was rather indignant that anyone would think it necessary to enforce strict safeguards in this case, because Trinity College was such an integral part of Ireland's national heritage. Nevertheless, in his peroration, Redmond announced that if Unionists were still in doubt about the safety of Trinity, then he would not object to the amendment.\textsuperscript{28}

Another opposition amendment to the third clause, involving prohibition of interference with religious equality by fiat, provided for protection of money endowments.\textsuperscript{27, 28}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[27]\textit{Debates} (Commons), XLII (1912), 1768-70.
\item[28]\textit{Debates} (Commons), XLII (1912), 1770-73.
\end{footnotes}
Recalling the disestablishment of the Irish Church in the last century when a great deal of the church's money had been diverted to "other purposes," John Gordon found it "logical" that the Dublin parliament might do the same with Protestant funds. At present, he cautioned, the Presbyterian Church had about £800,000 in the care of trustees which was liable to diversions.29

Marking an area for "public improvement," then confis- cating all of the property therein, was another ruse that might be exploited by rapacious Nationalists, remarked some Unionists. Campbell cited areas around St. Patrick and Christ Church Cathedrals in Dublin, for example, that contained slum pockets. Under the guise of "improvement," both properties could be appropriated, he warned.30

A further suggested change to the third clause was that protection be provided against the loss of "life, liberty, or property" for reasons of religion. The wording of this amendment alone indicated how strongly Irish Protestants felt about religious safeguards. Speaking as one who felt personally threatened, William Moore said that due to his years of residence among Nationalists, he could be sure that Nationalists would be vindictive toward the minority and were determined to deprive Protestants of their rights. Both Moore and John Gordon used as evidence

29 *Debates* (Commons), XLII (1912), 2066-67.
30 *Debates* (Commons), XLII (1912), 2080.
examples of past outrages carried out against Protestant property owners. These examples had both religious and economic overtones, and they illustrated cogently the interwoven relationship between Protestantism and landownership.\(^{31}\)

It is significant that amendments dealing with religious issues had a better chance of being accepted. The requests for reserve status of the universities and for protection of endowments were voluntarily withdrawn so that the Government could incorporate them into the bill. An amendment to prevent public money from being used to support religious education in public schools was accepted without a vote.\(^{32}\)

After this point, as each succeeding clause was put before the Committee, debate upon them became more and more sparse. The most vital clauses had been passed, and by this point debate had been abbreviated by the rigorous schedule set out by the procedural ruling of October 14. Subsequent clauses regulated the machinery by which the home rule government was to work. As before, Irish Unionists tried to rewrite the bill in such a manner as to maintain a strong administrative link with the British Parliament. They favored, for example, an amendment to replace the office of the Lord Lieutenant with a Secretary of State for Ireland. Since

\(^{31}\)Debates (Commons), XLII (1912), 2250-53, 2261-63.

\(^{32}\)Debates (Commons), XLII (1912), 1793, 2082, 2282.
the Secretary's position would have been that of a government minister, the administrative ties between Ireland and Britain would have been closer together.33

Keeping the Royal Irish Constabulary under British control was another Unionist objective. They were afraid that this internal police force might be used as an instrument of oppression by the Irish government. Moreover, the essence of their case for this demand seemed to be implied by Sir Edward Carson's statement that "the only force that the Imperial Government have for carrying out the powers which you yourselves are reserving" was being taken away.34

Restricting amendments such as these were defeated nearly every time. An attempt to alter the composition of the Irish senate, however, was successful after some political maneuvering. In its original form, the Irish senate was to be nominated by the Imperial Parliament for a certain number of years. William O'Brien suggested that the number of years that the senate was nominated might be extended, but his amendment was unacceptable to both sides. He then recommended that the Irish upper house be made up of Irish municipal officials, thus creating indirect elections. That too was unworkable and was withdrawn. It was nonetheless apparent that the Government would be

33 Debates (Commons), XLII (1912), 2487-89, 2499-2500.
34 Debates (Commons), XLIII (1912), 117-19.
agreeable to some kind of revision of this clause. After an amendment to increase the number of senators was defeated, the clause was changed so that each of the four Irish provinces would elect senators by proportional representation.35

An amendment to the next clause allowing for proportional representation to the Irish lower house, however, lost in the division lobby. The sponsors of home rule evidently did not want any modification of their original plan. An important incident took place during this vote; for the first time in the home-rule debates, the independent Nationalists voted with the opposition and against the main body of the Nationalist party.36

Throughout the committee stage of the bill, home-rule opponents had been largely ineffective in altering the composition of the bill; but early in November they seized the initiative for a while. A special financial resolution had been introduced by the Government to clarify some of the financial provisions of the bill that were soon to be debated. One of the items covered in the resolution was the Transferred Sum; this was the amount of annual payment to be made from the British treasury to the Irish treasury that was to be used for certain municipal services.

Taking advantage of a propitious moment on November 11, when their opponents were poorly represented on the

35Debates (Commons), XLIII (1912), 485, 516, 618, 701.
36Debates (Commons), XLIII (1912), 994-96.
floor, home-rule opponents suddenly forced a snap vote on an amendment to limit strictly the total annual amount that could be paid out to Ireland to £2,500,000. This limitation probably would have severely restricted Ireland’s potential for developing financial independence. The amendment won by only nineteen votes, and the Government immediately gathered its forces and had the house adjourned.37

Two days later, Prime Minister Asquith attempted to have the amendment rescinded. Conservatives and Unionists countered with a movement for adjournment but were out voted. They turned next to obstruction and caused enough disruption before the question could be put that the Speaker was forced to adjourn due to disorder. In this way, the opposition was able to stop debate on the home rule bill for a week. When the debate was again taken up on November 19, the resolution had been re-drafted, was called “Money Resolution Number Two,” and made a specific statement on the amount of money that Ireland could draw. The amount was not as limited an amount as the Unionists’ first amendment had proposed, but it was to be determined within the framework of the act. The next day the Government was able to pass this resolution by a safe 317 to 195 margin.38

37 Debates (Commons), XLIII (1912), 1765, 1774-78.
38 Debates (Commons), XLIII (1912), 2026-32, 2053-54; XLIV (1912), 121, 443-48.
This resolution far from solved the financial entanglements of the bill, for fiscal matters were a weak link in the home rule legislation. Complex, intricate, often ill-defined and poorly understood, they were open to criticism from both Irish parties. For Irish Unionists, the economic risks of home rule, especially through taxation, presented one of the gravest threats to their security. Nationalists, on the other hand, were determined to win the right to regulate their own fiscal policy without constricting limitations.

