



NUI MAYNOOTH

Ollscoil na hÉireann M& Nuad

Imperial precedents in the Home Rule
Debates, 1867-1914

by

Conor Neville

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF MLITT
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND
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Conor Neville, 27 Jan. 2011

Abbreviations

| | |
|----------------|---|
| A. F. I. L. | All For Ireland League |
| B. N. A. | British North America |
| F. J. | Freeman's Journal |
| H. G. A. | Home Government Association |
| I.I. | Irish Independent |
| I. R. B. | Irish Republican Brotherhood |
| M. P. | Member of Parliament |
| N. L. I. | National Library of Ireland |
| P. R. O. N. I. | Public Records Office of Northern Ireland |
| U. I. L. | United Irish League |

Introduction

The cause of Home Rule was the primary focus of mainstream Irish nationalism from the mid-1870s until the Irish parliamentary party's electoral collapse at the 1918 general election. The Home Rule movement's predecessor as the dominant force in Irish nationalism was Daniel O'Connell's repeal movement of the 1830s and 40s, which was the only prior coherent, constitutional nationalist movement to impinge on House of Commons business in a significant manner. During the 1850s and 1860s, constitutional nationalist agitation was greatly muted, and the repeal tendency within Irish politics was generally subsumed within the Liberal party. The Fenian movement, founded in 1865, which advocated total separation from Britain, officially ignored and forbade constitutional methods. The Home Rule movement, essentially inaugurated as the Home Government Association by Isaac Butt in 1870, emerged into Irish politics in this context.

Throughout its lifetime, the Irish parliamentary party harnessed many different arguments when attempting to instil, within the British constitution, the vague ideal of Irish Home Rule. There were many strands in the Home Rule debate. There was much bewailing the arbitrary and corrupt Act of Union of 1801, and the decrepit state of Irish industry and commerce in the nineteenth century. There was also much harking back to Grattan's parliament and the supposed glorious prosperity that was a feature of Ireland at the time of that institutions existence. Home Rulers were also preoccupied with various European precedents and analogies, most notably the Austro-Hungarian solution, which was a favourite of Arthur Griffith and the Sinn Féin movement. Jennifer Regan Lefebvre, in her recent study of Quaker Home Ruler, Alfred Webb, said of Home Rule arguments, 'Dozens of pamphlets, newspaper articles and speeches, from both pro- and anti-home rule camps relied on

examples from international affairs. These included the status of self-government in Canada, Australia, Poland, Austro-Hungary, South Africa, Italy, France and the United States.’¹

In this thesis, the extent to which Home Rulers harnessed the examples of self-government within the British empire is analysed, most particularly how Home Rulers used the granting of responsible government to the major colonies of Canada, Australia and South Africa, in formulating their arguments for Home Rule. This thesis examines how imperially alert were the broad tranche of Home Rulers throughout the period. Particular attention is paid to the traditionally less heralded Home Rule M. P. s, the ordinary rank-and-file members of the parliamentary party. The study also examines the views of influential figures within Irish nationalism that were never elected to parliament on a Home Rule platform. Veteran repealers and former Young Ireland agitators, such as William Daunt O’Neill and Charles Gavan Duffy, for instance, frequently played a large role in the shaping of nationalist opinion on these issues, frequently counselling the leadership of the parliamentary party throughout the 1870s and 80s.

The Anglo-Irish Treaty, signed in 1921, copper-fastened Ireland’s dominion status and asserted that Ireland was now officially the constitutional equivalent of Canada. The Treaty declared that the new Irish Free State’s relationship to Britain was to be as ‘that of the Dominion of Canada, and the law, practice, and constitutional usage governing the relationship of the crown or the representative of the crown and of the imperial parliament to the dominion of Canada shall govern their relationship to the Irish Free State.’² Many Irish republicans reacted with dismay to this conclusion, with even those who endorsed the deal doing so with some weariness. It was considered an anti-climax, yet it offered Ireland far more autonomy than had been granted by prime minister Herbert Asquith’s 1912 Government of Ireland bill nine years earlier. Asquith’s bill had been almost unanimously

¹ Jennifer Regan-Lefebvre, *Cosmopolitan nationalism in the Victorian empire: Ireland, India and the politics of Alfred Webb* (Cambridge, 2009), pp 132-3.

² Ged Martin, ‘The Irish Free State and the evolution of the commonwealth, 1921-49’ in Ronald Hyam and Ged Martin, *Reappraisals in British imperial history* (London, 1975), pp 201-25.

endorsed by Irish nationalist opinion when it first appeared. Michael Collins and others sought to harness the example of Canada when defending the Treaty.

The fact of Canadian and South African independence is something real and solid, and will grow in reality and force as time goes on. Judged by that touchstone, the relations between Ireland and Britain will have a certainty of freedom and equality which cannot be interfered with.³

Responsible government had been granted to most of the British North American colonies in the 1840s and the Australian colonies in the 1840s and 50s. When introducing the first Home Rule bill to the House of Commons, Gladstone quoted Charles Gavan Duffy, the former Young Ireland revolutionary and later premier of Victoria, 'When it was determined to confer Home Rule on Canada, Canada was in the precise temper attributed to Ireland. She did not get Home Rule because she is loyal and friendly, but she is loyal and friendly because she got Home Rule.'⁴ After a protracted conflict over the governance of the South African colonies, the four states that eventually entered the South African union were granted responsible government at differing stages, ranging from the early 1870s until the early 1900s. Historians such as W. D. McIntyre, Ged Martin and Ronald Hyam have adequately charted the development of responsible government in the colonies. This thesis examines how such thinking featured in the minds of rank-and-file Home Rule M. P. s, when set alongside other issues and concerns. It analyses to what extent they leant on these arguments in putting forth their case for Home Rule, and the context in which they were inclined to raise imperial dimension of the Home Rule argument.

The abstract and somewhat irrational vagaries of simple nationalist sentiment are a critical part of any nationalist movement. Former Home Rule M. P. for North Tyrone, and founder of the Young Ireland branch of the United Irish League, Tom Kettle, in a highly sophisticated article, entitled 'The obviousness of Home Rule', declared that nationalist sentiment was a pure abstraction and that arguments made in support of it, or arguments

³ Jason Knirck, *Imagining Ireland's independence: the debates over the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921* (Maryland, 2006) p. 133.

⁴ *Hansard* 3, ccciii, 585 (10 May, 1886).

made in order to discredit it, were beside the point.⁵ He argued that acceptance of the ‘fact of nationality’ must be a basic starting point for any future considerations. Michael Wheatley in his book, *Nationalism and the Irish party: provincial Ireland 1910-16*, has argued that abrasive, sentimental and tribal rhetoric was far more prominent than the moderate, conciliatory, imperially aware mantras that John Redmond, and a select few others such as Sir Walter Nugent and Thomas Scanlon, frequently trotted out.⁶ ‘Emotional Fenianism’ was a common trait among Home Rule parliamentarians. Historian James McConnel has indicated that, at any one time, between twenty and twenty-five per cent of Home Rule M. P. s were former Fenians.⁷

Nostalgia for Grattan’s parliament also loomed large in the minds of many Home Rulers. Daniel O’Connell’s repeal movement of the 1830s and 40s held as its aim the re-establishment of Grattan’s parliament, based in College Green between 1782 and 1800. The rhetoric of the Parnellite era was brimming with references to ‘our ancient parliament’, and sentimental talk of the ‘restoration to Ireland of her native parliament’, in spite of the fact that the founder of the Home Rule movement, Isaac Butt had deliberately distanced himself from this line of thought. The Parnellites, and O’Connell’s repeal movement, evidently did not want to see the re-institution of Grattan’s parliament in every particular, complete with its exclusion of Catholics and its lack of executive power. This study seeks to examine how the colonial analogy, which focused on new-fangled constitutional formulae, stacked up as a factor in the minds of Home Rulers, when compared with the legacy of Grattan’s parliament.

One of the earliest books comprehensively examining the Irish parliamentary party was Frank Hugh O’Donnell’s *History of the Irish parliamentary party*, written in 1910. O’Donnell was a highly idiosyncratic Home Rule M. P. in the 1870s and 80s, and a fervent

⁵Tom Kettle, *The open secret of Ireland* (London, 1912).

⁶Michael Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish party: provincial Ireland 1910-16* (Oxford, 2005), pp 74-7.

⁷James McConnel, ‘The view from the backbench: Irish nationalist M. P. s and their work, 1910-14’ (PhD thesis, University of Durham, 2002).

enemy of Charles Stewart Parnell. O'Donnell offers an extremely jaundiced view of the Irish party. Despite his own obstructionism in the 1870s, he offers a sympathetic portrait of the 'nominal Home Rulers' who drifted away from the party in the 1880s.⁸ O'Donnell himself emerges as a heroic figure in the book, fighting against the relentless tyranny of Parnell. O'Donnell praises Isaac Butt heavily, despite Butt's chastisement of him for his involvement in the obstructionist agitation of the late 1870s. The first volume of his history was subtitled *Butt and Parnell: nationhood and anarchy, the curse of the American money*. O'Donnell as an M. P. took a great interest in Indian and South African questions and these feature heavily in the book. However, his history is largely free of references to the self-governing colonies or the Canadian precedent.

Historians such as James McConnel and Pat Walsh have argued that John Redmond was far more enamoured with colonial analogies than the bulk of his party. Redmond had been more nationalistic in its sentiments in the 1890s. Walsh, in his work, *The rise and fall of imperial Ireland: Redmondism in the context of Britain's conquest of South Africa and its great war on Germany, 1899-1916*, has the lesson of the solution reached in South Africa was critical in Redmond's transformation by the time of Asquith's bill. Walsh's book focuses heavily on Redmond and the main players in the Home Rule party at the time rather than the rank-and-file members of the party.⁹ McConnel, in his unpublished thesis, 'The view from the backbench: Irish nationalist M. P. s and their work, 1910-1914', analyses the political life and attitudes of Irish party backbenchers during the period. He examines to what extent they were preoccupied with local issues, concluding that they deserved their formidable reputation when it came to asking parliamentary questions relating to their own constituencies. He examines their interaction with the Fenians, their relationship with the Catholic church, how they looked upon the Gaelic revival and how they dealt with issues such as the 'Dublin Lock-out.' One particular section focuses on backbench M. P. s'

⁸Frank Hugh O'Donnell, *A history of the Irish parliamentary party* (London, 1910).

⁹Pat Walsh, *The rise and fall of imperial Ireland: Redmondism in the context of Britain's conquest of South Africa and its great war on Germany, 1899-1916* (London, 2003) pp 78-106.

attitudes to the crown and the empire. McConnel does not hone in specifically on how Irish party parliamentarians looked at the self-governing colonies but more their general attitudes towards British imperialism. He also focuses narrowly on the 1910-14 period, during the tumult over the third Home Rule bill and the First World War.¹⁰

Stephen Howe and Felix Larkin both contend that Irish nationalists were disinclined to reference the colonial precedents of Home Rule in the empire, but for violently differing reasons. Howe, in his book, *Ireland and empire*, argued that Irish nationalists did not tend to harness the Canadian or Australian precedents because the measure of Home Rule implied by this analogy was overly modest.¹¹ By contrast, Larkin argued, in his essay, 'The dog in the night-time: the *Freeman's Journal*, the Irish parliamentary party and the empire, 1875-1919', argued that the measure of autonomy envisaged by Irish party M. P. s was tilted towards devolution rather than independence.¹² Thus, in Larkin's estimation, the colonial analogy was inapplicable because Irish Home Rule was not co-equal with dominion status and nor did it replicate the conditions of a Canadian province. However, David Fitzpatrick, in his essay 'Ireland and the empire', flatly differed from both Howe and Larkin, and insisted that 'the relevance to Ireland of the Canadian precedent was repeatedly affirmed by advocates of Home Rule.'¹³ Ian Sheehy, in his essay entitled "'The view from the fleet street": Irish nationalists in London and their attitudes towards empire, 1892-89', also argues that Home Rulers did lean on the colonial analogy in making their arguments for Irish self-

¹⁰James McConnel, 'The view from the backbench: Irish nationalist M. P. s and their work, 1910-14' (PhD thesis, University of Durham, 2002).

¹¹Stephen Howe, *Ireland and empire* (Oxford, 2002) p. 45.

¹²Felix M. Larkin, 'The dog in the night-time: the *Freeman's Journal*, the Irish parliamentary party, and the empire, 1875-1919' in Simon J. Potter (ed.) *Newspapers and empire in Ireland and Britain: reporting the British empire, 1857-1921* (Dublin, 2004) p. 119.

¹³David Fitzpatrick, 'Ireland and the empire' in Andrew Porter and Elaine Low (eds), *The Oxford history of the British empire: the nineteenth century* (Oxford, 2001) p. 506.

government.¹⁴ Sheehy highlighted Butt, McCarthy and, in particular, T. P. O'Connor as avatars of this type of imperially aware nationalist rhetoric.¹⁵

Larkin and Sheehy's essays, both of which appeared in Simon Potter's collection, *Newspapers and empire in Ireland and Britain*, were coloured by the fact that they were examining two very distinct newspaper cultures. Larkin was examining the conservative and Dublin-based *Freeman's Journal* under the proprietorship of the moderate Buttite Home Ruler, Edmund Dwyer Gray, whereas Sheehy was examining the attitude of some of the more cosmopolitan Irish nationalists based in London.

Alan O'Day is one of the more prominent figures in the historiography of the Home Rule period. His book, *The English face of Irish nationalism: Parnellite involvement in British politics, 1880-86*, focused on the members of Parnell's party between the 1880 general election and Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule in the aftermath of the 1885 general election.¹⁶ He catalogued and analysed their occupations, petty rivalries and how they were regarded by their peers, noting that a large proportion of the members of the Irish party in that era were 'nominal Home Rulers' who were eventually to drift out of the Home Rule party and who Parnell excised from the party in the 1885-6 period. O'Day focused, in particular, on the Parnellites themselves. In the main, he analysed their involvement in the major British political questions of the era, such as the Egyptian question, the Sudanese episode, as well as how individual members fraternised with the two major political parties in the House of Commons. He attacked the notion of Irish nationalist parliamentarians were narrowly concerned with Irish

issues, such as the land question, the issue of education, and the central question of Irish Home Rule. In the book, O'Day does not look at the Home Rulers through the prism used in

¹⁴Ian Sheehy, "'The view from Fleet street': Irish nationalist journalists in London and their attitudes towards empire, 1892-1898" in Potter (ed.) *Newspaper and empire*, p. 145.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶Alan O'Day, *The English face of Irish nationalism: Parnellite involvement in British politics, 1880-86* (Dublin, 1977).

this thesis. He does not analyse their attitudes to wider imperial questions and how they envisioned Irish Home Rule. O'Day's book also examines Irish party M. P. s exclusively in terms of their performance in the House of Commons whereas this work analyses the Home Rulers' speeches both inside and outside parliament.

O'Day has written a more panoramic study of the Irish Home Rule movement, entitled *Irish Home Rule, 1867-1921*, which covers the entire period of the Home Rule party. His glossary includes short notes on the Irish party parliamentarians throughout the era, and his opening chapter focuses on concepts and terminologies, examining Home Rule, in particular, with regard to the 'federalism versus repeal' debates in the 1870s. He examined briefly the influence of Grattan's parliament and the repeal movement on the Home Rule era and delineated upon issues such as Home-Rule-all-round. His work was more of a generic, sweeping study of the Home Rule movement than the present study, and he does not hone in on the colonial analogy in the manner in which this work does.¹⁷

Alan J. Ward's work, *The Irish constitutional tradition: responsible government and modern Ireland, 1782-1992*, covers Irish constitutional nationalism from the establishment of Grattan's parliament through to the early 1990s when the Irish republic abandoned its formal claim to the governance of Northern Ireland.¹⁸ Ward analyses the Home Rule period closely, examining the various types of self-government envisioned by politicians during the period, including Home-Rule-all-round, federalism, dominion status, colonial Home Rule, Grattan's parliament, and so on. His study takes detailed account of the colonial dimension to the debate. His work, however, examines the issue from a theoretical standpoint and is only preoccupied with the opinions and declarations of the prominent figures within the party.

Dierdre MacMahon, in an essay entitled, 'Ireland, the empire and the commonwealth', analyses Irish nationalism's engagement with the British empire, analysing nationalists'

¹⁷Alan O'Day, *Irish Home Rule, 1867-1921* (Manchester, 1998).