Clause fifteen, which established the Irish parliament's powers of taxation, was a hotly debated issue. Opposing an amendment that would have prohibited the Irish legislature from altering Imperial taxes, John Redmond assured skeptics that any variation would be quite small. Yet it was necessary, he argued, because Irish-regulated taxes were one way to reduce indirect taxation and thus relieve some of the tax burden upon the poor.39

Irish Unionists did not see it that way at all. In the opinion of Captain James Craig, the purpose of the amendment was to prevent an imbalance in the fiscal policy of the United Kingdom. He was even more concerned that the option to vary taxes would be used as a weapon by the Irish government to gouge northern monied interests. For a

39 Debates (Commons), XLIV (1912), 879.
similar reason, Unionists supported an amendment to prevent the Irish from levying new taxes. Captain Craig warned that the Irish chancellor of the exchequer might impose arbitrary taxation upon northern industrialists "at random, for spite." Sir Edward Carson and William Mitchell-Thomson both agreed that any kind of unusual taxation, whether or not it were beneficial, could be created by the Dublin parliament.40

These amendments were not passed, and the last twenty-five clauses of the bill engendered less and less debate. Of all the clauses presented to the Committee after number twenty, eighteen were passed without one word of discussion. The Government, however, did make amendments to several of these clauses to facilitate adjustments in terminology.

Most of the remaining clauses dealt with the judicial system and with the civil service. Worried that Irish courts would not be impartial, Carson moved an amendment to provide for Crown-appointed judges instead of judges appointed by the Irish establishment. His reason for requesting this which was supported by other Unionist spokesmen, was that British-appointed judges would be more acceptable to the minority than judges appointed in Dublin; even if they were Catholics, he offered, their

40Debates (Commons), XLIV (1912), 950-52, 1071-72, 1077-78, 1080-81.
adjudication would be more valid than Irish-appointed Protestants.41

Carson's amendment was defeated, as were two others in the same vein. One of them would have allowed any Irish citizen to bring an appeal of any Irish act before the Privy Council of the Imperial Parliament; this would have meant Imperial review of Irish legislation. The other amendment also sought to broaden the base of appeals of Irish laws by allowing appeal to the British executive.42

The debate on clause thirty-three, which provided for the employment, payment, and retirement of civil service employees, was much like the discussion over land purchase; Members of Parliament did not want to offend the loyalty of the civil service, so they tried to appear amiable. Many of the amendments concerned teachers and most of them were easily accepted. Of the amendments to this clause that were refused, only two went into division.43

The last clause to receive serious attention from Irish members was the forty-second. In this case, it was a Government amendment that aroused the opposition to speak against it. Although apparently controlling enough votes to enact home rule, the Government decided that immediately

41 Debates (Commons), XLIV (1912), 2135-41, 2149-53, 2159-64, 2172-78.
42 Debates (Commons), XLIV (1912), 2234-38, 2372-78.
43 Debates (Commons), XLV (1912), 79-200.
forcing it upon the Unionists would probably lead to an explosive situation. The bill's supporters asked that the first meeting of the Irish parliament be delayed for eight months after it received the royal assent, plus an additional seven months at the discretion of the Government. Speaking for the Unionists, J. H. Campbell questioned the status of certain parts of the bill during the long interval between its enactment and its enforcement. What about the clauses that were required to go into effect immediately upon passage of the act, he asked. For instance, the judiciary authority and the ascertainment of the Transferred Sum were to be effective immediately. In short, Campbell charged, power was being granted before there was a parliament to administer it. The amendment, nonetheless, was upheld.\footnote{Debates (Commons), XLV (1912), 396-99, 490-505, 534.}

A few new clauses were introduced at the end of the discussion of the original bill, but not many were accepted. One of these that was passed was an amendment to exempt Freemasons from unlawful oaths, \textit{i.e.}, from oaths to non-Protestant institutions such as the Roman Catholic Church. Another successful one was the previously-mentioned protection of Trinity College and Queen's University.\footnote{Debates (Commons), XLV (1912), 797; XLVI (1912), 153.}

The opponents of home rule seemed to have two principal objectives in their attempt to thwart the
legislation. They consistently supported amendments to have all Irish legislation subjected to Imperial review. Unionists also wished to insure that the legal subordination of the Irish legislature to the British Parliament was stated in clear and unmistakable terms. Both of these requests were denied. The Nationalists, on the other hand, were determined to pass the home-rule bill in essentially the same form in which it was presented. Restricting limitations were avoided, and in most cases, it seemed that Irish Nationalists succeeded in achieving what they wanted.

Unionist spokesmen participated in the discussion of virtually every clause. Sir Edward Carson did most of the speaking, but he was supported actively by several other members of his party. The Nationalists did not take nearly as active a role in the debate before the Committee. While John Redmond usually made most of the speeches, after the third clause was passed, there were only six or eight occasions when Nationalist speakers made any contribution.

With a few exceptions, the home-rule bill that was presented to the Committee of the Whole House emerged in the same form for the third reading. Twenty-five of the bill's clauses, more than half, were passed without debate, albeit some of them were modified in some minor way. Of the numerous amendments offered by the opposition, only a dozen or so were incorporated into the bill. Therefore, the third reading debate in January 1913, involved substantially
the same piece of legislation that had been discussed in the second reading.
CHAPTER V

THE FLOOR DEBATE ON THE HOME-RULE BILL OF 1912

The fundamental purpose of the Government of Ireland Bill of 1912 was to institute home rule in Ireland. Yet during the debate, it became fairly clear that the implications of home rule extended far beyond the organization of merely administrative necessities. The nature of Ireland's future was to be determined by this bill, for it was embodied within the concept of home rule. One of the essential questions inherent in the overall debate was, what did home rule really mean in terms of the nation and its institutions?

The Nationalists' support for home rule, always vigorous and complete, did not always seem to be based upon very clearly explained reasoning. John Redmond made perhaps the most lucid explanation of the ultimate objective of home rule during the final few hours' debate on the third reading. Redmond declared:

What we want is our nationality recognized. We want the power to govern ourselves in our national affairs... we want to do that inside the Empire; we want to have our Imperial patriotism as well as our local patriotism.

Great Britain, 5 Parliamentary Debates (Commons) hereafter cited as Debates (Commons) XLVI (1913), 2334.
This was one of the Nationalists' basic claims about home rule; they claimed the right to dual nationality. Nationalists argued that they could exhibit loyalty to both homeland and kingdom, and embrace the values of both nation and empire. Redmond therefore contended that the Nationalist party would accept "a subordinate Parliament created by Statute of this Imperial legislature," if England would admit Ireland on terms of equality into the "sisterhood of nations that make up the British Empire." ²

That Irish home rule advocates could maintain such a position and could be true to both entities was an attitude taken by several members of the Nationalist party. Ireland did not want to disrupt the empire, explained Sir Thomas Esmonde, but rather wanted to establish a position of "international equality" that would allow the nation to "contribute to the strength and greatness of the Empire." Sir Walter Nugent thought that if Irishmen were treated as "citizens of the Empire," there would be a real union of willing partners because home rule was "an Imperial problem requiring an Imperial solution."³

The proper solution, suggested William Redmond, was for Great Britain to recognize the "separate and distinct

²Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1444-45, 1453.
³Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1490; XXXVIII (1912), 140-41.
national spirit of Ireland." But it was not to be thought, cautioned John Redmond, that the home-rule bill had to "give" nationality to Ireland. That was a quality inherent in the Irish people; the purpose of this bill, he said, was simply to return to Ireland some of its national rights that had been lost in 1801. This important distinction was emphasized further by Jeremiah MacVeagh. In his opinion, Irish nationality was not dependent upon British legislation for its existence; it was a spiritual principle, abstract and pure, because "the impulse of nationality comes from higher than earthly powers and is indestructible."4