¹⁸Alan J. Ward, *The Irish constitutional tradition: responsible government and modern Ireland, 1782-1992* (Washington, 1994).

attitudes towards India, South Africa, as well as the self-governing colonies.¹⁹ Her essay, however, focuses on the prominent figures in the Home Rule party such as John Redmond and T. P. O'Connor and certain idiosyncratic figures, who had a great deal to say on imperial matters, such as Frank Hugh O'Donnell. It does not analyse the contribution and attitudes of the more low-key Home Rulers. Its timeframe also runs from the 1886 election to the Statute of Westminster of 1931, examining the Cumann na nGaedheal governments' interaction with the commonwealth. MacMahon's other work focuses on Irish nationalism in the 1930s and the dismantling of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Her work on this topic is much shorter in length and skims across many of the issues, coming as it does in the context of a collection of essays, *Ireland and the British empire* edited by Kevin Kenny.

Donal P. McCracken's work *Forgotten protest: Ireland and the Anglo-Boer war*, focuses on Irish nationalists' apoplectic response to the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902, and the attempted imposition of Canadian-style federalism on Transvaal and the Orange Free State in the late 1870s.²⁰ These episodes in South Africa were revelatory as far as Irish nationalists' true attitudes to federalism were concerned; federalism being the ostensible object of the party in the 1870s.

There are scores of books on the major players in the Irish parliamentary party throughout the period. Charles Stewart Parnell has been the subject of numerous biographies, from various angles, from historians such as F. S. L. Lyons,²¹ Conor Cruise O'Brien,²² and Paul Bew.²³ David Thornley wrote the standard work on Isaac Butt and the founding of the Home Rule party.²⁴ F. S. L. Lyons published a biography of the leader of the militant wing of the Home Rulers, John Dillon.²⁵ Tim Healy, and his many controversies, were the subject of a

¹⁹Dierdre McMahon, 'Ireland, the Empire and the Commonwealth' in Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British empire* (Oxford, 2004).

²⁰Donal P. McCracken, *Forgotten protest: Ireland and the Anglo-Boer war* (Belfast, 2003).

²¹F. S. L. Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell* (London, 1977).

²²Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Parnell and his party 1880-90* (Oxford, 1957).

²³Paul Bew, *Charles Stewart Parnell* (Belfast, 1980).

²⁴David Thornley, *Isaac Butt and Home Rule* (London, 1964).

²⁵F. S. L. Lyons, *John Dillon: a biography* (London, 1968).

biography by Frank Callanan.²⁶ William O'Brien's influence on Irish politics from the fall of Parnell until the massacre the parliamentary party suffered at the 1918 general election is the subject of a study by Joseph V. O'Brien.²⁷ A. C. Hepburn has written on Joe Devlin and Irish nationalism in Belfast at the turn of the twentieth century.²⁸ Willie Redmond, another noted 'lieutenant' within the party has been the subject of a biography penned by Terence Denman. Denman's book focuses heavily on the First World War in which Redmond died in 1917. Denman referred to Willie Redmond in the course of his book as the 'most tragic victim' of the type of colonial nationalism purveyed by the Redmondite elite at the head of the parliamentary party during the 1900s.²⁹ Thornley's book on Butt analyses in forensic detail the various categories of Home Ruler that populated the Buttite parliamentary party in the 1870s, concluding that only one third of the party could be considered committed Home Rulers. His attitude is particularly scathing towards the 'nominal Home Rulers', who in Thornley's unambiguous view, merely attached themselves to the ideal of Irish self-government in order to secure easy passage to parliament.

In the main, studies have been confined to the major players within the movement and the impression gained from the historiography of the period is that only the elites within the party were entitled to have a philosophy. However, there are also studies of less heralded figures within the party, though they are few and far between. J. A. Gaughan has written a full-length biography of Irish language enthusiast and Home Rule backbencher, Tom O'Donnell, M. P. for Kerry West from 1901-18, which focuses heavily on internal constituency matters and O'Donnell's own position within his Kerry stronghold.³⁰ The M. P. for Sligo North from 1893-1908, P. A. McHugh, whose career is examined in a short biography by Ide Ni Liathain entitled *The life and career of P. A. McHugh, a north*

²⁶Frank Callanan, *T. M. Healy*, (Cork, 1996).

²⁷Joseph V. O'Brien, *William O'Brien and the course of Irish politics, 1891-1918* (Dublin, 1976).

²⁸A. C. Hepburn, *Catholic Belfast and Nationalist Ireland in the era of Joe Devlin, 1871-1934* (Oxford, 2004).

²⁹Terence Denman, *A Lonely grave: Life and death of William Redmond* (Dublin, 1995).

³⁰J. A. Gaughan, *A political odyssey: Thomas O'Donnell* (Dublin, 1983).

Connacht politician: foot-soldier of the party.³¹ As noted above, Alfred Webb, M. P. for Waterford West from 1890-95, is the subject of a recent study by Jennifer Regan-Lefebvre, which examines his career particularly in the context of his work with the Indian National Congress in the late nineteenth century.³² The cosmopolitan, arch-Redmondite figure Stephen Gwynn, M. P. for Galway from 1906-18, is the subject of a recent study by Colin Reid.³³

Michael Wheatley's book, alluded to earlier, *Nationalism and the Irish party: provincial Ireland, 1910-16*, traces, with reference to regional newspapers around Connacht and the midlands, both Redmondite and O'Brienite, the decline of the parliamentary party, which, it is argued, was well in train by the time of the commencement of the First World War and the conscription crisis.³⁴ Wheatley contends, among other things, that aggressive nationalist rhetoric was far more prevalent than the moderate, imperialist tone pursued by the leadership of the party during the period, and this study focuses strictly on the Redmondite era, and its overall thrust is towards explaining the decline of the Home Rule party in the said period. Therefore it is more concerned with discovering the volume of nationalist activity during the period, with only one chapter devoted to 'Nationalist political language.'

Wheatley supports this particular argument in an essay examining John Redmond's association with federalism.³⁵ In 1910, when touring Canada in an attempt to drum up support for Home Rule, Redmond, along with his lieutenant T. P. O'Connor, offered up a vision of limited self-government which the more nationalist members of the party, such as John Dillon, balked at. After furious and panicked back-peddalling from Redmond, most M. P. s outwardly refused to believe that he had uttered such sentiments. Wheatley contrasted

³¹Ide Ni Laithain, *The Life and career of P. A. McHugh, A north Connacht politician: Foot-soldier of the party* (Dublin, 1999).

³²Regan-Lefebvre, *Cosmopolitan nationalism and the Victorian empire* (Cambridge, 2009).

³³Colin Reid, 'Stephen Gwynn: a life in Irish politics and culture, 1864-1950' (PhD thesis, Queen's University, Belfast, 2008).

³⁴Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish party*, pp 74-118.

³⁵Micahel Wheatley, 'John Redmond and federalism in 1910' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxii, no. 127 (2001), pp 343-64.

the sentiments Redmond expressed in Canada with those he expressed earlier in the tour in the United States, which consisted of far bolder nationalist posturing. In Canada, Redmond essentially expressed support for provincial Home Rule along the same lines as that enjoyed by the province of Quebec, the ostensible objective of the party in the Isaac Butt era, whereas in America he placed Irish self-government on the same footing as the parliaments of Canada and Australia. In this study, I examine the finer points of where Home Rule parliamentarians in all eras sat in relation to the question of provincial versus dominion self-government. Wheatley details in his essay on Redmond's flirtation with federalism that the main bulk of Home Rule M. P. s were outraged by this performance, however they were also willing to accept the Liberal party's various Home Rule bills which amounted to not much more self-government than Redmond had envisaged in his Canadian interview.

Patrick Maume's book, *The long gestation: Irish nationalist life, 1891-1918* explores the various factions and trends within Irish nationalism from the fall of Parnell to the collapse of the Irish parliamentary party.³⁶ It is focused on political machinery rather than political ideas and is largely concerned with the split between the O'Brienite and Redmondite factions, a split which was largely independent of imperial concerns (O'Brien's main irritation being the 'Liberal alliance' and his main pre-occupation the ushering of Irish protestants into the nationalist fold.) Roy Foster's collection of essays *Paddy and Mr. Punch* is brimming with insights into the Home Rule party from a cultural standpoint.³⁷ The work of Ged Martin, in particular, has been informative in the sphere of Canadian and imperial history. He has, in one essay, specifically examined the Irish Free State, the nature of its 'Dominion status' and its relationship with the British empire in the 1920s.³⁸

The Hansard parliamentary debates are an invaluable tool, which I leant on heavily while researching this thesis. Every debate on Irish issues, and indeed other issues, in the

³⁶Patrick Maume, *The Long Gestation: Irish nationalist life, 1891-1918* (Belfast, 1999).

³⁷Roy Foster, *Paddy and Mr. Punch: connections in Irish and English history* (Oxford, 1993).

³⁸Martin, 'The Irish Free State' in Hyam & Martin (eds), *Reappraisals*, pp 201-25.

Westminster were accessible through this resource. The downsides of this primary source from the point of view of this study is that only a small proportion of Irish nationalist M. P. s contributed to the relevant debates in the House of Commons. Only the more prominent politicians tended to deliver speeches there and these figures have been unsurprisingly, much studied.

Pamphlets and propaganda leaflets, such as those produced by the Irish Press Agency, are a particularly rich source of material. This was a publishing house, established by Parnell, in the aftermath of the rejection of the first Home Rule bill of 1886. They consisted of works by parliamentarians, and various nationalist agitators, making detailed arguments in favour of Irish Home Rule. These pamphlets toured the raft of arguments in favour of Irish self-government. However, only a small number of politicians tended to engage in the writing of pamphlets, the typically intellectual members of the party such as Jeremiah MacVeigh, Stephen Gwynn, J. J. Clancy, John Redmond, T. D. Sullivan, Tom Kettle and T. P. Gill. One particular pamphlet, written by T. P. Gill, was devoted entirely to the *Home Rule constitutions of the British empire*.³⁹

Newspapers, particularly Irish nationalist newspapers, form an important part of the primary source material for this thesis. Newspapers such as the *Freeman's Journal*, *The Nation*, and the *Irish Independent* carry detailed accounts of the speeches made by Irish politicians throughout the period. The *Cork Examiner* has also proven valuable in this regard, focusing, naturally enough, on the speeches of Cork parliamentarians. The smaller regional newspapers do provide useful information and snippets of speeches made by local M. P. s, but, overall, they are less fruitful in this regard. Hostile Unionist newspapers such as the *Irish Times* and the *Dublin Evening Mail*, as well as British newspapers, such as *The Times* and the *Evening Standard*, do not carry the speeches and rhetoric of Irish nationalist parliamentarians with the same frequency as the other newspapers cited.

³⁹T. P. Gill, *Home Rule constitutions of the British empire* (London, 1887).

Manuscript collections frequently offer an intimate glimpse into the thoughts and attitudes of politicians. The political papers of Isaac Butt, John Redmond, John Muldoon, Jeremiah Jordan, William O'Brien, John Dillon, T. P. Gill and Tom O'Donnell have been consulted in relation to this thesis, among others. The Redmond papers have been the most often consulted, as Redmond was inclined to take soundings from various politicians on ideas and policy rather than dwell on purely administrative matters. However, many politicians, in their private correspondence don't tend to devote much space to political arguments or apologies. Reams of correspondence are often concerned with more humdrum matters. The J. F. X. O'Brien papers, for instance, are almost wholly concerned with organisational and administrative matters.⁴⁰

This study is grouped into three main parts. Each chapter examines the extent of the members' preoccupation with the examples of colonial Home Rule, as it existed in Canada and Australia, when set alongside the other competing factors such as Grattan's parliament, contemporary European analogies, particularly the popular example of the Austro-Hungarian solution, and the simple nationalist, almost Fenian-like sentiment which pervaded the party, particularly from the early 1880s onwards.

The first chapter focuses on the bearing of Isaac Butt's Home Rule party. The party which has been previously been regarded, by historians such as David Thornley, as being overly genteel in the manner in which it conducted its business in the House of Commons, and almost pseudo-nationalist in aspiration. Thornley has exempted Butt himself, and the aggressive Parnellite rump, from this conclusion. This chapter analyses the Buttite party's attitude to the colonial dimension of the debate of the 1870s.

The second chapter focuses on the Gladstonian Home Rule bills of 1886 and 1893, analyses closely the rhetoric of the Parnellite party in the 1885-86 period, and the performance of the Home Rule party during the 1892-93 period. The extensive committee stage discussions

⁴⁰J. F. X. O'Brien papers (1886-1904), N. L. I. MS 13,420-15, 376.

over the latter of these Home Rule bills provide a wealth of indicators as to how Irish members envisaged Home Rule and how alert they were, in general, to colonial precedents.

The third chapter focuses on the Redmondite era and the third Home Rule bill of 1912 through a similar lens. Redmond has often been characterised as far more moderate and pro-imperial than was Parnell. It examines whether the rank-and-file members had been any more or less engaged with the colonial precedents on offer, than the nationalist politicians of the earlier eras. This study will not analyse the controversy over the First World War in an overly detailed manner. The timeframe of this study runs just up to the commencement of the war, but it has been necessary to reference the struggle obliquely in as far as it illuminated the attitudes of parliamentarians in the period up to 1914.

The aim throughout is effectively to examine how imperially-minded were the broad tranche of the party, particularly the unheralded, rank-and-file members, during its long spell as the dominant force in Irish politics. It will examine closely, with reference to the colonial precedents, what brand of Home Rule they wished to institute, remaining alert to the vagaries and contradictions that Home Rule members may have indulged in. It will do this with reference to the rhetoric of party members both in and outside parliament.

Chapter 1:

Taking their cues from 1867: Isaac Butt and Home Rule in the 1870s

The Home Rule movement, which was to dominate Irish nationalist politics from the mid-1870s until the beginning of the First World War, was initiated by the unlikeliest of figures, former Trinity College professor and Tory M. P., Isaac Butt. The movement emerged in Ireland at a propitious time as there had existed something of a vacuum in constitutional nationalism in the 1860s and early 1870s. This chapter will examine the extent to which the Home Rule party of the 1870s leant on the examples of self-government in the colonies in formulating its arguments for Home Rule. This will be done through examination of the debates within Ireland over the direction of the movement and the party's performance in the House of Commons during Butt's time as leader. It will analyse Home Rule as envisaged by Butt and those around him, and the ideological focus of the rank-and-file members of the Home Rulers in the 1870s.

Responsible government in the colonies

In the 1840s the various provinces of Canada were granted what was termed 'responsible government', whereby the legislature of each province would appoint the executive of each colony. Hitherto, this had been the remit of the imperial parliament in Westminster. The colonial legislature had previously been devoid of executive power, leaving them in a position similar, in constitutional terms, to that of Grattan's parliament in the late eighteenth century.

Unrest pervaded the North American colonies. Canadians grew disenchanted with the haughty, unresponsive form of government that prevailed in the 1830s. The representative assemblies were repeatedly ignored. The home secretary, John Russell, in his rebuttal of responsible government, insisted that it was unfeasible that the colonial governor could act simultaneously on the advice of the ministers responsible to the colonial assembly and the ministers of the Crown. He laid great stress on the fact that power must be vested in the

crown, which then exercised that power on the advice of her ministers. He argued that it would be dangerous to allow the colonial assembly to have power in dealing with even internal matters. London had to be supreme.¹

Upper Canada was populated primarily by British settlers and Lower Canada was peopled by French settlers, with the French settlers constituting a majority in the province of Canada as a whole. The chief figures of the unrest were, in Upper Canada, the mayor of Toronto, William Lyon MacKenzie and in Lower Canada, the speaker of the Lower Canadian assembly, Louis Joseph Papineau. Both men made positive allusions to the United States system of government and MacKenzie referred to the status quo within Canada as a system of 'despotism.' The rebellion of 1837-38, in Lower Canada, was an almost hesitant one. Papineau, 'The O'Connell of Canada' appeared to share his Irish counterpart's queasiness about physical violence. In Upper Canada, the rebellion was undermined, despite MacKenzie's enthusiasm, by his own ineptitude as a general. The rebellion was snuffed out and both Papineau and MacKenzie fled to the United States.²

The British government reflected on the causes of unrest and decided initially that Upper and Lower Canada be unified. The iconic report of Lord Durham, which advocated the granting of responsible institutions to the North American colonies and recommended the unifying of the province under British control, was frequently referred to by parliamentarians during the Irish Home Rule debates in the 1880s,³ though historians such as Ged Martin have argued that the report's influence has been wildly overstated and that such ideas had been floating around London for some time.⁴ They were not dreamt up with any startling originality by Lord Durham. Responsible government was eventually conceded to most of the Canadian provinces throughout the 1840s, with Nova Scotia being the first to

¹ John Russell, *Selected speeches and documents on British colonial policy 1763-1917*, ed. A. B. Keith (Oxford, 1918) pp 173-9.

² Kenneth McNaught, *The Pelican History of Canada* (Harmondsworth, 1969), p. 216.