Thus, while the bill did initiate legislative machinery for home rule, there was some question within the Nationalist party as to how satisfactorily it provided for Irish national identity. Not all Nationalists were so sure that the bill achieved this goal. For example, William O'Brien declared frankly that acceptance of the bill required "a certain degree of renunciation by Irish Nationalists of the old school of those dreams ... for which many generations of the best men of our race were proud to risk their liberty and their lives." But for the sake of peace, O'Brien conceded that it was a "sensible compromise" toward an acceptable solution.5

4Debates (Commons), XLVI (1913), 2334; XXXVIII (1912), 479.
5Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1467-68.
In a more skeptical mood, Tim Healy denied that the bill allowed Ireland any real autonomy at all and certainly did not revoke the Act of Union. It merely established the Irish government as "a local clearing house and a local counting house." Joseph Devlin took a more militant attitude toward home rule. "I want a change for Ireland first and for the Empire afterwards," he declared, because Irishmen were "fighting for Fatherland as well as for liberty."  

Nevertheless, members of the Nationalist party agreed to accept the home-rule bill for what it offered despite what some felt were shortcomings. It was, they insisted, a vital, strong, and growing cause that was demanded by nearly all Irishmen. To support these claims, home-rule advocates stressed two significant points. First, they emphasized Irish national unity. Both of the elections of 1910, remarked John Dillon, were in effect a plebeicite for home rule, because the return of a majority of Nationalist members to Westminster proved that the majority of the population supported the bill. Those who opposed it, he said, were really the same group of people who had consistently opposed reforms since 1881. Jeremiah MacVeagh contended that Ulster was not nearly as solidly opposed to home rule as the Unionists tried to make it appear. The Nationalist party had the support of almost half of the electorate in

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6Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 238-40; XXXVIII (1912), 106-07.
the Ulster counties of Derry and Armagh, said MacVeagh, and a quarter of the vote in Antrim and Down. 7

The second point that Nationalists wanted to assert was that the home-rule bill was the ultimate demand that Ireland would make upon the empire and that home rule would not be used as a springboard for national separation. John Redmond quickly noted that only a small group of radical Irishmen demanded total national independence and added that this bill would satisfy them as well. It was, he explained on the first reading, the final solution. 8

By the end of the second reading, however, Redmond had rather significantly qualified his promise of finality. The bill did not pretend to be "absolutely final," he now said; it was the "first and necessary preliminary step in a great system of federation." In addition, he continued, the economic scheme of the bill was programmed for change. When Ireland's economic status improved, there would have to be some modification of the original provisions. Redmond also deftly inserted the fact that he could speak only for his generation; he would not impose finality upon the future. 9

Members of the Irish Unionist party did not agree with the Nationalist interpretation of home rule in the

7 Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1487, 1491-94; XXXVII (1912), 94-96, 1743-45; XXXVIII (1912), 465.
8 Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1443-45.
9 Debates (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 597-600.
least. They vigorously took issue with the Nationalists over the question of support for home rule in the north, and they did not believe that the bill was in any way the final Nationalist demand. Arguing that home rule was not the central issue of the recent elections, Unionists maintained that the topic had been purposely hidden from the electorate by Irish Nationalist and British Liberal politicians. According to the Unionist point of view, the truth was that the demand for home rule had been diminishing steadily for quite some time.\textsuperscript{10}

In order to prove that point, however, Charles Craig used a curiously inconsistent argument. He first criticized the opposition for masking the home-rule issue from public view during the election campaigns. But Craig remarked that although he had been elected to Parliament in 1903 by 849 votes, by 1910, when it was known that home rule was to be a part of the Liberals' platform, the vote for him increased to 2,970. He added that every Unionist candidate had won his seat by a larger margin than before home rule became an issue.\textsuperscript{11}

From the beginning of the debate, Irish Unionists denied that the home-rule bill would be accepted as the last demand of Nationalist Ireland. Sir Edward Carson, in

\textsuperscript{10} Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1428; LXVI (1913), 2148, 2173.

\textsuperscript{11} Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1475; XXXVII (1912), 1752-53, 1755-56.
his opening speech of the first reading, contradicted the Nationalists' claims that home rule was to be a stepping stone toward "Home Rule All 'Round," i.e., that all parts of the United Kingdom were to have home rule. That impression, Carson said, was simply a disguise to conceal their real demand for national sovereignty. If the United Kingdom were seriously preparing for federation of the empire, asked Carson, why were there no plans for Scottish and English home rule?  

What the bill actually represented, commented Captain James Craig, was "a claim for the disintegration of the Empire and the Kingdom at its heart." This threat to the strength and unity of the British Empire was one of the Unionists' most basic objections to home rule, and other Unionist members echoed that sentiment. William Moore, for example, repeated almost verbatim what Craig had said; home rule was in his mind "a real danger to the Empire, striking at its very heart." William Mitchell-Thomson argued that "this narrower Little British federation . . . would be a hinderance and not a help to Imperial Federation."  

As evidence that the Nationalists intended to demand complete independence from the British Empire after they secured home rule, Charles Craig quoted from speeches made

12Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1433-35.
13Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1475-76; XXXVII (1912), 108; XXXVIII (1912), 118-20.
by leading Nationalist members. In Buffalo, New York, he reported, John Redmond had declared that home rule would allow Ireland "to push on to the great goal of national independence." John Dillon, Craig continued, had publicly stated that his party strove to promote a "free and independent Ireland." Joseph Devlin actively encouraged his listeners to "destroy the last link that binds us with England," claimed Craig.\textsuperscript{14}

Referring to recent home-rule demonstrations in Ireland, England, and in the United States, J. H. Campbell asserted that even while the bill was under debate in Parliament, militant Irish Nationalists were denying that the bill was final and were advocating complete separation. His implication that current members of the Nationalist party were advocates of separatism soon led to a bitter argument with John Dillon over whether or not Dillon was a member of a separatist organization. Campbell charged that Dillon's speeches were proof of his membership, but Dillon responded that he had already defended himself on this point in the House of Commons on a prior occasion.\textsuperscript{15}

Is it to be understood, asked Campbell, that you never were "a sworn member of the Fenian Brotherhood" and that you "had never been in favour of separation?" Dillon

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Debates} (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 1760-61, 1764-65.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Debates} (Commons), XLVI (1913), 2212-13.
answered him sharply that it had been a question of fact whether or not he had been associated with a separatist group; "while I should not be in the least ashamed, if it had been true," retorted Dillon, "as a matter of fact, I never did belong to it." Their argument was not really resolved. In keeping with Parliamentary tradition, Campbell acknowledged Dillon's explanation, but he still held that Dillon advocated separatism. For his part, John Dillon took the time to deny officially (and to have it placed in the record) that he was an active member of a separatist organization.  

Whether or not a particular Nationalist member was dealing with separatist circles, Unionists were certain that home rule would lead to separation. Once given legislative domain, they predicted, the Imperial Parliament would lose all authority over the Irish parliament. Despite the fact that the bill contained specific clauses guaranteeing supremacy of Westminster, Unionists had no doubt that Dublin would never again consent to outside control. They maintained that the only way to insure supremacy of the British Parliament was through force of arms, and that was an action that they were sure London would never take.  