³ *Hansard* 3, cccvi, 917 (3 June 1886).

⁴ Ged Martin, 'The influence of the Durham Report' in. Ronald Hyam and Ged Martin (eds.), *Reappraisals in British imperial history* (London, 1975) pp 75-88.

receive the boon in 1848, followed shortly after by New Brunswick the same year. The province of Canada was officially granted responsible government in 1849.

Responsible government was extended to the other colonies in the aftermath of the decision to grant it to the North American colonies. In Australia and New Zealand, events followed a similar course with an initially heavily truncated measure of 'responsible government' being granted to the province of New South Wales in 1842.⁵ The 'Australian Colonies Government Act' of 1850 extended this measure to the other colonies in Australia.⁶ The Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865 copper-fastened the validity of the laws passed by the colonial parliaments. There had been confusion over the supremacy of colonial law in relation to imperial laws in the years before this.⁷

Irish nationalists supported this move towards 'responsible government' in the colonies. The early precedents of self-government in the colonies were already being harnessed, albeit in a slightly offhand fashion, to garner support for a nationalist position in the late 1840s. The *Galway Vindicator*, as early as 1847, complained that 'Parliament has conceded local government to England, and self-government by local parliaments to Jamaica, Canada and Australia. With what show of justice is Ireland, claiming the same benefits, to be refused?'⁸ Prior to the granting of responsible government, O'Connell linked the fortunes of Ireland and Canada, when he made his famous, folksy joke about Papineau, saying that the only difference between Canada and Ireland was that the chief agitator had an 'O' at the end of his name rather than at the beginning.⁹ Papineau himself explicitly linked Ireland and Canada, stating, 'a responsible local and national government for each part of the empire... that is what Ireland and British America demand.'¹⁰ Richard Davis has alluded to William Smith O'Brien's support for the colonial reformers of the 1830s and 40s, and pointed out

⁵ W. D. McIntyre, *Colonies into commonwealth* (London, 1966) p. 49.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁷ *Hansard* 4, lxxxiii, 59-60 (14 May 1900).

⁸ *The Nation*, 13 Sept. 1847.

⁹ *Hansard* 3, cccv, 586 (10 May 1886).

¹⁰ Colin M. Coates, 'French Canadians ambivalence to the British empire' in Philip Buckner (ed.), *Canada and the British empire* (Oxford, 2008), p. 189.

that Irish M. P. s believed that developments in Canada in the 1837-38 period were of immediate significance to Ireland.¹¹ O'Brien, though not officially aligned with the repealers at the time, saw the 'similarity of circumstances that existed in the two countries, Ireland and Canada.'¹² He expressed sympathy with the notion of bringing the 'executive into harmony with the representative assembly', though he was opposed to the unification of Upper and Lower Canada. In common with many Irish nationalists, he instinctively sympathised with the French Catholics of the region and opposed the 'assimilation policy which ignored religious linguistic identity.' O'Brien was unusual, among Irish nationalists, in the sense that he would have preferred the provincial autonomy enjoyed by Canada and Australia rather than the establishment of an entirely independent Ireland. However, in spite of the comments of these notables, Kevin B. Nowlan, implying deliberate insularity on the part of O'Connell's repeal movement, has contended that, 'It was customary in all repeal factions to disclaim any serious interest in the management of the British colonies.'¹³

The exploits of Irish nationalists in the colonies were frequently alluded to by Home Rulers when they were trying to dispel the suggestions that the Irish were unfit for self-government, or, at best, not ready for it. Charles Gavan Duffy, often cited by Gladstone during the Home Rule debates, became premier of Victoria for a year in 1871. A founder of the Young Ireland movement and *The Nation*, he was briefly an M.P. in Westminster before emigrating to Australia in the 1850s. Another of the 'men of '48', Kevin Izod O'Doherty, was a member of parliament in Queensland from 1867 to 1885. He was subsequently elected for the Home Rulers at the 1885 election and spoke in the debate in the House of Commons over Gladstone's bill. Thomas D'Arcy McGee, another Young Irelander, was one of the fathers of the Canadian confederation. He maintained his support for the granting of 'responsible government' to Ireland. However, he became a staunch critic of Irish separatism in the 1860s and was widely disliked and resented by the Irish community in Canada. This was the

¹¹ Richard Davis, *Revolutionary Imperialist: William Smith O'Brien, 1803-64* (Dublin, 1998) p. 105.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹³ Kevin B. Nowlan, *The politics of repeal: a study in the relations between Great Britain and Ireland, 1841-50* (London, 1965), p. 13.

almost certain cause of his assassination in 1867. After the establishment of the Australian federal parliament in 1901, Tim Healy asked wittily why could an Irishman not 'be trusted with Home Rule unless he had first been transported.'¹⁴

Canada became a confederated dominion in 1867 under the provisions of the British North America Act. The parliamentary debate on the British North America Act was a fairly staid affair. The bill was introduced to the House of Lords by the colonial secretary, Lord Carnarvon, to widespread agreement on 19 February 1867.¹⁵ This was in stark contrast to the heated debates, in the House of Commons, over Irish Home Rule nineteen years later. The act grouped together Ontario, Nova Scotia, Quebec (Ontario and Quebec were previously Upper and Lower Canada) and New Brunswick into a confederation, and provision was made for the acceptance and entry of Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia. Carnarvon declared, momentarily, that 'we are laying the foundations for a great nation'.¹⁶ (The only serious opposition to the measure in the House of Commons came from Radical M. P. John Bright, who argued that there was little support in Canada for the move.) One of the major reasons for federation was the emergence of the United States of America as a powerful and united nation after the civil war. It was felt that the U.S. had designs on Britain's loyal North American colonies. Successive British governments regarded the British North America act as an ingenious instrument and would later attempt to impose this model, with subtle variations, on other parts of the empire.

William Gladstone would use the British North America Act as a guide to framing the Government of Ireland bill in 1886 and Butt would praise the act in his 1871 book *Home government for Ireland*. However, *The Nation*, which was a useful indicator of Irish nationalist opinion, praised John Bright's contribution to the debate for 'its truth and brilliancy', thus implying general distaste for the bill. In a highly Anglophobic and pro-

¹⁴ Ged Martin, 'The Irish Free State and the evolution of the commonwealth, 1921-49' in Hyam & Martin (eds), *Reappraisals*, p. 203.

¹⁵ *Hansard* 3, clxxxv, 557-76 (19 Feb. 1867).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 567 (19 Feb. 1867).

American article, it expressed surprise at the rapidity with which the bill passed through the House of Commons. Similar to Bright, *The Nation* had no qualms about the prospect of Britain's North American colonies being incorporated into the United States.¹⁷ The paper viewed the bill as being solely and narrowly concerned with shoring up the empire. The article alluded to the ramshackle Fenian invasion of Canada in 1866 which had been financed and launched from the United States. The British navy easily repelled this assault, though it caused alarm. The invasion had not been met with disapproval by the Irish nationalist press. *The Nation* characterised the invading Irish-Americans as a 'mighty Fenian force' and stated that America itself had held this force 'in check.' *The Nation* then expressed the hopeful opinion that America might 'repent of her misdeeds and open the floodgates of Irish wrath on the doomed colonies.'¹⁸

The genesis of the Home Rule movement

In Ireland, in the late 1860s, the Liberal party was in the ascendant. Constitutional nationalism hadn't impinged significantly on Westminster since the zenith of Daniel O'Connell's repeal movement in the late 1830s and early 1840s. In the aftermath of the Fenian campaign of 1867, Gladstone came to power with a desire to 'pacify Ireland' through reforms in the religious sphere and through moderate land reform.¹⁹ Gladstone disestablished the Church of Ireland in 1869 with his 'Irish Church Act'.²⁰ From then on, Catholics, Dissenters and other non-Church of Ireland members no longer had to pay tithes to the Church of Ireland. He then introduced a moderate land act intended to curb agrarian aggression and discontent. It failed miserably, and tenants' complaints were to escalate to a higher pitch later in the decade. The Catholic church, which had long advocated support for the British Liberal party, was bitterly disappointed with Gladstone's failure on the Irish

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ *The Nation*, 9 Mar. 1867.

¹⁹ O'Day, *Home Rule*, p. 32.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 33.

university bill of 1873.²¹ Gladstone had to reconcile the Irish clericalists in his party with the secularising radicals. The resulting botched bill satisfied no one. The Irish Liberals wanted a denominational university and withdrew their support.²² The secular radicals also objected to the bill on the grounds that it went too far in the area of religious education.²³ These groups allied with the Conservatives to defeat the bill.

Amid growing discontent in Ireland, the Home Government Association had been formed in 1870 by Isaac Butt. Butt was something of an Irish Disraeli, a romantic conservative who had wanted Ireland to be an integral part of the empire. He had defended the Union in a famous Dublin corporation debate with Daniel O'Connell in 1843 and claimed to have never repudiated the views he expressed on the repeal movement. However, a shift occurred in his thinking in the following decades, with David Thornley asserting that the Famine changed his views radically.²⁴ He developed a view that Ireland needed some measure of self-government. During the height of the Famine, Butt asked 'what alternative is there for an Irishman but to feel that the united parliament has abdicated the functions of government for Ireland and to demand for his country a separate legislative existence, the necessity of which will then be proved.' Thornley has also suggested he was partially inspired by the Fenians he came into contact in his role as a barrister.²⁵ Butt wrote an open letter to Gladstone in 1870, imploring him to grant an amnesty for all Fenian prisoners arrested in the aftermath of the 'outrages' two years before.²⁶ Butt came to Home Rule in the same way as Gladstone did as, a means of reconciling Ireland to the empire. He retained an unambiguously warm attitude to the British empire, regarding it as an Irish project as much as an English one. He was mindful of developments in the self-governing colonies and supportive of the Tory government's imperialist schemes in Afghanistan and South Africa in the late 1870s, with

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ David Thornley, *Isaac Butt and home rule* (London 1964), pp 17-18.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²⁶ Isaac Butt, 'Ireland's appeal for amnesty: a letter to the right honourable W.E Gladstone: a letter' in *Bristol selected pamphlets* (Glasgow, 1870) (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/60244652>).

the latter setting him at odds with the bulk of his party.²⁷ Butt affected a disinterested, almost naïve, patriotism that was admirably divorced from any sectional interest.

The Home Government Association was founded during the brief flowering of Conservative protestant nationalism that surfaced in the aftermath of Gladstone's disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. The attitude of this small rump, which constituted almost half of those that attended the early Home Government Association meetings, was best epitomised by the unambiguously Tory *Dublin Evening Mail*, 'If the power of the imperial parliament be used only to suspend the constitution in the whole of Ireland, it may be very well questioned whether the model of a free legislature might not be advantageously borrowed, for Irish use, from Protestant Canada.'²⁸ David Thornley has attested to the 'relative unimportance' of the Home Government Association in the nationalist revival of the early 1870s, and future Home Rule party chairman William Shaw lamented that it was little more than a 'Dublin shop-keeping movement.'²⁹

Nonetheless the germ of 'Home Rule' was planted in the public mind and candidates espousing those principles were elected in subsequent by-elections. The movement was swiftly flooded with figures from a more traditionally nationalist perspective and most of the protestant Conservatives consequently withdrew.³⁰ Figures such as Sir John Barrington and Lord Francis Coynningham were alienated by the emotive baggage that had attached itself to their sober, rational decentralisation scheme. Barrington noted that Reverend Joseph Galbraith was the only figure out of this unorthodox batch of Tory Home Rulers to retain an adherence to Home Rule principles by the early 1880s.³¹ The *Irish Times*, which spent a similarly brief period as a protestant nationalist newspaper, before becoming a stern Unionist

²⁷ Lawrence J. McCaffrey, 'Isaac Butt and the Home Rule movement' in *Review of Politics*, xxii, no. 1 (Jan. 1960), p. 94.

²⁸ Thornley, *Butt*, p. 86.

²⁹ David Thornley, 'The Irish Conservatives and Home Rule, 1869-1873' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xi, no. 43 (1959), p. 208.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

³¹ *Ibid.*

paper under the ownership of Sir John Arnott, was later to report on the departure of these peculiar, conservative advocates of self-government with some measure of glee.

The idea (federalism) was resuscitated by Mr. Butt for the benefit of the discontented protestants whom Mr. Gladstone's disestablishment policy had alienated, and who in shrinking from repeal in O'Connell's sense, ingeniously imagined that the "final" settlement of the land question in 1870 had left them in a position to secede safely. They soon discovered their error and we hardly believe one of the recruits Mr. Butt brought over from the conservative side fifteen years ago has not repented in sack, cloth and ashes.³²

The Home Rule League was officially established in 1873 by which time the protestant conservative influence had been minimised. Within this constituency, the desire for Irish self-government was merely a passing fancy, a spasm in the aftermath of disestablishment and Gladstone's reforms of the late 1860s. The Home Government Association, a pressure group which drew its ideological inspiration from what Alan O'Day calls a 'Protestant counter-movement' mooted in opposition to repeal in the 1840s, was eventually to evolve, by the late 1870s, into a popular pan-nationalist movement.³³

Butt laid out his views in his 1871 book, *Home government for Ireland: Irish federalism! : its meanings, its objects and its hopes*. The British North America Act of four years before was cited as the greatest example of federalism within the British empire. The issue of federalism was one which Butt used as a lodestar.³⁴ Butt outlined views which were strikingly similar to those expressed by the father of the imperial federation movement, Joseph Chamberlain, in the lead up to the first Home Rule bill fourteen years later. Chamberlain, after his 'Central Board' scheme had been shelved, had piloted a scheme for 'Home-rule-all-around' where England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland would get Home rule and the Commons would become an imperial parliament.³⁵ Butt had written in 1870, 'The imperial council ought plainly to be a great council of empire... The Irish parliament, consisting, be it always remembered, of the Queen, Lords, and the Commons of Ireland,

³² *Irish Times*, 26 Dec. 1885.

³³ O'Day, *Irish home rule*, p. 21.

³⁴ Isaac Butt, *Home Government for Ireland: Irish federalism! : its meanings, its objects and its hopes* (Dublin, 1870).

³⁵ J. E. Kendle, *Ireland and the federal solution: the debate over the united kingdom's constitution, 1870-1921* (London, 1989), p. 39.

would have supreme control in Ireland, except in those matters which the federal constitution might specifically reserve to the Imperial Assembly.³⁶

Federalism had a pre-history in Irish political circles prior to Butt's adoption of it. The idea had been propagated in 1844 by Liberal M.P for Rochdale, William Sharman Crawford, champion of Ulster tenant right.³⁷ It was briefly countenanced by Daniel O'Connell in the 1840s, though the ultimate goal of O'Connell's movement was apparently the restoration of Grattan's fabled parliament, this time no doubt bolstered by a greater executive power. However, when O'Connell realised the lack of support for Sharman Crawford's plan, he ditched it.³⁸

Rarely did federalism have the enthusiastic support of all the members of Butt's own party. It was primarily a pan-nationalist association. According to some, federalism was a plan misunderstood by its own adherents. The Reverend Joseph Galbraith, one of the founders of the Home Rule movement and a fellow of Trinity College, declared explicitly that, 'The federal independence which Canada had been granted was precisely what Ireland was demanding.'³⁹ P.J. Smyth, an old style repealer and rebellious Home Rule M.P., mercilessly attacked Galbraith for saying this. According to Smyth, under the federal plan Ireland would equate to Quebec in its relationship to Canada rather than the dominion of Canada in relation to the mother country. 'Simple repeal' was a catch-cry which held a great emotional attachment for many Irish nationalists. Smyth, for instance, believed that any scheme that granted Ireland the same level of independence as a province of Canada was a surrendering of Ireland's ancient right to self-government, which in his view had been provided for in 1782. This view involved an overestimation of the powers accorded to Grattan's parliament in that constitution. 'Canada possesses, but in a more perfect manner, the independence guaranteed to Ireland by the constitution of 1782, an independence which Ireland can regain,

³⁶ Isaac Butt, *Home Government for Ireland*, p. 24.

³⁷ O'Day, *Irish Home Rule*, p. 18.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

³⁹ *Irish Times*, 3 Dec. 1875.

not by begging for “Home Rule” of the league, but by demanding the simple repeal of O’Connell.’⁴⁰

The federalism-repeal argument was the centrepiece of the Home Rule conference of November 1873, held in the Rotunda in Dublin. It saw the thrashing out of this particular argument over four days of discussion. A. M. Sullivan, the editor of *The Nation* and subsequent M. P. for Meath, declared in favour of federalism, arguing that this was a more advantageous scheme than the one that had existed in Ireland from 1782 to 1800. Sullivan pointed out that, during the time of Grattan’s parliament, Ireland ‘had been governed by an English minister irresponsible to the Irish parliament.’ He quoted Charles Fox as saying in 1799, ‘Nobody is responsible but the Lord Lieutenant and his secretary... all the mischiefs ensue that belong to a government without responsibility.’ The editor of Fox’s correspondence, according to Sullivan, noted that “It is a curious thing to see the question of responsible government started in Ireland more than half a century before it became a watchword in Canada.”⁴¹

Butt had rejected repeal in a famed Dublin corporation debate with Daniel O’Connell in 1843, and insisted that he did not endorse the idea in the 1870s. However, he was somewhat hazy on the specifics of his own alternative scheme of federalism. He had made similar claims to those of Reverend Galbraith about placing Ireland on the level of Canada in terms of self-government, the same claims which had earned the chastisement of P. J. Smyth. Butt was intrigued by the federal principle but stated that Ireland’s position was different from that of Quebec or Ontario given that the two Canadian provinces were divided by an imaginary line. ‘The contiguity of these provinces to each other necessitated some details which would be inapplicable to the case of England and Ireland... The insular situation of Ireland fits us for a larger share of self-government than may be given to a country separated

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ *The Nation*, 22 Nov. 1873.

from another by an imaginary line.'⁴² His eventual plan was that the Westminster parliament would become a 'council of empire' with members from Canada, New Zealand and Australia, thus Ireland would, eventually, equate to Canada.

The specifics of the plan were not considered all that important by many Irish M. P. s. The sentiment of a national parliament in Dublin was more important. This was provided for by Butt's plan and thus it proved to be acceptable to most Irish nationalists. *The Nation* emphasised the attitudes of many Irish nationalists to the plan, 'In conclusion, we must express our entire agreement in the assertion that such an independence as, for instance, Hungary possesses "is the dearest aspiration of the Irish heart", but we also believe that a native federal parliament would be productive of many great advantages to this country, and that the Irish people would cordially accept it as a compromise.'⁴³ Richard Power's comment in retort to P.J. Smyth's argument eloquently encapsulated the ideology and attitudes of most Irish nationalists in the late nineteenth century, 'I do not think that either repeal or federation, one or the other, justifies a resort to the hostile declaration such as an Irish member of parliament has made. The only *right* which Ireland can stand on, in the principle of abstract justice, is the right of separation.' He argued that since separation was impossible, they should merely attempt to get 'the best terms that can be exacted.' *The Nation* was heavily critical of Smyth, reminding him of the three pledges he had made in Waterford, Dublin and Westmeath respectively, which bound him to support the scheme of Home Rule as it was constituted and forwarded by the party as a whole. In Dublin, Smyth stated that 'If it be the feeling of my countrymen... that federalism is the right thing, is the way to win, I can only say, as an Irishman, I believe it to be an act of patriotic duty and of public virtue to say I go with them.'⁴⁴

Fifteen years after Butt's manifesto, when Gladstone brought in his Home Rule bill, the constitutional scholar A.V. Dicey addressed the deficiencies of federalism in his book

⁴² Isaac Butt, *Irish Federalism!*, p. 23.

⁴³ *The Nation*, 21 Oct. 1871.

⁴⁴ *The Nation*, 16 May 1874.

England's case against Home Rule. Federalism required a written constitution which upset the famous unwritten constitution which the British system prided itself on. Dicey argued that federalism would lead to greater separation and that it undermined the sovereignty of parliament. He did concede that federalism would provide for the defence of minorities from 'the Irish state government', but ultimately, he held that it would be more dangerous than complete legislative independence.⁴⁵ He eventually saw Gladstonian Home Rule also, as nothing more than a halfway house to separation. Dicey dismissed as constitutionally deficient all forms of Home Rule, and offered nothing more than a restoration of the status quo.

At the 1874 election, when Gladstone was downed by 'a torrent of gin and beer'⁴⁶ (Gladstone had in a rather impolitic manner decided to increase duties on beer), the Home Rule party won fifty-nine seats. The Home Rule party emerged into the daylight of parliamentary politics in Westminster. It appeared that the new party easily outflanked the Liberal party in Ireland. However, David Thornley has dismissed the implications of the result, arguing that only one third of these figures could be regarded as genuine advocates of Home Rule.⁴⁷ Many politicians, such as William Stacpoole, M. P. for Ennis, Nicholas Murphy, M. P. for Cork and David Sherlock, M. P. for King's County, simply drifted from the Liberal party into the nascent Home Rule movement by making very vague inferences in favour of Irish self-government.⁴⁸ Alan O'Day, for instance, has characterised the movement in the early and mid 1870s as merely a matter of 'rechristening liberals as Home Rulers.'⁴⁹ One of this particular batch of Home Rulers, in an anonymous letter to *The Times*, written after the introduction of the First Home Rule bill, characterised his membership of the party in the Butt years as merely a place-holding ruse; fastening oneself to the Home Rule tag was the surest, most hassle-free way of getting back into the House of Commons at the 1874

⁴⁵ A. V. Dicey, *England's case against home rule* (London, 1973), p. 163.

⁴⁶ W.D. McIntyre, *The commonwealth of nations: origins and impact, 1869-1917* (Minneapolis, 1977), p. 19.

⁴⁷ Thornley, *Isaac Butt*, p. 195.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁴⁹ O'Day, *English face*, p. 52.

general election.⁵⁰ The immediate press reaction the new movement was generally scathing. The *Daily Express* intemperately described the movement as a 'farce.' Many of the critics of the movement (and indeed, its supporters) appeared to regard Home Rule and repeal as indistinguishable. The *Dublin University Magazine*, the journal of which Butt was a co-founder, and in an article which focused heavily on Butt's rejection of repeal in the Dublin corporation debate with Daniel O'Connell in 1843, declared that he had 'gathered together the rags of the old exploded repeal agitation and attempted to fashion out of them a mottled banner of disunion under which he has inscribed the name Home Rule.'⁵¹ It was deemed that the issue of repeal 'still serves to swell the wild and vapid declamations of Home Rulers who are alike regardless of logical argument and historical accuracy.'⁵²

Harnessing the colonial analogy in the 1870s

The Canadian comparison was trotted out a great deal in the early days of the movement. Butt, as the founder of the movement laid out its philosophy most cogently, frequently relying on the imperial precedents to make his arguments. He insisted that the grant of self-government would pacify Ireland, as Gladstone and the Liberals had miserably failed to do. Butt referred to Canada and Australia being able 'to haul down the rebel flag' as a result of garnering domestic self-government.⁵³ In a speech delivered in Birmingham, he hammered home the relevance of the colonial precedents to Ireland.

Thirty years ago, Canada was in a state of revolt against the British crown. There were state trials, informers, the military ransacking (of) the country for rebels, prices put on the heads of traitors and why? Because Canada had not the right to manage her own affairs... Why should not Ireland have what Canada has? Why should not Ireland have what Australia has?⁵⁴

In the main, gentler, more moderate language pre-dominated throughout the 1870s, relative to the 1880s. Long-time Irish parliamentarian, John Maguire, M. P. for Cork, stated, in a speech to the Home Government Association in Great Brunswick Street in 1871 that, 'If

⁵⁰ *The Times*, 25 Aug. 1886.

⁵¹ 'The Home Rule agitation' in *Dublin University Magazine*, lxxxiii (Apr.1874), p. 468.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 469.

⁵³ *The Nation*, 2 Dec. 1871.

⁵⁴ *The Nation*, 1 Mar. 1873

Englishmen could see that all that was aimed at was federation, such as existed in the United States and Canada, they would concede it, but there should be no bluster, for bluster would have no effect in obtaining Home Rule for this country.’ Maguire insisted that he would not join the Home Government Association because he was supporting the government in its efforts to institute land and education reform but asserted that he ‘never wavered in his devotion to the national faith of Ireland... he thought he had followed the policy of the wise and great man who they all revered, Daniel O’Connell (cheers).’⁵⁵ Maguire died in 1872 and was never officially elected on a Home Rule platform. Phillip Callan, M. P. for Louth, reassured people in a speech in Dundalk by declaring emphatically that he was against separation.

I am not here to tell you in the presence of so many leaders of the movement what they will tell you more fully- “what Home Rule means.” It is enough to say that it means that Ireland should have the rights possessed at this moment by Canada, Victoria and Tasmania under the British crown; but I will tell you what Home Rule does not mean. Home Rule does not mean separation. If it meant separation I would not be here.⁵⁶

At a large demonstration in Drogheda, Francis Brodigan, one of the founders of the local branch of the Home Government Association in Drogheda and a perennially unsuccessful candidate at repeated Westminster elections (he had failed to get elected as a Liberal candidate at the general elections of 1852,⁵⁷ 1865,⁵⁸ and 1868,⁵⁹ and was generally aligned with ‘popular politics of the country’⁶⁰), delivered a speech uncluttered with the usual references to 1782. Instead he honed in, with unusual directness, on the Canadian comparison.

Demonstrations such as we now witness are sufficient to evoke as they precede the fullest determination to found a federal system such as the British legislature has already established in Canada. Fanciful disparities in the circumstances of Ireland

⁵⁵ *F. J.*, 23 Aug. 1871.

⁵⁶ *The Nation*, 19 Aug. 1871.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 10 Apr. 1852.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 15 July 1865.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 14 Nov. 1868.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 24 Nov. 1855.

and Canada might be set up, but they do not affect the principle. Ireland is equally entitled to a federal parliamentary union as Canada.⁶¹

Future Home Rule M. P. and Liverpool-based barrister, Andrew Commins (elected for the Roscommon constituency in 1880 and subsequently, Cork North East in 1893), chaired a large Home Rule demonstration in Liverpool, in which he broached the colonial precedents of self-government.

He maintained that as Home Rule had been successful in the past twenty years in Canada, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, our American colonies, Australia, and all our other foreign possessions, which had all increased in prosperity, so in the same way, if Home Rule were granted to her, would Ireland progress and be content, and be not the less devoted to the British constitution.⁶²

The following year, Commins asked, in a speech in Bradford in 1873, 'why should not Ireland have self-government, the same as Canada, Australia, the Isle of Man, the Channel islands, and the other English colonies had?'⁶³ Joseph Neale McKenna, Catholic landlord and Liberal M. P., in a speech in his constituency of Youghal, stated 'I commend to British statesmen to win the loyalty of the people of Ireland by such a policy as has won the loyalty of the Canadians to the British crown.'⁶⁴ McKenna had, in the course of that speech, made a great deal of references to European analogies, such as the Austro-Hungarian empire and its relations with Hungary and Croatia, and had begun his speech, referring to the 'amalgamation by corrupt means and violent agencies of two ancient kingdoms separated by the sea-two ancient parliaments.'⁶⁵ McKenna also declared pointedly at the Home Rule conference of 1873, 'All the chief colonies had received constitutions and parliaments of their own.'⁶⁶

Charles Fay, recently elected M. P. for Cavan, after referring to the 'fraud' of the Act of Union, concluded his speech to the Home Rule League in Enniskillen in April 1875, by

⁶¹ *F. J.*, 12 Oct. 1871.

⁶² *The Nation*, 13 Jan. 1872.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 16 Aug. 1873.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 24 Oct. 1874.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Regan-Lefebvre, *Cosmopolitan nationalism in the Victorian empire*, p. 76.

pointing to 'New South Wales and Canada as examples of the Home Rule Ireland wanted.'⁶⁷ Francis O'Beirne, M. P. for Leitrim from 1876 to 1885, referred to the colonies in a speech to the Home Rule league. They had 'determined to wrest from the English government the management of their own affairs and see that they would be treated as the colonies were. Up to this hour they had less self-government in Ireland and even Jersey, or the Isle of Man, or the Australian colonies at the other side of the world (hear, hear). It was for this reason he had adopted Home Rule (cheers)'⁶⁸ O'Beirne, a member of the Union club in Belfast, an explicitly anti-nationalist institution, relinquished his seat at the 1885 general election after being excised from the parliamentary party by Parnell. William R. Redmond, the father of John and William and the first Home Rule M. P. among the Redmond clan, in 1877, 'contrasted the condition of Canada with that of Ireland' in a speech in Southwark.⁶⁹

Isaac Butt and Reverend Joseph Galbraith, both influential within the Home Government Association, were the two figures within the Home Rule movement that were the most ardent about the asserting the worth of the federal principle and the example of the British North America act. *The Nation* had earlier demonstrated sceptical hostility towards the confederation of Canada, however, Butt, in his *Home Government* manifesto, had declared the measure to be a model for the future governance of the United Kingdom, and Galbraith, who has been highlighted as the only member from the Tory Home Rule clique of the early 1870s to retain faith in the cause of Irish self-government, consistently echoed Butt's testimony as to the value of the British North America act in his speeches. Galbraith also expressed his support for the federation of the self-governing colonies of Australia and equated the Australian federalist movement aims with those of the Home Rule movement, 'The question of the confederation of Australia was different from the question of federalism in Ireland in its details but the principle was the same.'⁷⁰ The conservative clique that formed an influential part of the Home Government Association was moderately insistent upon the

⁶⁷ *F. J.*, 6 Apr. 1875.

⁶⁸ *The Nation*, 10 Feb. 1877.

⁶⁹ *F. J.*, 6 Dec. 1877.

⁷⁰ *The Nation*, 17 Dec. 1870.

relevance of the British North America act. A letter to the *Freeman's Journal* signed by Reverend Joseph Galbraith, Edward King Harman, future M. P. for Sligo, and a number of other figures, none of whom went on to become M. P. s, argued for Irish self-government, stating on the basis that self-governing constitutions had already been established in the colonies, 'the latest and most remarkable of which is that of the statute passed in 1867, which consolidated into one dominion the North American provinces of the British crown. The statute provides that each parliament should have its own parliament to legislate on provincial affairs. For matters which concern the interests of the dominion, a general parliament is provided, to which each province sends its representatives.'⁷¹ They were particularly insistent on the provincial nature of the demand.

Galbraith, an unorthodox Home Ruler and a fellow of Trinity College, had the classic profile of one who would drift away from the cause in the 1880s, however he remained a supporter of Irish Home Rule until his death in 1890.⁷² He attacked a proposed amendment to a Trinity College address to the new lord-lieutenant in March 1886 which specifically condemned Home Rule.⁷³ Throughout the early 1870s, he consistently harnessed the colonial precedents in his arguments for Home Rule.

The repeal constituency and advanced nationalists, while not quibbling with the analogy, sometimes had a tendency to speak of the self-governing colonies in a sour fashion. They frequently expressed the view that Ireland was entitled to Home Rule to an even greater extent than the colonies, on the grounds that these were concocted, manufactured communities whereas Ireland was an ancient nation with a distinct race and culture. A typical utterance came from A. M. Sullivan, one of the more advanced nationalist figures within the Home Government Association and editor of the aggressively nationalist, *The Nation*, when responding to Gladstone's criticism of Home Rule in a meeting of the association in October 1871.

⁷¹ *F. J.*, 11 Aug. 1870.

⁷² *The Irish Times*, 5 Nov. 1890.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 6 Mar. 1886.

The association asked for Ireland what the people of Victoria enjoyed, what the people of Queensland, what the people of Tasmania, what the people of New South Wales enjoyed, and they said that a great and gallant nation- a race of scholars, of civilisers, of heroes, and of sages- might be trusted at least with equal franchises of freedom, with the communities born of the outpourings of the jails of England (applause). When Mr. Gladstone asked what was Home Rule they bid him look at Canada and Australia.⁷⁴

William O'Neill Daunt, an M. P. in the early 1830s, and a staunch repealer, delivered a speech to the Home Rule League in D'Olier street in Dublin in 1880, in which he expressed disbelief that Home Rule 'could be conceded to the colonists and denied to one of the most ancient nations in Christendom.'⁷⁵ During the course of this speech he dealt with the Canadian precedent in great detail and force.

Lord Durham's remedy for Canadian wrongs was precisely the same which we claim for Irish wrongs. He advised that complete internal self-government should be given to the colonists; that the government of Canada should be put as much as possible into the hands of the colonists themselves. His advice was adopted; the Canadians got Home Rule and a transatlantic population transformed by that just and statesmanlike concession from a nation of insurgents into a nation of as loyal subjects as can be found in any part of the dominions (cheers)... The childish talk about dismemberment, disruption of the empire, is not really credited by those who utter it. Is the empire dismembered by Home Rule in Canada or in Australia? Then why should dismemberment result from undoing the giant wrong of the union?⁷⁶

O'Neill Daunt was highly attuned to the precedents of Home Rule in the colonies and abroad. He had earlier written an article when the Home Rule cause was in its infancy, to the Montreal newspaper, *True Witness*, which argued that Canadians, in particular, should 'understand Home Rule for Ireland was just.'⁷⁷

The 'Whiggish Home Rulers' were perhaps slightly more inclined to refer to the colonial precedents, in their constituencies, than their more advanced counterparts, possibly because they were less likely to indulge in the aggressive rhetoric of the proto- Parnellites. Callan, Fay and O'Beirne, all of whom referenced the colonial comparison in speeches in their own regions, were ostracised from the party by Parnell prior to the 1885 election. The Parnellite types, in the main, were somewhat less enamoured of dry, abstruse constitutional precedents.