Unionists looked to the examples from other former dependencies, like Canada, Australia, and South Africa.

16 *Debates* (Commons), XLVI (1913), 2213-15, 2222-24.  
17 Significantly, Unionists had been unable to have included in the bill a specific statement guaranteeing the subordinate status of the Irish parliament; see pp. 7-8 in Chapter IV.
In South Africa, for instance, apartheid demonstrated their point that once a dependency gained legislative freedom, Britain had no grounds for interference. There the legal exclusion of Black Africans had been enforced against the wishes of many British Members of Parliament, yet there was nothing that the British government could do about it. Unionists implied that if a similar injustice were carried out against Protestants in Ireland, the British government would likewise be unable to render assistance.\(^{18}\)

According to Unionist members, neither a declaration of Imperial supremacy nor any other supposed safeguard provided by the bill, such as the Lord Lieutenant's veto or citizen appeal to the Privy Council, would be of any genuine value. Sooner or later they would all be avoided or ignored. Safeguards were characterized tersely as paper shields that were "absolutely and entirely useless." These so-called guarantees, commented Mitchell-Thomson, were "too large for safety, but too small for finality."\(^{19}\)

One of the worst overall aspects of separation for the Unionists was loss of the protection of the British government. As Carson phrased it, "we will no longer have in Ireland the protection of an executive which is responsible to this

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\(^{18}\) *Debates* (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 115-16, 281-82, 1763-64; XXXVIII (1912), 117-18, 126.

\(^{19}\) *Debates* (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 128.
Government in Ireland had suffered from instability for centuries, and during the previous century relations were quite tense between those who had favored the legislative connection with Britain and those who had opposed it. Thus some Irish Unionists spoke as if they were living just within the pale of justice and just out of reach of a vicious and hostile population, and there was quite a bit of concern with the matter of law and order. That the crimes and outrages of the past would be regenerated under home rule was one of the most prevalent reasons given by Irish Unionists for their opposition. With emphasis upon the law and order aspect of the Unionist platform, Ulster was depicted by them as a peaceful and law-abiding area surrounded by the unstable and violent south.

To illustrate their point, the Unionists offered statistics. According to Captain James Criag's figures, in all but the four most Unionist-populated counties, forty-four policemen were needed for every 10,000 people. In those four Unionist counties, as well as in England and Scotland, only one-third of that number of policemen were required for each 10,000 people. As evidence that this unlawful situation would persist, Unionists represented certain Nationalist associations, such as the United Irish League, as organizations of intimidation, terror, and brutality. Anyone who was disapproved of

20 *Debates* (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1427.
by one of these Nationalist groups might be subjected to property destruction or personal injury, they warned, and there would be little hope of compensation from the Nationalist-controlled government. 21

Even if it could not be proven that the official Nationalist party condoned this condition, Unionists believed that they could reasonably anticipate that militant revolutionaries would take advantage of the Nationalists' passive attitude. J. H. Campbell cited a long list of instances in which justice had been ignored in the Nationalist part of Ireland. The chief inspector of police in Clare, he claimed, had reported that crime was so rampant there, neither witnesses nor a jury could be found to conduct legal proceedings against outlaws. In Queen's county (now Leix county), Campbell added, a judge had had to call off the trial of several men accused of cattle theft because some violent speeches had made a fair trial impossible; some of these speeches were reportedly made by Members of Parliament, he said. 22

Although these were rather serious charges that the Unionists made, Nationalist members made little response. John Redmond would say only that the home-rule bill was designed to end animosity, suspicions, and ill-will, and to

21 Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1482; XLVI (1913), 2354-55.

22 Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1452; XXXVII (1912), 105, 148, 1748; XXXVIII (1912), 468-69, 595-96.
inaugurate an era of mutual cooperation and good feeling. Other Nationalist spokesmen doubted that the Unionists were going to become victims of tyranny or were in jeopardy of losing their civil rights. They promised that injustices committed in the past would not be used as an excuse for revenge nor as an example of future conduct. We are willing to "bury the hatchet forever," said Jeremiah MacVeagh.2

Irish Unionist representatives no doubt were concerned seriously about the personal safety of both themselves and their constituents. No Nationalist actually denied that crime was a problem in Ireland, although Joseph Devlin suggested that there was no more crime in Ireland than anywhere else, but the Irish were burdened unfairly by a bad reputation.24 The Unionists were anxious not only about the immediate aspect of an individual's physical safety, however, but were worried deeply by the wider connotations of the effects of crime upon the Irish economy.

One of their fundamental requirements was for strictly enforced law and order, and they felt that this could be achieved only under British protection. North Armagh's Unionist representative William Moore foresaw a kind of economic domino effect, whereby practically anarchistic conditions in the Nationalist portion of the country would financially ruin the Unionist part of Ireland. He explained

23Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1452; XXXVII (1912), 105, 148, 1748; XXXVIII (1912), 468-69, 595-96.
24Debates (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 100-01.
that business depended upon capital secured through credit. But in home rule Ireland, where credit could not be extended due to the high crime rate, there would be no source of capital. Therefore, Moore concluded, commercial advancement would cease in Ireland. The economic success of Ulster was inextricably tied to the political union between Britain and Ireland in the opinion of Irish Unionists, and to dissolve that connection would be to invite an economic depression.25

Speaking to that point, Andrew Horner, the Unionist M. P. for South Tyrone, illustrated how he thought the catastrophe would come about. A large section of the western portion of Ireland, which amounted to about one-third of the Nationalist party's support, he said, was so poor that it was sustained solely through government grants provided by the Congested Districts Board. In an exclusively Irish parliament, representatives from these counties would far outnumber those from "progressive Unionist Ulster." To a large extent, Unionists anticipated a bleak future for themselves in terms of the economic consequences of home rule. Horner assumed that the damage would be done merely by attaching the poverty-ridden areas of western Ireland to the prosperous northeast corner of the country. Politics would be dominated by poor farmers, he believed, and depress

25 *Debates* (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 114, 2120.
industrial Ulster into the inferior status of the rest of Ireland.  

The Irish opponents of home rule worried that Ulster's financial condition might be undermined not only by massive poverty, but that the Irish government might actively persecute its industries. In their opinion, the Nationalist parliament would be in a position to raise taxes at the expense of industry and of large land holders, and they felt that there was good reason to fear that the new government's powers of taxation might be "vindictively used." An organizer for the United Irish League, Unionists charged, had publicly vowed to rid Ireland of large landowners through aggressive taxation. Unionists were apprehensive as well that a heavy tax might be levied on looms and spindles and siphon the wealth from one of Ulster's principal industries.  