⁷⁴ *The Nation*, 7 Oct. 1871.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 17 July 1880.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ P. M. Toner, 'The Home Rule League in Canada: Fortune, Fenians and Failure' in *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, xv (1989), p. 9.

Joseph Biggar, for instance, never constructed an analogy between any foreign country and Ireland in any of his recorded speeches.

A consistently popular tendency within the Home Rule movement was that of alluding to the strong support the cause of Irish self-government enjoyed within the colonies themselves, particularly among the Irish communities residing there. Kenelm Digby, M. P. for Queen's county, speaking at a Home Rule league meeting in the Rotunda in Dublin in 1874, informed those present that he had a pleasing duty to perform, namely to list the names of Canadians who were seeking to become members of the League.⁷⁸ The list consisted almost exclusively of Irish-Canadians. John Martin stated, in the national concert hall, that, 'In Canada a national petition was being prepared to be presented to the queen praying her to grant Home Rule to Ireland.'⁷⁹

The Catholic clergy, of course, were usually a large and imposing factor in parliamentary elections in Ireland in the nineteenth century. The local clergy's endorsement of one or other of the candidates frequently proved decisive. This fact was the subject of much anxiety in Britain, and was frequently asserted as a discrediting factor by Conservative politicians. The clergy, though initially suspicious of the movement, ultimately were to become a vanguard of the Home Rule party throughout its period as the dominant force in Irish politics. In the 1874 general election however, the clergy generally sided with Home Rulers of questionable sincerity who had slipped into the 'nationalist' ranks from the Liberal party. Clergymen, in their speeches, demonstrated no special tendency to refer to the colonial precedents, though nor were they averse to alluding to them. Aside from their obvious interest in issues of education, their speeches largely echoed those of nationalist politicians in shape and form. The dean of Limerick, Reverend Richard O'Brien, at the 1873 Home Rule conference in the Rotunda, in a moderate speech, alluded to the Canadian analogy, referring to 'the divisions which existed in Canada before its autonomy was granted, to show

⁷⁸ *The Nation*, 7 Mar. 1874.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 18 May 1872.

that the result of that concession of self-government been had to promote peace, prosperity and tranquillity.⁸⁰ By contrast, another long-time Home Ruler from the clerical ranks, Reverend Patrick Quaid, parish priest of O'Callaghan's Mills in the diocese of Killaloe, talked in more stirring tones a year earlier, stating, 'The Irish people were determined to shake off the infamous alien yoke placed on them by the cursed Act of Union, and kept on them by a robbing, plundering, oppressive alien government.'⁸¹

Buttite party in Westminster: Underwhelming parliamentary performances

Butt attempted an amendment to the parliamentary address to the queen's speech at the opening of parliament in 1874. He immediately launched into discussing the colonial precedent. He denied that he, or any members of his party, meant any harm to the empire, and asked, 'Had the parliaments of Canada, Australia and other colonies endangered the stability of the empire?'⁸² Maurice Brooks, M. P. for Dublin, in seconding the amendment, also disavowed any desire to break up the empire. In 1882, Brooks was abused by a placard in Dublin, characterising him and fellow Dublin M. P. Robert Lyons, as 'a willing henchmen for the government.'⁸³ Captain John Nolan, M. P. for Galway, briefly referenced contemporary European analogies, if only to differentiate them from the demand of the Irish members. He did so to highlight the modest nature of the Irish demand. 'He might perhaps be allowed, to observe that Norway had an army and navy separate from those of Sweden, and the militia of Hungary was separate from that of Austria. Those, who advocated Home Rule for Ireland had, however, no wish to take military power away from the central authority.'⁸⁴ Mitchell Henry, A. M. Sullivan, John Redmond and Joseph McKenna's contributions were devoid of specific references to the colonies, save for the usual bromides about consolidating the empire. Lord Robert Montagu, M. P. For Westmeath, in his speech

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ *The Nation*, 7 Sept. 1872.

⁸² *Hansard* 3, ccxviii, 112 (20 Mar. 1874).

⁸³ *Roscommon Herald*, 1 Apr. 1882

⁸⁴ *Hansard* 3, ccxviii, 147 (20 Mar. 1874).

on the proposed amendment, touched on a raft of arguments, and referred heavily to the grant of self-government to the colonies.

The right hon. gentleman (Gladstone) asked what were Irish affairs. The right hon. gentleman was in the house when it provided a parliament for the colonies, and especially for Canada; and did he ever ask what were Canadian and Australian subjects and what were English subjects?... Why then, was it said that the proposal of self-government for Ireland was unconstitutional? It was the constitution given to the colonies; it was merely carrying out an order of council substituting the word "Ireland" for the name of a particular colony... If this was a political question, it made no difference whether there was 3,000 miles or 100 miles of salt water between the two countries. If it were a true principle for Canada, it was true for England also, and if that principle was carried out for a little island between England and Ireland (The Isle of Man), why should it not be carried out in the case of Ireland as well.⁸⁵

In the course of his speech, Montagu did refer to the 1782 parliament, the debates over federation and centralisation in Switzerland, Germany and Austria, the religious dimension, and he attempted to demonstrate that the impulse towards 'local-self-government' was a Tory one rather than a Liberal one.⁸⁶

Sir George Bowyer, M. P. for Wexford, was the next to broach the colonial analogy in the debate.

With regard to the subject itself, he remembered when Lord Durham, who was Governor General of Canada, reported in favour of responsible government for the colonies, that his opinion was denounced as a revolutionary proposal... Now every large and self-governing colony in the empire had a ministry responsible to the colony... Yet self-government had been granted Canada, Australia, etc., without disruption, although these colonies were thousands of miles distant, and the vicinity of Ireland was so far from being a reason against self-government, that it was most improbable that Ireland should ever wish to be separated from this country.⁸⁷

Bowyer and Montagu were classic examples of the 'nominal Home Ruler', whose attitude to the cause of Irish self-government was essentially unserious. Montagu was a former Conservative M. P. for Huntington, who had converted to Catholicism in the early 1870s, and was subsequently expelled from that party. Montagu had written to Disraeli prior to the 1874 general election, asking for permission to run on a Home Rule platform for the constituency of Westmeath, pleading that it was the only way he could return to

⁸⁵ Ibid., 137-41 (20 Mar. 1874).

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ *Hansard* 3, ccxviii, 168 (20 Mar. 1874).

parliament.⁸⁸ Thornley has alluded to Bowyer's letter to Disraeli in 1877, where he referred to Home Rule as a 'shibbeloth' and said that he only joined the movement as a means of returning to parliament.⁸⁹

John Martin's speech on his own motion arguing that John Mitchel, the abrasive former Young Irelander, be allowed to take his seat, turned out to be homily on the issue of Home Rule itself.

Years after suppressing a rebellion in Canada, she has seen fit to grant Home Rule to Canada, and yet England did not feel herself at all the worse because the Canadians were masters in their own land, taxed themselves, spent the proceeds of their taxes and made their own laws. The interests of the English empire were not considered to be one whit injured by the Home Rule of Canada. Besides, Home Rule had also been granted to the Australian colonies and there was even talk of Home Rule being granted to that colony in which the case of the Langalibalele occurred (South Africa)... Besides, England already had the examples of Hungary and Austria, of Lombardy and Austria, of Belgium and Holland, of Norway and Sweden, to encourage or to warn... The common sense of the English people would before long convince them that Home Rule in Ireland could convince them no more than Home Rule in Canada or in Australia.⁹⁰

Martin was a contemporary of Mitchel's from the Young Ireland movement and was elected for the constituency of Meath in 1871. He was initially sceptical of Butt's federal ideas, however, unlike P. J. Smyth, he supported the party fully in parliament. Parnell succeeded Martin on his death later in 1875.

Mitchell Henry tabled an amendment to parliaments' response to the queen's speech in 1878, asking that their 'national demands' be considered 'in a wise and conciliatory spirit.' Henry, in his speech, alluded briefly to the colonial precedents on offer, arguing, in relation to local self-government, that 'Parliament had already given this power to Canada, it existed still more fully in Jersey and Guernsey, and it was universal throughout the States of America.'⁹¹ Chevalier O'Clery, M. P. for Wexford, in a theme which was something of a speciality of his, referred to a number of European analogies, describing Ireland as being in the same situation relative to England as 'Poland was to Russia.' He then alluded to the

⁸⁸ Thornley, *Isaac Butt*, p. 198.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

⁹⁰ *Hansard* 3, ccxxii, 970-2 (26 Feb. 1875).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, ccxxxvii, 124 (17 Jan. 1878).

‘instructive lesson’ of Hungary.⁹² This was a thread he had run with during the debate on Butt’s first Home Rule motion of June 1874. A. M. Sullivan compared Ireland to the ‘Christians under the Moslem yoke’ in Turkey.⁹³ He closed his speech by declaring that ‘Austria tried your present policy towards Hungary, and changed it after Sadowa.’⁹⁴ Both O’Clery and Sullivan showed a tendency to dwell on contemporary European analogies in debates throughout the 1870s.

Four months into the first session of the new parliament, Butt tabled a motion on 30 June 1874, ‘that this House resolve itself into a Committee to consider the parliamentary relations between Great Britain and Ireland.’ He made a speech laden with references to history rather than the empire. (Michael Hicks Beach, in particular, attacked this tendency, noting that ‘so much of this debate has been taken up with historical reminiscences.’) Butt devoted the early part of his speech to Ireland’s historical parliament. He admitted some of its limitations. He lamented that it accorded Ireland no voice in the imperial realm and was a purely Protestant parliament. However, he went on to discuss the prosperity Ireland enjoyed during its era. He then commenced upon the obligatory attack on the Act of Union. Butt made a brief reference to the extant self-governing colonies, ‘in some of our own colonies they found people owning the imperial sway of England but at the same time managing their own affairs... Sir George Grey, the governor of the Cape of Good Hope, wrote strongly in favour of giving a federal parliament to Ireland and he believed in his soul that it would be a means of affecting a complete union with England.’⁹⁵

The debate was scant on references to the empire. Richard Power, M. P. for Waterford, in a speech largely free of references to the empire and totally free of references to the self-governing colonies, looked forward to seeing the ‘restoration of their (Ireland’s)

⁹² Ibid., 131-2 (17 Jan. 1878).

⁹³ Ibid., ccxxxvii, 145 (17 Jan. 1878).

⁹⁴ Ibid., ccxxxvii, 151 (17 Jan. 1878).

⁹⁵ Ibid., ccxx, 713-4 (30 June 1874).

parliament.⁹⁶ His speech was more concerned with fanciful historical notions rather than colonial matters, 'There was a time when Ireland had her manufactures. When under the fostering care of a native parliament, they rose to such a state of perfection as to win the jealousy of this country... So far back as 1699 the liberty of exporting woollens was taken away. Yet, in the face of all their difficulties Irish manufactures existed and flourished as long as they had their parliament.'⁹⁷ McCarthy Downing, an M. P. for Cork, stated that 'I entered this house the representative- unopposed-of nearly 17,000 electors of an agricultural county, whose first requirement of me was a pledge from me that I would advocate in this house, and demand from it, the restoration to Ireland of her parliament, of which she was so fraudulently deprived, in the modified form asked for tonight.'⁹⁸

Chevalier O'Clery, the piously Catholic and compulsively internationalist Home Rule M. P. for Wexford, briefly harnessed the colonial analogy in his speech. O'Clery complained that, 'we are taunted with the revolutionary character of our demand for self-government, when you have readily granted the same rights to the colonies, and in so doing have added immensely to the strength of the empire.'⁹⁹ However he was particularly verbose on the Austro-Hungarian solution. 'For generations Austria attempted to crush out the national feeling of Hungary, until the constitution of the kingdom was declared abolished, and Austria by brute force attempted to rule the country from Vienna.'¹⁰⁰ The Austrians, reeling from the defeat by Bismarck's Prussian forces in 1866, conceded Hungary its parliament in 1867. Hungary was granted self-government under a dual monarchy system whereby both Austria and Hungary shared a monarch, the emperor of Austria, and a common foreign and defence policy. Both countries, however, had separate parliaments and separate prime ministers to legislate for their own domestic concerns. Where the Hungarians had previously been a source of danger to the Austrian empire, they had now emerged as its

⁹⁶ Ibid., 752 (30 June 1874).

⁹⁷ Ibid., 749 (30 June 1874).

⁹⁸ Ibid., 964 (2 July 1874).

⁹⁹ Ibid., 765 (30 June 1874).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

'bravest defenders.'¹⁰¹ O'Clery reiterated the Hungarian comparison in a speech in Enniscorthy in 1876, stating, 'it is time she (Ireland) prepared herself for a future in which she would have the dignity and prestige of Hungary in foreign affairs.'¹⁰²

A. M. Sullivan explicitly compared the Home Rule party to the moderate Hungarian nationalists, 'We stand in Irish politics where the Deak party stood in Hungarian; they stood between the Imperial Austrian party on one hand, and the Kossuth separationists (sic) on the other.'¹⁰³ Ferenc Deak was a Hungarian politician and the architect of the Austro-Hungarian solution of 1867. He was considered a moderate advocate of Hungarian self-government. Sullivan would later make similar comments during the debate on the queen's speech of 1878.¹⁰⁴ The Hungarian solution of 'dual monarchy' would later become associated with Sinn Féin, as the party's founder, Arthur Griffith, would be inspired by, and seek to emulate the abstentionist policy of the Hungarian nationalists. Griffith saw this abstentionist policy as having led inexorably to the Hungarian parliament of 1867. O'Clery pointed out that Sweden and Norway had had separate parliaments under one kingdom since 1814. He lamented Lord Castlereagh's decision to bind Belgium and Holland under one parliament. Belgium had eventually acquired its national parliament after the 1830 War of Independence. European examples featured at least as prominently as references to the colonial analogy, in the debate.

John McCarthy, the M. P. for Mallow, was one of few genuine believers in Butt's scheme of federalism. Bringing to the fore possibly the most persuasive argument for Home Rule, he noted that the 'Imperial parliament has adopted this (federalism) as a fixed principle for dealing with all its colonies of European race.'¹⁰⁵ The *Daily Telegraph*, however, characterised his portentous speech as 'wildly irrelevant.' The English newspapers, almost

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² *New Zealand Tablet*, 21 Jan. 1876.

¹⁰³ *Hansard* 3, ccxx, 790 (30 June 1874).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., ccxxxvii, 151 (17 Jan. 1878).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., ccxx, 879 (30 June 1874).

universally and unsurprisingly, were not enamoured of the Home Rule effort. They generally praised those who spoke against the bill.

The motion was defeated; the Tories and the Liberals were united against it. Both parties were implacably hostile to the Irish nationalist claims. The Irish chief secretary, Hicks Beach, and Scarborough M. P., Sir Charles Legard, alleged confusion on the part of the Home Rule members. Legard stated that, on the basis of the speeches made by senior Home Rulers over the previous twelve months, they appeared to want simple repeal more so than the plan which they purported to support. Lord Hartington also dwelt upon Grattan's parliament rather than the federalist scheme that Butt wished to set up. He relayed Isaac Butt's own words, from his 1843 Dublin corporation debate with Daniel O'Connell, back to him. There, Butt had emphasised the real limitations of Grattan's parliament, such as the lack of executive power. He had noted that the assembly was merely a talking shop and had equated it to the Canadian parliaments before 'responsible government.' In the Dublin corporation debate of 1843, Butt had asked any repealer who yearned for Grattan's parliament, "is he willing to recur to the state of things on the day before the Union was passed? ... In the first place you must have all bills passed by the Irish parliament approved of by the English privy council, and sanctioned under the great seal of England, by ministers responsible only to the English parliament."¹⁰⁶ Butt denied that the status quo that had existed prior to the Union was especially enlightened. The 1782 parliament was not exactly zealous in its propagation of rights for Catholics. These rights were largely foisted on the 1782 parliament from outside, against its will. This was the case with the Catholic relief act of 1793. Butt had implied, in his role as Home Rule leader, in 1874, that Grattan's parliament would have granted Catholic emancipation had it not been disbanded. Richard Smyth, a liberal M. P. from Belfast and a minister in the Presbyterian church, continued to hold the views that Butt once held, 'Ireland is not as she was once, a mere annex to England,

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 772 (30 June 1874).

but is an integral part of the Imperial system.’¹⁰⁷ Smyth queried the legacy of Grattan’s parliament on Catholic emancipation, ‘It was reserved for the united parliament of a united empire to rise above the wretched contending and jealousies of creeds to pass a measure of Catholic emancipation.’ He took care to distance himself from the attorney general Dr. John Ball, who was the first speaker to respond to Butt’s motion, and who Smyth accused of speaking with ‘contempt’ about his fellow countrymen.¹⁰⁸

Hicks Beach was the only politician to go into detail on the colonial analogy. He was also the only government spokesman to deal specifically with the federal principle. He pointed out that the North American colonies were disparate entities before they were bound together in a confederation. Every other federation was, hitherto, inclined in the direction of union. That separated them from this scheme which was inclined in the direction of separation. Hicks Beach simply chose to regard Ireland as a province rather than a nation. As far as Hicks Beach was concerned, Home Rule for Ireland was more equivalent to the cause of Quebec separatism than to the demand in Canada as a whole for dominion Home Rule. He offered a litany of practical objections to the federalist scheme. He also dismissed the comparison with Austro-Hungary. ‘Under the system which had now been in force for 70 years in Ireland there had been growing up silently, perfect constitutional freedom, and this was not the case in Austria and Hungary.’¹⁰⁹ Disraeli impatiently swatted away the notion that Ireland was ‘a conquered land.’ During the tenure of his premiership, he was eager to avoid the, to him, intractable Irish problem altogether, an issue of which he had little or no knowledge. The veteran Liberal, John Roebuck, who had argued fervently in the 1830s for the granting of self-government to the colonies, also opposed the plan. He argued that it involved the dismantling of a state. He viewed Butt’s scheme of federalism as a highly convoluted one, the natural extension of which was the re-establishment of the kingdom of

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 734 (30 June 1874).

¹⁰⁸ Thornley, *Isaac Butt*, p. 231.

¹⁰⁹ *Hansard* 3, ccxx, 894 (2 July 1874).

Wessex and the Heptarchy. He insisted on a United Kingdom nationality and called for the abandonment of Irish nationality, as well as Scottish and English nationality.¹¹⁰

Despite the granting of responsible government to Canada and New Zealand, Home Rule for Ireland was still considered a 'far out', dangerous idea. Ireland's constitutional position complicated matters. Although ostensibly an integrated part of the United Kingdom, similar to Scotland, the Home Rule M. P. s claimed that Ireland was ruled in a manner akin to a colony. While providing 105 members to the House of Commons (more than its fair share), Ireland had a separate and distinct civil service to the rest of the United Kingdom and was frequently used as a testing ground for policies later used in India, an outright colony. Ged Martin has alluded to the fact that Ireland was not, in the main, a 'country of settlement' in the way Canada and Australia were. He indicated that the 'British spasmodically thought of them (the Irish) as a problem in an imperial context- sometimes colonial, sometimes "Indian."' ¹¹¹ Lord Salisbury, Disraeli's successor as leader of the Tory Party, and a visceral opponent of Irish Home Rule, said, that 'on Tory principles' in 1872 that it was necessary to hold Ireland 'like India, at all hazards: by persuasion, if possible; if not, by force.'¹¹²

Two years had elapsed by the time Butt brought a slightly attenuated motion for Home Rule once more before the House of Commons, in June 1876 (exactly two years to the day since he had brought in the earlier motion). Essentially, the motion argued that there be an inquiry into the demand for Home Rule that existed among the Irish people. Butt stated frankly that 'The proposal was that, there should be a parliament for Ireland exercising over Irish affairs the same dominant control that had been exercised by the parliament of Canada over Canadian affairs and the parliament of Australia over Australian affairs and as was exercised in every colony by colonial parliaments.'¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 943 (2 July 1874).

¹¹¹ Ged Martin, 'The Irish Free State and the evolution of the commonwealth, 1921-49' in Hyam & Martin (eds), *Reappraisals*, p. 205.

¹¹² *The Nation*, 26 Oct. 1872.

¹¹³ *Hansard* 3, ccxxx, 738 (30 June 1876).

The debate ended up portraying the amount of animosity to Butt within his own party. The federal principle wasn't universally endorsed or adhered to by Home Rule M. P. s and was treated with outright disdain by some. In a speech that was lavishly praised for its lyricism, P.J. Smyth dissented from the federal principle and argued for a simple restoration of the 1782 parliament.¹¹⁴ Smyth attempted to move an amendment stating, 'That, in the opinion of this House, Home Rule, as understood by a large proportion of the Irish people, is the restoration of the parliament with the legislative powers and prerogatives declared, by an act of the parliament of Great Britain, to have established and ascertained forever by the international settlement.'¹¹⁵ Smyth was depressed by Butt's insistence on federalism and instead eulogised the 1782 parliament. He regarded Home Rule as a convoluted, new-fangled scheme destined to sell out Ireland's ancient historical right. Smyth was keen to insist that Ireland would not equate with the dominion of Canada under federalism but rather it would be placed on the same emaciated footing of a mere province of Canada. 'The colonial example, so far from sustaining the case of the hon. and learned gentlemen (Butt) illustrates most forcibly its absurdity-unless it can shown that England is prepared to adopt the political system which South Africa would not have and that Ireland is willing to become the Manitoba of a British dominion.'¹¹⁶ The province of Manitoba had most recently been inducted into the Canadian confederation in 1870.¹¹⁷ In Smyth's estimation, Manitoba, like the other provinces in the Canadian dominion, would have enjoyed a far too restrictive constitution from an Irish point of view. Ireland would thus be in a much more limited position than Canada. He argued that Grattan's parliament equated with the dominion parliament of Canada. 'Put Ireland in the position of the Canadian dominion, or of any of the countries composing the Australasian group, revive the constitution of 1782.'¹¹⁸ He did correctly predict that imperial federation, an idea that Butt regarded as the natural culmination of his efforts to establish federalism in Ireland, would have to find favour in the

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 750-67 (30 June 1876).

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 751 (30 June 1876).

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 756 (30 June 1876).

¹¹⁷ McIntyre, *Colonies into commonwealth*, p. 77.

¹¹⁸ *Hansard* 3, ccxxx, 758 (30 June 1876).

colonies before it could possibly be enacted. The Hungarian comparison was another favourite of Smyth's, as it was a favourite of all those nationalists who were impatient with Butt's scheme, and who thought too accommodating. 'Hungary's constitution had slept till awakened by the canon of Sadowa, and better that Ireland's constitution should sleep for three quarters of a century more, than that Ireland should annul that treaty of liberty by a treaty of slavery.'¹¹⁹

Smyth regarded Grattan's parliament with an avowedly sentimental eye. In a speech to the inaugural meeting of the Home Government Association in 1871, Smyth dwelt rather fancifully on the history of the Irish parliament. He referred to the Irish parliament's 1641 declaration that the Irish were 'a free people... governed only according to the common law of England and statutes made and established in this kingdom of Ireland', the 1688 revolution which 'confirmed the Irish constitution' and how the question of Ireland's constitutional status was 'at last satisfactorily terminated by Henry Grattan and his armed men (cheers)'.¹²⁰ The high priest of restorationism was always inclined to ignore the fact the 1782 parliament had no executive responsible to it. Despite the mythology surrounding Grattan's parliament perpetuated by the generations of Irish nationalists, that parliament, roughly speaking, equated with the assemblies in Canada prior to responsible government.

The Home Rulers who contributed to the debate dressed Smyth down. Whatever their actual views on federalism, they reacted against the mutineer. John O'Connor Power, the M. P. for Mayo and ex-Fenian, quoted the eighteenth century Whig statesman Charles Fox, a figure much beloved of all radicals in the nineteenth century, as saying that the 1782 parliament was not built for 'durable material'.¹²¹ Grattan's parliament had a wider legislative scope than Butt's proposed parliament but had no executive responsible to it. The nationalist press

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 766-7 (30 June 1876).

¹²⁰ *F. J.*, 27 June 1871.

¹²¹ *Hansard* 3, ccxxx, 768 (30 June 1876).

were impatient over what they considered to be the tedious scuffle over federalism vis a vis repeal.¹²²

The distinctions between federalism and repeal dominated the debate in the aftermath of Smyth's critique. Arthur Kavanagh, Tory M. P. for Carlow, suggested that there was little difference between federalism and repeal and that they both meant 'separation' with federalism perhaps meaning 'modified separation.' Kavanagh, however, insisted that Butt's federalism was not endorsed by the bulk of rank-and-file Home Rulers, 'the hon. and learned member (Butt) knows himself that in advocating that federal scheme he does not represent the opinions of the entire class of Home Rulers. He knows, I believe, that he has only to go among his own constituents to discover that there a different sect exists who were once upon the point of handling him roughly, if the papers speak the truth, because his opinions were too milk-and-water for their notions. This sect, I believe, go in broadly for entire separation and for a distinct and separate nationality.'¹²³ Richard Power argued that the insistence that Home Rule meant separation was unfounded. 'I fear that those who advance such an argument do not profit much by the lessons of history. Self-government has not made Canada, Australia, the Isle of Man, or Hungary seek for separation.'¹²⁴ Arthur Kavanagh's son Walter would later become an Irish party M. P. for Carlow between 1908 and 1910 and one of the more conservative advocates for Irish self-government, eventually resigning his seat because of the party's opposition to the Tariff reform movement.¹²⁵

Michael Hicks Beach spoke again on the motion saying, 'Much has been said by the hon. and learned member (Butt) about our being ready to concede liberty to our colonial dominions, but denying it to Ireland. I do not suppose the hon. and learned Member intends to imply that Ireland would be satisfied with the position of a colony in relation to Great Britain. By accepting this position she would gain legislative independence for herself, but

¹²² *The Nation*, 16 May 1874.

¹²³ *Hansard* 3, ccxxx, 776 (30 June 1876).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 793 (30 June 1876).

¹²⁵ *Irish Independent*, 28 Feb. 1910.

she would not have the representation in the Imperial Parliament she now possesses.¹²⁶ Agreeing with Smyth, he argued that the modest amount of autonomy that had been granted to the provincial assemblies in the colonies would not be enough to satisfy Irish Home Rulers. He pointed out that the dominion parliament in Canada was all-powerful. The motion was again defeated resoundingly, in front of an even more uninterested parliament, by a majority of 230.

William Shaw, who succeeded Butt as leader in 1879, introduced a similar motion on 24 April 1877. Shaw noted the unpopularity of the idea as he was bringing it in. W. E. Forster, otherwise opposed to the motion, actually encouraged Shaw not be so apologetic. Shaw did not refer to the colonial analogy in his speech but instead talked about the effects of the Union since 1800 and dismissed the possibility of a Roman Catholic ascendancy in a Home Rule Ireland. He insisted that the only proper objections to Butt's federalism were those based on minute details that could be easily circumvented.¹²⁷ He insisted, undoubtedly correctly, that the Home Rulers were not rigid in their adherence to the plan and they were open to teasing out the issues in committee. It was the principle of ultimately instituting 'an Irish parliament' which was most important to the Home Rulers. The nominal 'Tory Home Ruler', Edward King Harman, M. P. for Sligo, seconded the motion in an extraordinarily meek fashion and almost distanced himself from the motion as he supported it. King Harman stated at one point that 'the first body of men who spoke up for Home Rule were principally protestant Conservative gentlemen, who repudiate with scorn the idea that they desired to separate from England, and who, if repeal of the union was offered to them, would refuse it at once.'¹²⁸ Hicks Beach noted that this 'repudiation of a desire for repeal was coldly received by the Home Rulers who sat on the benches below the gangway on the opposition side of the house.'¹²⁹ Rowland Blennerhassett, M. P. for Kerry, was another figure subsequently lambasted as a 'nominal Home Ruler' to be openly critical of repeal, stated

¹²⁶ *Hansard* 3, ccxxx, 804-5 (30 June 1876).

¹²⁷ *Hansard* 3, ccxxxiii, 1748 (24 Apr. 1877).

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1751 (24 Apr. 1877).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1827 (24 Apr. 1877).

that, 'I am no advocate of the repeal of the union. I do not believe it would be practical from an imperial, or desirable even from a purely Irish point of view, to go back exactly to the settlement of 1782.'¹³⁰ His use of the phrase 'local self-government' in speeches, both in the House of Commons and on platforms in his constituency¹³¹, earmarked him as a moderate. He further said that, 'no proposal which does not stand the test of imperial utility can or ought to be accepted here. I believe the soundest regard for imperial interests should prompt us to abandon, as regards Ireland, the fatal policy of centralisation.'¹³² Shaw stated that the Irish Home Rulers would not withdraw from the empire even if they could.

Butt himself was the first speaker to allude to the Canadian comparison, 'Did they understand it when they gave Canada Home Rule, and by doing so converted a most disloyal province into one of the most loyal portions of the empire. Let them give Ireland the same control over Irish matters that Canada possessed over her affairs, and the Irish people would ask no more.'¹³³ However, many Home Rulers, in these debates, appeared to regard Home Rule and repeal as interchangeable. Colman O'Loughlen continually lapsed into referring to Grattan's parliament, rather than federalism. Richard O'Shaughnessy, M. P. for Limerick, also talked exclusively about history rather than the recent colonial analogy

The motion involved a rerun of the same issues and the House was getting decidedly weary and bored of the issue (thus Shaw was possibly justified in apologising). Charles Lewis, the M. P. for Londonderry, stated that what the Home Rulers wanted was the 'restoration of the Irish parliament plus the right to interfere in the imperial affairs of the British parliament.' Hicks Beach stated that 'Home Rule was not, it appeared, a proposal to place Ireland in the position with regard to England that was occupied by one of our colonies... it was a federation, similar, not to that of Austro-Hungary, but to that of the Dominion of Canada.'¹³⁴

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, ccxxiii, 1782 (24 Apr. 1877).

¹³¹ *The Nation*, 28 Sept. 1878.

¹³² *Hansard* 3, ccxxiii, 1789 (24 Apr. 1877).

¹³³ *Ibid.*, ccxxxiii, 1820 (24 Apr. 1877).

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1827 (24 Apr. 1877).

Hicks Beach argued that the Dominion parliament in Canada held the bulk of the power and that the provinces had a very truncated measure of independence.

The hon. and learned gentleman the member for Limerick had told the house that it was essential that the education and land questions should be among the subjects which would have to be decided by a future Irish parliament... But in Canada questions relating to land and education were not left entirely under the control of the provincial legislatures. These legislatures might make, no doubt certain changes with respect to both those questions, but they could only introduce them... subject to certain provisions with regard to the rights of minorities, carefully laid down in the Act of Federation.¹³⁵

The motion was rebuffed by the House by 417 votes to 67.

A small clique of English M. P.s, mainly coming from the north of England, supported Irish Home Rule in the 1870s. Jacob Bright, M. P. for Manchester and Sir Wilfrid Lawson, M. P. for Carlisle spoke in favour of the Irish party motions demanding an inquiry into Home Rule in 1876 and 1877 respectively. Joseph Cowen, the M. P. for Newcastle, otherwise an imperial federationist and supporter of Tory policy with regard to the eastern question and in South Africa, and the M. P. for Morpeth, Thomas Burt, along with Lawson, a major figure in the temperance movement and one of the most left wing members of the Liberal party, consistently voted in favour of Home Rule throughout their careers. Others supporters included the M. P. for Halifax, John Hutchinson and Alex MacDonald, another hard left-winger from Stafford.

Obstructionist revolt

In 1877, a few disenchanted members of the Irish parliamentary party revolted against the decision of the government to annex two independent republics in South Africa. These two republics, Transvaal and the Orange Free State were peopled by Dutch settlers and were ravaged by war with black African tribes along their border. The mire of South Africa had puzzled British statesman since the turn of the nineteenth century. Lord Carnarvon, back in the role of colonial secretary, attempted to transpose the solution he had grafted onto Canada, on South Africa. This would involve grouping together the four prospective parts of

¹³⁵ Ibid., 1828 (24 Apr. 1877).

the Union of South Africa, Natal, the Cape Colony, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal into a confederation. The former two colonies were considered loyal and were within the British empire, the latter two were not and objected violently to the annexation of their territory.

During this imbroglio, a small tranche of Irish M. P. s was aggressive in their hectoring of British policy. These included the obstreperous Biggar and Parnell, the cosmopolitan Frank Hugh O'Donnell, Captain J. P. Nolan, Edmund Gray, the owner of the *Freeman's Journal*, G. H. Kirk and John O'Connor Power, another Fenian.¹³⁶ They opposed violently in the case of South Africa, the scheme that they purported to support in Ireland.