Another rhetorical tactic used by Irish Unionist speakers to discredit the home rule bill in an economic sense was to appeal to the British taxpayer. Under the terms of the bill, Ireland was to be granted an annual Transferred Sum which was to be used to operate certain government functions. According to the Unionists, Ireland was to receive money for such services as old age pensions, national insurance, and land purchase. Although the costs

26 Debates (Commons), XLVI (1913), 2175-76.
27 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 2122; XXXVIII (1912), 124.
of these services would progressively increase, they cautioned, the British government was not given administrative control of the funding. Long-range necessities such as education or land reclamation might require a substantial increase in cost and compel Britain to hand over even more money.\textsuperscript{28}

The Liberal party's spokesmen denied that the cost of Irish finance would rise, and they attempted to offer statistical data to show that costs would decrease. But Unionist members persisted in their attack upon the bill. William Mitchell-Thomson argued that Ireland's upkeep would cost British taxpayers more money every year, while the Irish taxpayers were obligated to contribute nothing to the basic Imperial expenses of national defense and funding the national debt. The Unionists' attitude toward Imperial finances showed how closely they identified with and felt dependent upon the British economic structure. They charged that Ireland would be taking money from the British treasury while contributing nothing to it, and that would place Ireland in a deplorable situation. At best, Ireland would become a "poor pensioner," paid a fixed amount and compelled to live within a narrow income; at worst, Ireland would become a parasite, ingesting money given by others while offering nothing in return.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{28}\textit{Debates} (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 283; XXXVIII (1912), 50.

\textsuperscript{29}\textit{Debates} (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 120-23.
Irish Nationalists could see no validity to these arguments. It was unreasonable, they declared, to think that the inchoate Irish government, faced with a myriad of economic perplexities and yet determined to succeed, would want to destroy its own industry with harmful and discriminatory taxation. Nor did they want to prolong their dependency on the British government by extending the Transferred Sum. To the charge that the Transferred Sum was an unjustified expense, John Redmond answered that that much and more already was being spent each year, and would have to continue to be spent even without home rule. Both Dillon and Devlin excused the expense with the argument that it was just recompense for the past over-taxation of Ireland. 30

Contrary to the Unionist point of view, Nationalist spokesmen contended that the cost of Irish municipal services would decrease as prosperity stabilized the economy. Some members of the Nationalist party insisted that the budget would become solvent much faster if the Irish government were allowed latitude to regulate its own taxation more fully than the bill allowed. For instance, the new government was allowed to impose customs, income, and estate taxes only ten per cent above what was already established. Also, no customs duties could be imposed upon articles not currently dutiable in Britain. By permitting Ireland to exercise 30 Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1446-47; XXXVII (1912), 106; XXXVIII (1912), 108, 466-68.
greater authority over these local tax needs, said Maurice Healy, a balanced economy could be brought about much faster.\textsuperscript{31}

It seemed that the independent faction of the Nationalist party was really seeking more than simply a small measure of taxation power. The ultimate demand that he wanted to have satisfied, said William O'Brien, was that Ireland be given "fiscal independence, full and at once." In O'Brien's opinion, the bill left Ireland with an insufficient revenue. It provided for a surplus of only £500,000 annually; yet with the cost of administrative services, which he assumed included payment of the two hundred member legislature, that small surplus soon would be exhausted. Another member of the independent faction, Daniel Sheehan, agreed with O'Brien that the lack of money for operating the government and for sustaining the needs of housing, public services, and natural resources development would be detrimental to the economy. Political liberty cannot be detached from financial liberty, Sheehan remarked.\textsuperscript{32}

Determining how much money to allot to the Irish government and how much autonomy in fiscal matters to allow them were just two of the critical economic questions. A third important fiscal issue involved the distribution of

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Debates} (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 246, 293-94.

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Debates} (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 1923-26, 2149-51.
funds; in other words, who was going to decide where the money went? The discussion over this question developed into an issue of political economics. J. H. Campbell initiated a long argument about this when he brought up the question of representation on local governing councils. On the municipal bodies in Ulster, he stated, there were 125 Unionists and 115 Nationalists. But in the Nationalist-dominated areas, like Connaught and Munster, there were only one or two Unionist representatives. Even in the Dublin area, Campbell contended, where numerous Protestants lived, there were only fourteen Unionists seated on the municipal council. He calculated that out of 800 local representatives, only seventeen were Unionists.33

Joseph Devlin took issue with Campbell's statistics. He conceded that it was true that very few Unionists held seats on county councils in some places, but it was only because there were almost none in those areas. On the other hand, he claimed, Unionists were not so anxious to share municipal government leadership with Nationalists. For example, it had been necessary to insert a special clause in an act of Parliament so that eight Catholics could sit on the seventy-member Corporation of Belfast. He added that while Belfast was one-quarter Roman Catholic in population, there never had been a Catholic Lord Mayor.34

33 Debates (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 58.
34 Debates (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 102-04.
Furthermore, Devlin continued, a large number of paid positions had gone to Protestants even where they were few in number; but this was not the case in Ulster. Of 437 salaried officials in Belfast, with a total salary of £68,723, there were but nine Roman Catholics with a total salary of £768. Again, while the Belfast Board of Guardians in 1911 had a total salary of £16,790, Catholics received only £680 of that sum. There were no Catholic medical officials, he claimed, and the powerful Harbor Commission "practically does not give a single position to a Catholic."35

North Belfast's Unionist M. P. Robert Thompson, chairman of the Harbor Commission, immediately rose to refute Devlin's charge; Devlin paid no attention to the correction and concluded his speech. William Mitchell-Thomson, the next Unionist speaker, took up the argument, saying that it was flatly untrue that the lowest wages were paid to Catholics. The Belfast Corporation had paid nearly £30,000 to Catholic officials, he said. Devlin interrupted him, pointing out that he had used the term "salaries," not "wages."36

Devlin's correction was more than a fine point of semantics; it involved an important implication. In general, wages represented an hourly payment for a specific job, while a salary was usually paid as compensation for a

35 *Debates* (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 103-04.

36 *Debates* (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 104, 116.
professional service. The distinction between the two, therefore, was interpreted as a difference in status between an unskilled or semi-skilled wage earner and a highly-trained or skilled salary earner. Devlin was arguing that in Ulster Catholics were discriminated against in hiring practices and were generally treated as hired help. Campbell maintained that Roman Catholics were given paid positions even in areas where they were in a minority. 37

Irish Unionists' concern that as a minority in Ireland they would be mercilessly exploited by the Nationalist majority was so intense that their opposition to home rule became intransigent. Unionist spokesmen frankly proclaimed that they had not the slightest intention of allowing home rule to become effective where they could prevent it. On the day that the bill was introduced, Captain James Craig informed the members that "we loyalists in Ireland find ourselves compelled to take the whole matter into our own hands." Unionists insisted from the outset that they would resist home rule in any way necessary, and that they were not bluffing. This was not rebellion, explained William Moore; it was a matter of survival. 38

During the first reading of the bill, Arthur O'Neill, the Unionist representative from Antrim, had tried to impress

37 Debates (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 58, 116.
38 Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1481; XXXVII (1912), 111, 121.
upon the opposition the seriousness of Ulster's promise to resist home rule. He reminded Nationalists of the signing of several covenants by thousands of home-rule opponents. By attempting to force it on them, he warned, the Government would be responsible for "bringing about a state of disorder and, possibly, civil war in Ireland." When the bill came up for the second reading, the tone of some Unionists' speeches was noticeably more militant. Charles Craig stated bluntly that the attempted imposition of home rule would result in "Opposition by us, by force if necessary." He ended his speech by quoting a verse from the British National Anthem:

O Lord our God, arise
Scatter our enemies
And make them fall; 39

Craig later modified somewhat his declaration of Ulster's intentions by saying that Unionists wanted to prevent home rule only in their part of the country. He still cautioned, nonetheless, that if it were forced upon them, those responsible "would have to realize the very grave responsibility of bringing about a state of affairs which may amount to civil war in Ireland." Other Unionist speakers showed like tenacity in their resolve to block home rule where they could. Sir John Lonsdale warned that measures would be taken "to make the Government of Ulster by the Nationalist Parliament an impossibility." Lonsdale did not

39 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 273-76, 1763, 1767.
say that he personally would do this, but admonished that "behind us" there were men "who are united in their determination to lay down their lives rather than submit to a political tyranny." 40

Essentially the same message was delivered by J. H. Campbell. Civilized people, he asserted, had the right to "defend themselves" when faced with such risks as those portended by home rule. Had not physical force been used as a remedy by others in the past, he asked, in England, Ireland, and the United States? If the bill passed, he concluded, "we at home will be compelled to take care of ourselves." 41

Members of the Nationalist party did not reply directly to the Unionists' threats of civil war; rather, they tended to cast them off as bluffing. That they were more bluff than reality, at least, was the impression Nationalists wanted to create. Home-rule advocates, on the other hand, were more interested in impressing upon the opposition the importance of achieving home rule. With home rule, said Sir Thomas Esmonde, Ireland could become a productive member of the British Empire. But without it, "Ireland may come to something very much the opposite." In a direct statement to Ulster representatives, Esmonde warned that if the north

40Debates (Commons), XXXVII (192), 2118, 2125; XLVI (1913), 2150-51.

41Debates (Commons), XLVI (1913), 2217-18, 2221.
refused to aid in the settlement of the Irish question, "it must be settled in spite of her." 42

Looking ahead, Sir Walter Nugent surmised that if the bill were defeated and if the Conservatives returned to power, there would be only two choices. The Conservative party could redesign the bill and try to pass it with their Government, or they could reject home rule entirely. In the event of the latter, however, government in most of Ireland would be possible only through coercion. In the meantime, he believed, the delay to solve Ireland's problems would do irreparable harm to a peaceful solution. The more time lost, the more desperate Ireland's condition would become. 43

On January 16, 1913, the home-rule bill was read successfully for the third time; the vote was 367 to 257. Irish Unionists were still vowing armed resistance, and Irish Nationalists still insisted that it be put into effect as soon as possible. As expected, the bill was quickly defeated in the House of Lords on the second reading. It was returned to the Commons for further consideration, sent back to the Lords, and again was defeated in the upper chamber. In 1914, the Liberal Government faced an incredible dilemma. The constitution required that unless the bill were withdrawn,

42 *Debates* (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1491, 1494.
43 *Debates* (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 144.
home rule was to become law in 1915; while Irish Unionists promised civil war if it did, Irish Nationalists hinted at revolution if it did not.

In March 1914, Prime Minister Asquith stood for the Government to introduce formally an amendment to exclude Ulster from the effects of home rule. It was basically the same type of amendment that had been introduced and withdrawn twenty-one months before, albeit there were significant modifications. The amendment provided for the exclusion of certain counties in Ulster from home rule for six years. During the interim, two plebiscites were to be held to determine whether the electorate of Ulster wanted to join the remainder of the country before the six-year limit expired.

The leaders of both Irish parties agreed to discuss the new amendment, but neither would accept it without specific changes. Sir Edward Carson made a very guarded acknowledgement of the idea of exclusion for Ulster, saying that it would relieve the immediate tension, prevent a violent resistance movement in Ulster, and allow time for further negotiation. But the beneficial effects of the amendment, he regretted, were nullified by the time limit which seemed to condemn Ulster to "a sentence of death with a stay of execution for six years."  

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44 For details of the original amendment, see above, pp. 4-6 of Chapter IV; Debates (Commons), LIX (1914), 906-18.
45 Debates (Commons), LIX (1914), 933-34.
What would happen to Ulster for six years, Carson asked? The Unionist leader claimed that the north of Ireland would be beset by serious and damaging uncertainty and that suspicion and vacillation would jeopardize business and hamper progress. Did the Government anticipate establishing a completely independent system of government for the excluded counties, only to tear it down after six years, he wondered? To enforce the time limit, Carson concluded, would "make a Hell of Ulster for six years." And regardless of the interval, Ulster would never accept home rule. The problem would only intensify and be carried forward to the next generation. The best way to avoid this, said Carson, was to replace the time limit with a clause that allowed Parliament to determine the future status of the north. Only if this plan were accepted would the Irish Unionist party, under his leadership, carry the suggested amendment to the public. 46

The Nationalist party leaders also acknowledged that the exclusion of certain counties in Ulster might create the conditions necessary for a stable transference of power. They were confident that during the period of detachment the south of Ireland would win the trust of Ulster. But Nationalist spokesman John Redmond agreed to support the amendment only if the six-year limit were adhered to strictly. By accepting this amendment, other Nationalist speakers

46 *Debates* (Commons), LIX (1914), 934-36, 1668, 2273.
added, the Nationalist party was taking a great risk. They might be denounced as traitors by their own countrymen by offering to agree to partition even temporarily. They had agreed to the Government's offer for the sake of peace, but if the Unionists did not respond in a like spirit of cooperation, there would be resentment against Ulster in the south and the bill was bound to be instituted into law.  

The exclusion amendment was both ironic and tragic. Irish Unionists, to whom it was meant to appeal, favored partition over inclusion in home rule; but they would not accept exclusion on the terms on which it was offered. The Nationalists agreed to a proposal they had rejected before for the sake of peace for Ireland, but unity within the party began to break down. The independent faction of the Nationalist party bolted.

To the independents, partition meant the end of hopes for Irish unity. Tim Healy declared that should the amendment be incorporated into the bill, a unified Ireland could never again be achieved. William O'Brien agreed that once divided, Ireland would remain a divided nation. The original concept of home rule, as they understood it, no longer meant Irish reconciliation; it had been distorted to serve the purposes of party politics and to save Britain from the embarrassment of political repercussions in Ulster. O'Brien predicted that

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47 Debates (Commons), LIX (1914), 927-29, 2284; LX (1914), 1211-13.
the partition of Ireland would establish an "anti-Irish State" that would be the target of reprisals "every day, every week, and every month of the year."\textsuperscript{48}

The final outcome of the Government's attempt to amend the Government of Ireland Bill of 1912 will never be known officially. The majority of the Nationalist party membership seemed to be willing to follow Redmond's leadership in accepting it. The Unionist members seemed to accept exclusion, but not on a temporary basis, thus further compromises probably would have been necessary. It is certain that the home-rule bill did, in fact, meet the legal requirements to become law. But in September 1914, the act was indefinitely suspended. The debate over partition, however, was not resolved and has not been to this day.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Debates} (Commons), LIX (1914), 930-31, 941-43; LX (1914), 1243-45.