O'Donnell was extremely verbose on the subject. He was keen to point out in his history of the parliamentary party that he met with Kruger later in 1877 for a tete-a-tete where they affirmed their solidarity.¹³⁷ O'Donnell stated that, 'He could not, at all events, conceive how they could consistently grant those extensive powers of self-government to South Africa and refuse Home Rule to Ireland.'¹³⁸ In his response to Butt's 1877 manifesto, he indicted the moderate Home Rulers for having 'criminally aided the government to violate in the South African republic all the privileges and principles which should be sacred to the representatives of "Grattan and the Volunteers."¹³⁹

Parnell, who was also particularly voluble on the subject, was asked why he opposed the attempted confederation of South Africa when he claimed to support it in Ireland. He stated frankly that Ireland's desire was for federation whereas South Africa was hostile to it. Parnell argued that, 'The difference between the two cases was that Ireland desired federation, while the confederation of these states was sought, not by the colonists... any confederation of the kind ought to be voluntary and spontaneous and not forced.'¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Donal P. McCracken, *Forgotten protest: Ireland and the Anglo-Boer war* (Belfast, 2003) p. 4.

¹³⁷ O'Donnell, *Irish parliamentary party*, p. 218.

¹³⁸ *Hansard* 3, ccxxxv, 1770 (24 July 1877).

¹³⁹ *The Nation*, 22 Sept. 1877.

¹⁴⁰ *Hansard* 3, ccxxxv, 1768 (24 July 1877).

O'Connor Power declared, at a speech in Leeds, that 'he and his friends subsequent opposition to the Transvaal acquisition was a protest in favour of a constitutional confederation like what they claimed for Ireland, as against the atrocious usurpation of South African territory which had been committed.'¹⁴¹ Parnell also stated, in the course of his speech on 24 July, 'It had been argued against the restoration to Ireland of its native parliament that, in that event, it would be impossible to define what matters pertained to be local, and what pertained to the imperial parliament; but, in that respect, her majesty's government showed a remarkable inconsistency in dealing with these South African colonies, because by this measure they did define those matters, and appeared to find no difficulty about it.'¹⁴² Certainly, it appears to be the case that the obstructionists' objection to the enterprise, and their objection to the Second Boer War at the turn of the century, lay in its' expansionist nature, rather than out of any hostility to the notion of federalism or self-government within the empire generally. Home Rulers fulsomely supported the arrangement that was reached in South Africa during the 1906-09 period, which mirrored closely the Canadian arrangement, albeit with an even more powerful central government.

Home Rulers did not always ally themselves with the colonists, though they frequently insisted that sought the same measure of self-government as the colonies. They also demonstrated hostility to the federal governments, and the notion of federalism, in the colonies. Home Rulers frequently made comments which inferred sympathy with the indigenous peoples in the colonies without ever committing officially to such an outlook. In the 1880s, when the Home Rulers, under Parnell, adopted a tone of unceasing hostility to any imperial projects, the *Dublin Evening Mail* accused the Irish party of showing excessive sympathy towards Louis Riel and the Metis rebellion against the Canadian federal government. They stated, after his execution, that Riel was a 'great favourite with the separatist faction in this country as the Mahdi or General Komaroff... At all events, our

¹⁴¹ *F. J.*, 27 Aug. 1877.

¹⁴² *Hansard* 3, ccxxxv, 1768 (24 July 1877).

friends the Irish nationalists have lost a hero, and the American Fenians a valuable ally.¹⁴³ Tim Healy objected to parliament paying for the cost of medals to the Canadian volunteers in the aftermath of the Riel rebellion partly on the grounds that he couldn't, in the House of Commons, attain information on the grievances of the Metis.¹⁴⁴ William Lane, M. P. for Cork North East, stated that 'I oppose the vote on the grounds as my right hon. friend the member for Derry (T. M. Healy)- namely, that the volunteers of Canada were engaged in suppressing a rebellion, with which we, as the representatives of an oppressed people in Ireland, naturally sympathise.'¹⁴⁵ John Hooper, M. P. for Cork South East, objected to the government of the United Kingdom paying for something which involved the internal politics of the Canadian dominion and announced that he was not enamoured of 'the policy which led to the execution of the Riel.'¹⁴⁶ Richard Davis indicated that John Dillon, in his tour of New Zealand in the late 1880s, 'showed the customary Irish interest in the Maoris.'¹⁴⁷

The Home Rulers' sincerity in taking up the Boer cause was questioned; however there was a genuine sympathy with the Boers which animated the M. P. s to obstruct parliament for such a length of time. This went hand in hand with a chance to embarrass the government. Jennifer Regan Lefebvre has argued that Parnell 'was interested in extra-Irish affairs only to the extent that they furthered Irish nationalist goals.'¹⁴⁸ On 31 July, 1877, the rogue Home Rulers engaged in an epic, marathon session of disruption and obstruction to the growing annoyance of the house. Parnell and his cohorts introduced a series of niggling amendments to the motions throughout the night. Irish Liberals reacted with disgust to their performance and the O'Donoghue, in a letter to *The Nation*, cynically received their claims that 'the sole object of all their talk was the "reform of imperial legislation."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ *D. E. M.*, 5 June 1885.

¹⁴⁴ *Hansard* 3, cccii, 1245 (25 Feb. 1886).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1249 (25 Feb. 1886).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1247 (25 Feb. 1886).

¹⁴⁷ Richard Davis, *Irish issues in New Zealand, 1868-1922* (Dunedin, 1974), p. 157.

¹⁴⁸ Regan Lefebvre, *Cosmopolitan nationalism*, p. 133.

¹⁴⁹ *The Nation*, 25 Aug. 1877.

English M. P.s who supported the Irish parliamentarian's advocacy of the Boer cause, if not the obstructive methods, included the radical M. P. s, Leonard Courtney, Sir Charles Dilke and Joseph Chamberlain.¹⁵⁰ Chamberlain was still in the anti-imperial coalition in the late 1870s and he had little time for Disraeli's foreign policy, opposing 'imperialism, if it meant jingoism'. Michael Davitt, in his 1904 book, *The Boer fight for freedom*, published after his resignation from parliament, related Chamberlain as saying of the Boers in a speech in Birmingham, 'In 1852 we made a treaty with them and agreed to respect and guarantee their independence; and I say under these circumstances, is it possible we could maintain a forcible annexation of the country, without occurring the accusation of having been guilty, I will not say of national folly, but of national crime.'¹⁵¹ In his role as colonial secretary at the turn of the century, Chamberlain would be one of the chief architects of the second Boer war.

Butt had a leisurely approach to Commons business and had little patience for the gung-ho, Irish pro-Transvaal lobby that had grown up in the Commons. The latter represented the aggressive fringes of the party. The heavily nationalist wing of the party was exasperated by Butt's inaction and was frustrated about his failure to make his presence felt in the Commons. Biggar and Parnell delivered a much needed infusion of energy into the party. Their campaign was met with favour by most of the Irish nationalist press. *The Nation* declared that 'the Irish popular press calls loudly for vigorous action instead of the "conciliatory" line of conduct which the party has hitherto adopted.'¹⁵² In a letter written in favour of the obstructionists, former Young Irelander and future M. P. for Queen's County, Richard Lalor asked plaintively, 'What got Canada her present position? Not parliamentary eloquence. And is there is to be an exception made for Ireland?'¹⁵³ However, the more moderate *Freeman's Journal*, supportive of Butt, attacked the obstructionists for their actions and claimed they were bringing the cause into disrepute.

¹⁵⁰ McCracken, *Forgotten protest*, p.14.

¹⁵¹ Michael Davitt, *The Boer fight for freedom* (London, 1904), p. 15.

¹⁵² *The Nation*, 9 June 1877.

¹⁵³ *The Nation*, 25 Aug. 1877.

Butt's insistence on a moderate course and his unambiguous support for imperialism dogged him. Feeling was turning against him from 1877 onwards. He had lost control of the party and was characterised as a purely 'nominal' leader by many of its supporters. He was defeated in a motion at the Home Rule League in February 1879 and he died three months later of a stroke. Butt was succeeded by William Shaw, non-conformist clergyman and the chairman of the prestigious Munster Bank who sat for the famously Tory stronghold of Bandon. Shaw did not deviate from Butt's course. He was even more alienated from 'obstructionist' opinion than Butt had been. Gladstone, hereafter, referred to Shaw and his ilk, in an unintentionally damning phrase, as 'nominal Home Rulers', a comment that was seized upon by the obstructionists in the party.

The Home Rulers were enraged by the 1880 Conservative manifesto. The manifesto was in the unusual shape of a letter composed by Disraeli to the lord-lieutenant of Ireland, and the father of Randolph Churchill, the duke of Marlborough. In it Disraeli bombastically declared that Irish Home Rule was 'a danger, in its ultimate results, scarcely less disastrous than pestilence or famine.' Referring presumably to the Liberals, he stated, 'Having attempted to enfeeble our colonies by their policy of decomposition, they may, perhaps, now recognise in the disintegration of the United Kingdom a mode which will not only accomplish, but precipitate their purposes.'¹⁵⁴ A. M. Sullivan, erstwhile editor of *The Nation*, in seconding a motion on the issue put forward by the O'Gorman Mahon, stated, 'It was absurd to say that the demand of the Irish people for the control of their domestic affairs implied disloyalty to the empire. Was Australia or Canada disloyal, or was any other dependency of the British crown, to which England, with that generosity she never failed to display outside Ireland, had granted representative institutions, disloyal?'¹⁵⁵ The Irish party unambiguously supported the Liberals in the election and recommended getting rid of Disraeli in strident

¹⁵⁴ *The Times*, 9 Mar. 1880.

¹⁵⁵ *Hansard* 3, ccli, 1228 (19 Mar. 1880).

terms, 'Vote against Benjamin Disraeli as you should vote against the mortal enemy of your country and your race.'¹⁵⁶ The Liberals ultimately won the election by a comfortable margin.

In the aftermath of the election, in which the Home Rule vote remained static, Parnell challenged Shaw for the leadership of the party. He was nominated by the aging repealer O'Gorman Mahon. Parnell defeated Shaw by twenty-three votes to eighteen, with the other twenty Home Rulers abstaining. Parnell's sensibilities were, in common with the bulk of the party, quasi-repeal rather than federalist. Under his leadership, the party assumed a more blanket nationalistic position. Working in consort with the Fenians, after the New Departure, he helped stir up the Land War of 1879. Butt held the respect of the Fenians in the early years of Home Rule where he fought tenaciously for amnesty, but they had grown impatient and disenchanted with the lack of progress in the years 1876 and 1877. Parnell would cultivate even closer links to the I. R. B. than Butt had and these helped propel him to the leadership of the party. By the end of the 1880s the Conservative government would claim that Parnell and the I. R. B. were inextricably linked, to use a phrase from the modern day. James McConnel has pointed out that, at one time, between twenty and twenty-five per cent, in the parliamentary party were either Fenians or former Fenians.¹⁵⁷

Parnell delivered a much more robust agitation than either of his two predecessors over the next ten years. In contrast with Butt's laid-back approach to party discipline, Parnell installed a 'party pledge' whereby members were obliged to vote with the party on all issues. The ebullient nature of his agitation contrasted heavily with the gentlemanly approach of Butt and Shaw. Parnell brilliantly harnessed the Land League in order to drum up mass Catholic support for the party, fighting tenaciously for land reform. In the aftermath of Gladstone's (once again botched) second Land Act, Parnell's rabble rousing activity over the bill landed him in Killmainham gaol under the Crimes Act of 1881. Gladstone was forced to introduce fresh coercion acts, something which was anathema to him, and Parnell proceeded

¹⁵⁶ *The Nation*, 13 Mar. 1880.

¹⁵⁷ James McConnel, 'The view from the backbench', p. 14.

to goad the authorities into detaining him by making a score of insurrectionary speeches around the country. Parnell eventually succeeded in wresting the further concessions he was looking for from Gladstone in the Kilmainham Treaty of 1882.

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, ideas were consistently mooted that Indian nationalists should consider sitting for Irish constituencies,¹⁵⁸ in order to give a voice to Indians in the House of Commons, in exchange for their support for Irish Home Rule. Frank Hugh O'Donnell, who was to be pivotally involved in the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885,¹⁵⁹ Michael Davitt,¹⁶⁰ a particularly cosmopolitan member of the Home Rule party, and the Quaker M. P. Alfred Webb, who served as president of the Congress in Madras in 1894,¹⁶¹ were all especially to the fore in promoting Indian causes in Ireland. Parnell was not initially dismissive of the idea but eventually shot it down. He was worried that it would cause upset within the party and was sceptical about how it would be received by the public at large.¹⁶² Parnell ultimately had a much more conservative outlook than the more excitable internationalist, Michael Davitt, who had envisioned London-based mathematician and long-time Indian nationalist leader, Dadhabai Naoroji, as the figure who would give the Home Rule party this international dimension. Naoroji would eventually become a Liberal M.P. for Central Finsbury in 1892, and an ardent supporter of Gladstone on Home Rule. He had run unsuccessfully in the Holborn constituency in 1886. Lord Salisbury noted disdainfully, and incorrectly, before this election, that the British public would not elect 'a black man' to parliament.¹⁶³ Edward Blake, by contrast, the leader of the Liberal party in Canada at the time of Gladstone's first Home Rule bill, was elected for the Home Rule party for the constituency of South Longford in the 1892 general election. Blake lent credibility to the Home Rulers' claims with regard to the imperial precedent. Davitt, for

¹⁵⁸ McCracken, *Forgotten protest*, p. 10.

¹⁵⁹ Dierdre McMahon, 'Ireland, the empire, and the commonwealth' in Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British empire* (Oxford, 2004), p. 187.

¹⁶⁰ Laurence Marley, *Michael Davitt: Freelance radical and frondeur* (Dublin, 2007), p. 231.

¹⁶¹ Regan-Lefebvre, *Cosmopolitan nationalism*, p. 148.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 143.

¹⁶³ Roberts, *Salisbury*, p. 650.

his part, was not merely inclined to link the Irish agitation to the Indian one. He was also particularly interested in the Australasian colonies and wrote a book entitled *Life and progress in Australasia*.¹⁶⁴

Conclusion

The colonial analogy was not uppermost in the thoughts of the Home Rule M. P. s. Of those parliamentarians who were committed to Home Rule, the simple repeal programme of Daniel O'Connell and the legacy of Grattan's parliament seemed to stir them more so than the example of federalism in operation in Canada, a trend which continued into the 1880s and 90s. A large proportion of the parliamentary party, if one could describe Butt's party as such, was listless and appeared not to have thought too deeply about Home Rule. The earliest tranche of Home Rulers that were prominent in the Home Government Association, men such as Butt and Reverend Joseph Galbraith, were keen to allude to the British North America act. With the dropping of federalism as the explicit aim of the movement, this tendency fell away.

Butt himself was, as he admitted in his manifesto in 1871, intrigued by the example of the British North America Act. However, Butt also fell into the trap of being hazy on the specifics of his own plan. The Home Rulers were somewhat unclear about whether Ireland's position in relation to Great Britain would be akin to Quebec in its relationship with the federal parliament of Canada or whether it would equate to the dominion of Canada as a whole in its relationship with the United Kingdom. The sentiment of the plan was more important.

The Parnellite Home Rulers were not that dissimilar in their general aims to Butt, but their personnel were drawn much more from the traditionally nationalist, and even Fenian, element within Irish society and their ideology and objectives became looser. Parnell was ultimately a pragmatist, determined to get 'the best terms that can be exacted.' Butt was keen

¹⁶⁴ Marley, *Davitt*, p. 235.

to trumpet his own imperialism whereas the Parnellites were, by and large, hostile to the empire and were generally aligned with radical, anti-imperialist opinion. During the furore over the attempted imposition of Canadian-style federalism over an unwilling Transvaal, the relative militants who came to the fore in the 1880s demonstrated their instinctive, innate opposition to the imperialism. In this, the Parnellites represented the broadest strand of Irish nationalism; while they accepted federalism, they were more interested in emphasising a vague, generalised demand for self-government and they had distaste for British imperialism. The Canadian model rather than being the inspiration for the movement was merely, occasionally, used to buttress the argument for Home Rule.

The next chapter will analyse the rhetoric and attitudes of the Parnellite party with regard to the colonial precedents of Home Rule from the period leading up to the 1885 general election and Gladstone's momentous conversion to Home Rule, until the anti-climactic rejection of the 1893 Home Rule bill by an assertive House of Lords.