\textsuperscript{49}\textit{Debates} (Commons), LXVI (1914), 920.
CHAPTER VI

RESULTS OF THE HOME-RULE DEBATES
OF 1912-1914

The results of more than two years of debate on the Government of Ireland Bill of 1912 were initially inconclusive, but they were far from insignificant. The debates of 1912-1914 had a major impact upon the two Irish political parties and upon the concept of home rule, but when they were over in 1914, at least one important condition had not changed; Ireland's parliamentary status in 1914 remained just as it had been when the bill was introduced in 1912.

One condition that had changed was condition of the Irish parties. In 1912, the Nationalist party had been the stronger numerically, was supported in Parliament by the majority British party, and seemed to have good reason to be confident of success. Two years later, they still maintained their numerical strength; but they were again divided by internal conflict. The British Liberal party continued to support home rule; yet despite their parliamentary majority, the Liberals had been unable to pass the bill in its original form. And successful enactment of the home rule bill for a united Ireland was not realized.

Within the Nationalist party there were really three factions. John Redmond was the principal spokesman of what might be called the conservative element. His attitude was
consistently that of a politician devoted to the British constitution and to the parliamentary system. In his speeches, which were usually delivered in a sweeping and rather grandiloquent style, Redmond expressed an unswerving confidence in the power of home rule to solve the Irish problem. He approved of the bill as it had been written, and he wanted to see home rule instituted along those lines. Yet, in order to maintain moderation, he had been willing to yield to an official partition of Ireland.\(^1\)

Joseph Devlin was an example of a member who stayed within the Nationalist party structure, but who was politically to the left of Redmond. Devlin's urban working-class attitude was representative of his background and of his west Belfast constituency. Class conscious in his approach, Devlin spoke against those whom he considered the privileged minority; these were mainly industrialists and landlords. He was also more adamantly nationalistic than Redmond, demanding a "change for Ireland first" and declaring that he was "fighting for the Fatherland."\(^2\)

\(^1\)Redmond always considered the partition to be temporary, but before he died in March 1918, he began to realize that the Ulster Unionists had already been making plans with Lloyd-George's Government for permanent exclusion; his death mercifully spared him from witnessing the defeat of the Nationalist party in the November 1918 elections. See Robert Kee, The Green Flag (New York: Delacorte Press, 1972), pp. 614-15.

\(^2\)See above, p. 4 of Chapter V.
The actual split in the party occurred among those men who had never been fully reconciled since Redmond took charge of the reunited party. This independent faction, led by Tim Healy and William O'Brien, had admitted early in the debate that the bill fell short of their expectations. For the most part they had accepted Redmond's leadership, but throughout the debates there were growing differences of opinion between the independents and the main body of the party. O'Brien and Healy, and their followers, represented the most advanced nationalistic attitude within the parliamentary party. Their first concern was with self-government for all of Ireland, regardless of party affiliation or British constitutional tradition. On the one hand, they had favored giving as much consideration as possible to Irish Unionists; for instance, they had stood against Redmond on an amendment to give Ulster artificial over-representation in the Irish lower house. On the other hand, the independents were unyielding in their demand for home rule for a united Ireland, despite Ulster's rejection of it; they had broken from the main party when Redmond agreed to make that concession.\(^3\)

The desertion of a dozen or so members did not destroy the Nationalist party's numerical advantage, and probably it would not have stopped passage of the exclusion amendment. But there was emerging in the country another force; it was

\(^3\)Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1467-68; XXXVII (1912), 238-40; see above, p. 19 of Chapter IV.
the resurgence of a kind of nationalism that would stand
no compromise, led by individuals who had lost faith in the
ability of the British Parliament to satisfy their demands.
This was the antithesis of Redmond's approach; in fact,
it flew in the face of the whole parliamentary movement for
home rule since 1885. They called themselves, appropriately
enough, Sinn Fein.  

The idea had its more recent roots, at least philosophi-
cally, in nineteenth-century Fenianism, and it had been
receiving attention early in the twentieth century through
the Irish literary renaissance. Since 1905, when it was
organized as a political party by Arthur Griffith, Sinn Fein
had been opposing Nationalist candidates at Irish by-elections.
Until 1914, however, the Nationalist party had preserved its
dominance in Irish politics. But during the next four
years the situation was reversed, and in the first national
elections after the war, Sinn Fein won seventy-three Irish
seats at Westminster.

Thus after 1914, the Irish Nationalist party's attempt
to gain home rule through parliamentary representation broke
down. As a result, the parliamentary party itself was lost,
along with its purpose. Of the numerous reasons why this
happened, some of the more important ones included

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4 This Gaelic phrase, commonly translated "We Ourselves" or
"Ourselves Alone," may be understood better by the idiomatic
rendering "We Rely Upon Ourselves"; Dorothy Macardle, The Irish
58-66 offers a Republican point of view.

disunity in the party over Irish autonomy, the partition issue, and the suspension of the home rule act.

In contrast to the condition of the Nationalist party in 1912, the Unionist party was at distinct disadvantage. They represented only around one-fourth of the country with about one-fifth of the number of Irish M. P.s, and their parliamentary support came from the minority British party. They had been unable to defeat the bill on the floor of the House of Commons, and had been unable to change the provisions of it to any significant extent. But in the end, their persistence and intransigence had resulted in the removal of Ulster from the effects of home rule. This was perhaps what they had hoped to secure from the beginning.\(^6\)

As the debates progressed, what became characteristic of the Unionist party was a growing spirit of militancy. Their refusal to budge on the home rule issue and their threats of civil war should it be applied to Ulster were a major tactic used in their defense. The head of the Unionist party, Sir Edward Carson, was not the leader of this attitude. He was returned from a southern Irish constituency and he ran on the Conservative ticket. Carson never did threaten violence, and toward the latter part of

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\(^6\) In his opening speech on the first reading, Carson had made an oblique reference to partition. Redmond asked Carson if he were suggesting exclusion for Ulster, and Carson replied, "Will you agree to it?" But Redmond backed away from an answer: *Debates (Commons)*, XXVI (1912), 1442-43.
the debates, he made fewer speeches. There seemed to be a belief among some home rule opponents that Carson was not aggressive enough.

Near the end of debate on the second reading, Unionist representative Robert McMordie stated that whatever action was taken by militant Ulster groups would not depend upon Carson's sanction. In McMordie's opinion, Carson did not "fully realize the seriousness of the situation." The better representative of the hard-line Unionist outlook was Captain James Craig. Craig had made it plain that he would under no conditions accept home rule. Craig said that if he thought home rule would be good for Ireland, he would "resign [his] seat and allow it to pass." 7

Craig had made that statement during the first day of debate, and it was a theme that was used with increasing frequency by several other Unionist spokesmen throughout the debates. The thrust of the warnings of civil disobedience seemed to be directed against the idea of coercion by the British government to accept home rule more than against the Nationalists' demand for home rule for themselves. Irish Unionists were determined to stop home rule where they could, and this supports the argument that the separation of Ulster from the remainder of the country was the most viable alternative to home rule. The Unionists used threats

7Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1477-78; XXXVII (1912), 288.
of civil war to impress exclusion upon the British as the only alternative.

The real power of the Unionist party, therefore, was in the hands of the militant Unionists, while Carson acted more or less as the chief legal spokesman. This made a difference in the Unionists' future. The growth of Irish nationalistic militancy eroded the influence of Redmond's moderate Nationalist party; but as Carson stepped aside, other Unionist spokesmen came forward to represent accurately the militant Ulster spirit. With iron-clad resolve, the Unionists held out for exemption; and indeed, they won their case. Their party remained in Parliament after the war. Carson had joined Lloyd-George's Government in 1916, and Craig eventually took over leadership of the party. Most significant of all, the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921 guaranteed Ulster's separate parliamentary status. To this day, Ulster's representatives continue to oppose the dissolution of the union. 8

The home-rule debates brought to light also some key ideas about the true meaning of Irish self-government and its impact upon the country. In the first place, the principal issue was not religion, certainly not in any theological context of the term. What discussions there had been about religion were for the most part confined to examples of eighteenth-century persecution. Nationalist

speakers, for instance, had devoted some time to explaining that despite the past, Roman Catholics were tolerant and forgiving.

To be sure, Irish Unionists occasionally made scattered references to the belief that they would be discriminated against because of their religious persuasion; that home rule would mean "Rome rule" was a usual part of the Unionist platform. In isolated instances, they suggested that a Catholic-dominated government could actively take advantage of Protestants. The Irish parliament, for example, could be called into session on Sunday in order to prevent Protestants from attending.9

Yet, as some Nationalist members remarked, the religious issue was not taken as a serious argument against home rule. The Nationalist party had not opposed several Unionist-supported amendments to protect Protestant churches and their property. And when matters of conscience did make some difference, such as in the case of separation of religion and public education, Nationalist members had been willing to yield to the objection. The more precise issue, of which religion was only one aspect, was, as John Dillon phrased it, the historic question of "the

9Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 108, 118, 1754.
English garrison in Ireland" and the question of the "ascendancy faction." 10

In contemporary terms, these amounted to two specific topics: national identification and economics. For Nationalists, that there was an "English garrison" in Ireland pointed to the fact that they considered themselves a separate country with a "separate and distinct national spirit." They were Irishmen, that quality which came "from higher than earthly powers." It was therefore essential that they be self(Irish)-governed. William Redmond had declared that in any event he preferred to "live in Ireland under a Parliament dominated by Ulster than live in Ireland dominated by this Parliament or any other." 11

In contrast to the position of the Nationalist party, Unionist members had the attitude of British citizens who were living in Ireland. What we want, said William Moore, is "to continue our rights unimpaired as British citizens." They considered themselves "Ulster people by British stock," and their approach to home rule was taken from that position. Throughout the debates, they fought to retain the legislative connection to the government to which they felt loyal and to the people whom they so closely identified. 12

11 Debates (Commons), XXXVII (1912), 149.
12 Debates (Commons), XXXVIII (1912), 112; XLVI (1913), 2176.
The distinction between these two Irish points of view can be understood most practically and cogently in terms of economics. Almost every aspect of the home rule issue was influenced by an economic consideration, and economic considerations in turn influenced the Irish attitude toward home rule. The Irish members represented, in effect, two different economic systems. In the northeast, the economy rested heavily upon an industrial footing, while in the remainder of the country a primarily agricultural system prevailed. The two groups seemed to be unable to achieve a balance between themselves in order to formulate a mutually beneficial economic structure.

Irish Unionists attributed the economic prosperity of Ulster exclusively to the legislative connection with Britain, and since the late nineteenth century their affinity had intensified. In 1912, Unionist members feared that they would suffer financial ruin if their part of the country were administered by an exclusively Irish, and thus predominately agricultural parliament. In short, the union with Britain was responsible for Ulster's past and essential to Ulster's future.

This stress placed by the Unionist party upon Ulster's economic condition further emphasized their feelings of disassociation from the south of Ireland. In very economic terms, Carson observed that home rule was most unfair to the "people of the north of Ireland who after
all are the only people in Ireland who have created industries." In a similar manner, Captain James Craig commented "you elect as arbitors over businessmen . . . a Parliament composed of men who never earn more than £400 a year."13

The dispute over the economic aspects of home rule seemed to suffer from a breakdown in communications at times because each side was speaking at cross purposes. Charles Craig remarked that no one had demonstrated how home rule would benefit commercial interests; Andrew Horner promised, "If you can convince us that a single clause of this Bill will increase our prosperity, we will risk all else and welcome it." But members of the Nationalist party were not advocating home rule simply to further commercial ends; that was to have been a subsidiary benefit of self-government. The purpose of home rule, in the Nationalists' opinion, was to create an Irish legislature; as Sir Thomas Esmonde said early in the debates, "this Parliament [Westminster] has no right to make laws for Ireland." This was the point of the Nationalists' arguments.14

Both Irish parties had good reasons for concentrating upon fiscal affairs. Some of the financial arrangements of the bill were vague and subject to change, allowing for

13 Debates (Commons), XLIV (1912), 420-421, 952-53.
14 Debates (Commons), XXXVI (1912), 1488; XXXVII (1912) 1758-59; XXXVIII (1912), 299.
loopholes of which both parties wanted to take advantage. The topic of taxation, for example, was especially controversial. While Unionists thought that it was through taxation that they would be exploited, Nationalists argued that it was because of unjust taxation that they had been deprived and economically disadvantaged. But there were also moot economic points regarding social unrest and municipal government.

When these and other similar issues arose, it was the members of the Irish Unionist party who represented themselves as endangered by home rule mostly in an economic sense. In fact, the home-rule debates were essentially economic in nature. This aspect had been clouded over to a large extent by other issues, particularly by the religious dispute. The confusion resulted from the interdependency of these two forces. By their own admission, Unionists acknowledged that the financial power of Ireland lay mostly with those represented by their party. Since they also represented Protestant interests, the two questions of religion and economics became inextricably mixed together. When Unionists said that they were defending the Protestant faith, they were defending also the economic superiority of the industrial northeast corner of Ireland. To be sure, they did not speak for every Protestant in Ireland; the Nationalist party, after all, had some support in even the most heavily Protestant areas. Nonetheless, Irish
Unionists did have the support of the overwhelming majority of Protestants who were concentrated in the most prosperous part of Ireland.

Without the direct protection of the British Parliament, Unionists feared that under home rule, they would be forced to submit to Catholic Nationalist control. As Unionists envisioned the future under home rule, legislation would be passed for the pleasure of the poorer farming interests and to the detriment of the wealthier industrial northeast. They believed that their money would be drained away, their grievances would be ignored, and their minority status would be perpetuated by a hopeless lack of power.

Finally, the outcome of the debate over the home-rule bill resulted in the defeat of moderation in both Irish parties. John Redmond's moderate constitutional approach virtually was destroyed over the next four years as the militant Sinn Fein party assumed political control of southern Ireland. Sir Edward Carson's conservative leadership was set aside more gracefully, but in its place was left an equally uncompromising militancy. No political solution has since been found that could bridge the gap between the two extremes.
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