Chapter 2:

Tailoring their arguments: The Home Rule party 1885-1893

This chapter analyses the Home Rule party's reaction to the Home Rule bills of 1886 and 1893. It examines the importance of British colonial precedents in the rhetoric of the Parnellite party from the period leading up to the 1885 general election, when it abandoned, in Parnell's words, 'subsidiary measures' and focused instead on the 'plank of national independence', until the House of Lords' unceremonious rejection of the 1893 Home Rule bill.¹

The Parnellite party had a notably different complexion from the party Isaac Butt had led until 1879. The Buttite Home Rule party had a large element of 'nominal' adherents to the movement who, in reality, had a very relaxed attitude to the question of Irish self-government. This chapter examines whether there was any shift in the nature of party rhetoric arising from this change. It analyses whether the inclination of M. P. s and prospective M. P. s to allude to the colonial precedents of Home Rule diminished or increased or remained unchanged during the period.

1885 general election: Aggressive Home Rule rhetoric

As the parties warmed up for the 1885 election, there began a period of intense haggling over the support and votes of the Home Rule party. The Conservative minority administration under Salisbury, somewhat cynically, softened its line on coercion. Salisbury, intensely hostile to Home Rule, had appointed Lord Carnarvon to the post of Irish chief secretary. Carnarvon had been colonial secretary during the Tories' short lived 1867 administration, and had introduced the British North America act to the House of Commons. He was excited by the arguments posited in Charles Gavan Duffy's article, written in the Tory magazine *National Review* and entitled 'An appeal to the Conservative party', which

¹*The Nation*, 29 Aug. 1885.

argued that since Peel had granted 'responsible government' to Canada, and Derby was prime minister when it was granted to Australia, it was well within Tory party tradition to bring in a measure conceding self-government to Ireland. Duffy insisted that 'what has made Irish Catholics contented and loyal on the banks of the Parmatta and the YarraYarra would make them contented and loyal on the banks of the Liffey and the Shannon.'² Carnarvon was showered with praise by the Irish nationalist press during his brief time at the helm.³ Many Tories, by contrast, not least the Ulster Tories, were deeply suspicious of Carnarvon. The Conservative leader was sceptical, but he let Carnarvon go his own way, and kept his counsel.

Parnell eventually ended up advocating that the Irish in Britain support the Tories at the 1885 election. He always demonstrated a slight preference for converting the Tories to Home Rule, partly from a curious personal distrust of the Liberals, as well as of Gladstone himself, and partly because he felt that if the 'English right' acceded to the Irish request then Home Rule would have a better chance of becoming law.⁴ The Liberals were unlikely to take up the cudgels against it. Charles Gavan Duffy's article gave a historical and imperial dimension to this belief. The Tories had previously, during the administrations of Peel and Derby, granted Home Rule to the colonies. This point was also made by the English radical and convinced Home Ruler, Joseph Cowen, in late 1885 when he reminded people of Carnarvon's 'leaning in favour of local liberty'⁵ and his role in the federations of Canada, Australia and South Africa, arguing that the Tories were likely to bring in some measure of local self-government but that it might not be full Home Rule. (This analysis may have been informed by Cowen's own hostility to the Liberal party at this point.) The Tories also controlled the House of Lords and thus held a veto, though the peers still would have been likely to throw a potential Home Rule bill out even if the Tories had supported one in the

² *Cork Examiner*, 23 July 1885.

³ *F. J.*, July 28 1885.

⁴ Dennis Gwynn, 'John Redmond and English politicians' in *Irish Quarterly Review*, xxi, no. 81 (1932) p. 22.

⁵ *The Nation*, 19 Dec. 1885.

Commons. The Home Rulers issued a strikingly anti-Liberal party manifesto. They were the men who ‘coerced Ireland, deluged Egypt with blood, menaced religious liberty in the school, freedom of speech in parliament.’⁶

Parnell announced to the rank-and-file members of the party at a meeting in the Imperial Hotel on O’Connell Street, Dublin, on 24 August, 1885, that he hoped ‘it may not be necessary for us in the new parliament to devote ourselves to subsidiary measures and that it may be possible for us to have a programme and a platform with only one plank, and that one the plank of national independence.’ Parnell, like most of his followers, was still inclined to think in terms of the ‘restoration’ of the ancient parliament rather than the building of a modern parliament along the lines of the Canadian or Australian bodies. One of Parnell’s chief lieutenants, Andrew Kettle, in his autobiography, also betrayed an obsession with Grattan’s parliament as opposed to any interest in the form of self-government granted to the colonies.⁷ Parnell always made it abundantly clear that Grattan’s parliament was his preferred option, much to the consternation of some within the nationalist fold.⁸ However, these critics did not constitute the majority of the party in the autumn of 1885, and one of the loudest cheers on the night was reserved for the phrase ‘repeal of the union.’ Parnell concluded by saying ‘I therefore feel assured that the next Irish party that will be assembled will be the last in the English and the first in the restored Irish parliament.’⁹

Charles Gavan Duffy, in an article written in the aftermath of the general election, was critical of the continued insistence on Grattan’s parliament. A former premier of Victoria, he had detached himself somewhat from the reverence for the 1782 parliament. He detailed its failings with regard to responsible government and declared that that body was not an instrument of ‘national progress.’ However, even he was capable of blurring the boundaries.

⁶*The Times*, 23 Nov. 1885.

⁷ Andrew Kettle, *The materials for victory: being the memoirs of Andrew J. Kettle* (Dublin, 1958).

⁸ J. O’Connor Power, *The Anglo-Irish quarrel: a plea for peace* in LSE selected pamphlets (London, 1886) (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/60216729>).

⁹*The Nation*, 29 Aug. 1885.

Prior to the election, Duffy had written a series of articles on the 'Colonial constitutions.' In the opening article, he stated, in relation to the British North America act, 'It is not more certain than that Grattan won the independence of Ireland in 1782 than that Papineau- the Celt with the O at the wrong end of his name- as he was called in Ireland-won this beneficent system for British colonists.'¹⁰ He also described the British North America Act as an 'encouraging spectacle for an Irish nationalist to see.'¹¹ Thomas Sexton, M. P. for Sligo, admitted the failings of Grattan's parliament in a lecture in the Rotunda of the 22 September, stating 'that (Grattan's parliament) as you know, it was a parliament of the Anglo colony and not of the Irish nation', though he still praised the effects of self-rule as it related to Grattan's parliament. As part of the broad gamut of arguments he covered in the course of the night, Sexton also dwelt on the colonial analogy, albeit at the close of his speech. Sexton argued, 'is the empire dismembered because there are six Home Rule parliaments in Australia... because in our generation, Canada has founded and perfected a system of native rule, which gives freedom to every Canadian, and makes the law a reflection of Canadian opinion, aye which protects the interests of Canada even against the manifest interests of Britain.'¹²

The former nationalist M. P., John O'Connor Power, was scathing about the continued harking back to Grattan's parliament. O'Connor Power and Parnell's detestation of each other has been well documented.¹³ O'Connor Power refused to accept Parnell as an 'honest dictator'¹⁴ of the movement, and he eventually defected to the Liberal party. *The Nation* gleefully claimed that Parnell and the Irish party were instrumental in O'Connor Power's failure to gain a seat at the 1885 election, with their exhortation to the Irish in Britain to vote Tory. In his pamphlet of 1886 entitled, *The Anglo-Irish quarrel: a plea for peace*, O'Connor

¹⁰ *F. J.*, 28 Aug. 1885.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *F. J.*, 23 Sept. 1885.

¹³ Donald Jordan, 'John O'Connor Power, Charles Stewart Parnell and the centralisation of popular politics in Ireland' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxv, no. 97 (1986) pp 46-66.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Power wrote, 'Mr. Parnell deceives himself through sheer indifference to history and dislike of the trouble of inquiring into facts when he tells us he wants Grattan's parliament.'¹⁵ In the pamphlet, he dealt in a detailed manner with the Canadian analogy. In spite of his former Fenianism, he established himself as an extremely moderate federalist. He categorised the three specific desires, within the Irish party, as to what a putative Irish parliament should resemble,

Mr. Parnell's idea of Home Rule is 'Grattan's parliament.' Mr. T. P. O'Connor's is very different from this-'Ireland like Canada. No Irish members in the imperial parliament. No contributions for imperial expenditure. No share in the national debt. Ireland, in short, like Canada.' And Mr. Justin McCarthy differs from both, for he describes Home Rule as 'the same power of self-government enjoyed by a state of the American union or a province of the dominion of Canada.'¹⁶

O'Connor Power objected to T. P. O'Connor's proposals on the basis that they constituted 'the next thing to separation... If Ireland were very far away from England as Canada, the latter might very well serve as a model for a new Irish constitution, but as she is within four hours sail of Holyhead, and is already an integral part of the United Kingdom, Mr. T. P. O'Connor's solution of our difficulty will be dismissed as impracticable.'¹⁷ He defended Justin McCarthy's federal programme as the best way forward, 'The federal scheme advocated by Mr. McCarthy appears to me the only one that offers a basis for useful discussion.'¹⁸

O'Connor Power, who was, by the time of the 1885 general election, lamented as a 'nominal Home Ruler' by his Parnellite enemies, had borne a somewhat more nationalist countenance in the 1870s. In a speech in Dungannon, the future advocate of provincial Home Rule asked whether 'Ireland should aspire to no higher destiny than to be a trampled and despised province of the British empire.' He spoke of Home Rule in very general terms, grouping together Canada in the same bracket as countries such as England, France and the United

¹⁵ O'Connor Power, *The Anglo-Irish quarrel* (London, 1886) (<http://www.istor.org/stable/60216729>), p. 18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

States, all of whom enjoyed an untrammelled measure of self-government.¹⁹ Frank Hugh O'Donnell, a contrarian, if egotistical, figure within Irish nationalism and another enemy of Parnell, who drifted out of the Home Rule party while still retaining a belief in Irish self-government, considered Grattan's parliament ludicrously archaic, describing it as being as 'obsolete as crom-a-boo, or the programme of Rinuccini.'²⁰ (Archbishop Rinuccini was the papal nuncio to Ireland during the Confederacy of the seventeenth century.)

Parnell did reference the colonies in a speech in Wicklow, hailing the candidacy of the two prospective M. P. s for his home county; Garrett Byrne and William Corbet. He grouped the colonial analogy together with the Austro-Hungarian analogy.

We can point to the example of other countries; of Austria and of Hungary- to the fact that Hungary having been conceded self-government became one of the strongest factors in the Austrian empire. We can show the powers that have been freely conceded to the colonies- to the greater colonies- including this very power to protect their own industries against and at the expense of those of England. We can show that disaffection has disappeared in all the greater English colonies.²¹

John Redmond was particularly well versed in colonial and constitutional issues. In a speech to the National League on 8 September, he stated that 'Mr. Parnell and the Irish party today were simply asking for this- for a parliament as free at least from English control as was the parliament of Grattan, and for a constitution as free at least as that under which the Australian colonies and Canada had become not only prosperous but contented.'²² He also attacked the notion that the constitutional relationship between mother country and colony was a fixed one, 'Was that (home rule) to be refused because Irish public men declined to enter upon the absurd and impossible attempt to bind all future generations of Irishmen to the end of time to be satisfied with that position?... were all future generations of Australasians or Canadians bound to accept without exception their present position within the empire?'²³ During Redmond's speech, however, the applause arrived after some of his

¹⁹*The Nation*, 9 Jan. 1875.

²⁰*D. E. M.*, 8 June 1885.

²¹*The Nation*, 10 Oct. 1885.

²²*F. J.*, 9 Sept. 1885.

²³*Ibid.*

more bellicose pronouncements, ‘Why the empire might crumble into pieces (applause)’ and his quotation of Parnell, ‘no man has the right to fix a boundary to the nation (applause).’ He also stated that, ultimately, ‘even if the argument should go against them and it should be proved that constitutional Home Rule would be an injury to the empire, still they would be bound to demand it and obtain it if they could (applause)... they would be bound to act on the words of Grattan, and in a spirit which animated so many generations of their people and say- “Perish the empire and live Ireland” (applause).’²⁴ This was an observation he would possibly have been more circumspect about making in a speech delivered to the House of Commons. J. J. O’Kelly, M. P. for Roscommon, known for his interest in Egyptian issues, announced, in a speech to the Irish National League of Great Britain in Sheffield, that ‘What they wanted was to rule Ireland as Canada and Australia ruled themselves remaining inside the empire. What they asked for was the restoration of the old parliament as existed in Grattan’s time, with such modification as would make it harmonise with the spirit of the present age.’²⁵ Alderman William Meagher, M. P. for Meath until the 1885 election, in seconding an amendment objecting to the party’s proposal to make an address to Prince of Wales during his proposed visit to Dublin, had described ‘the benefits accrued to both England and Canada by the cession of self-government to the latter.’²⁶ He followed this with a reference to the Austro-Hungarian solution. In Hyde Park, London, Michael Davitt, not an M. P. at the time, stated that, ‘we demand we will be satisfied with nothing less than the right to manage our own affairs as fully and completely as Canada and Australia are allowed to manage theirs.’²⁷

The Irish party had recruited former Queensland premier and Young Ireland revolutionary, Kevin Izod O’Doherty, to contest the 1885 general election in North Meath. He lent great credibility to the Irish party’s claims that Ireland would become satisfied and contented with

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 31 Oct. 1885.

²⁶ *The Nation*, 21 Mar. 1885.

²⁷ *Dundalk Democrat*, 4 July, 1885.

the measure of Home Rule granted to the Australian colonies. O'Doherty delivered a lecture in the Rotundo in Dublin, explicitly comparing Queensland to Ireland, 'The colony of Queensland is composed of materials quite as antagonistic as the north and the south of Ireland; but nevertheless all,- Englishmen, Scotchmen and Irishmen- worked heartily together for the common good of the country.' Referring to the self-government the Australian colonies enjoyed, he said, 'This is the golden link that binds the colonies to the mother country, and it is much safer for the empire than the iron one with which England now holds Ireland.'²⁸

The issue of tariff protection was one where Irish politicians and the nationalist press leant heavily on the colonial precedent. Parnell, though he was loath to offer any definite indication of his political preferences, and Dillon, were both in favour of the right of Ireland to impose tariffs on imported goods. The *Freeman's Journal* harnessed the Canadian example in an argument for protectionism. The article was entitled 'Home Rule and protection- What they have done for Canada'. The article referenced 'The national policy' of the 1870s, whereby the Canadian federal parliament had instituted tariff walls protecting native goods, and in many cases, discriminated against British goods, 'Canada has the fullest possible measure of Home Rule, and for some years past has protection to the masthead. The English minister who would describe Canada as a foreign country animated with unfriendly intentions towards England would properly be laughed at as a drivelling idiot. But Home Rule and protection would, it appears, be disastrous and ruinous to Ireland herself.'²⁹ The paper stated that 'It may be probably be said that what is good for Canada may be evil for Ireland, but the position of the two countries has been frequently shown to be analogous.'³⁰

Felix Larkin has critiqued the *Freeman's Journal*, owned by M. P. for Tipperary, Edmund Dwyer Gray, for not engaging in detailed analyses of the complexities and finer points of the

²⁸ *D. E. M.*, 23 Oct. 1885.

²⁹ *F. J.*, 8 Sept. 1885.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

colonial analogy.³¹ He stated, correctly, that they merely, in passing, issued the odd trite and throwaway remark about gaining the measure of Home Rule that Canada enjoyed. He argued that Irish nationalists did not recognise the relevance of the colonial precedents to Ireland, insisting that Irish M. P. s' ambitions were more modest than the measure of self-government enjoyed by Canada. Larkin contended that the Irish party ambitions for self-government amounted to nothing more than a morsel of devolution within the metropolitan centre of the United Kingdom.³² While it is true that Irish M. P. s were willing to accommodate the very modest measure of devolution contained within Gladstone's 1886 Home Rule bill, the claim that devolution represented their ultimate aspirations for Irish self-government sits oddly with the aggressive rhetoric of the bulk of the parliamentary party throughout the Parnellite period, in particular.

The bulk of the speeches made by Irish party M. P.s, and aspiring M. P.s, prior to the election were not overly concerned with imperial analogies. The colonial analogy and the assorted constitutional formulae discussed in relation to it, were not sufficiently stirring to rouse the crowds at such events. The speeches were somewhat different to the mannered, persuasive tones nationalists tended to speak in, in parliament. The emotive language of 'The cause', as Michael Wheatley has put it,³³ was prominent. P. J. Power's speech in Donaghmore was a classic of the genre. The M. P. for Waterford county referred to an 'alien and hostile' parliament, vowed to 'crush landlordism' and he announced that the crowd 'revere Fitzgerald, Emmet and Tone.'³⁴

The militant tone employed in Ireland was absent from the speeches parliamentarians made in the House of Commons. Instructive arguments about the lessons to be drawn from the

³¹Larkin, 'The dog in the night-time' in Potter (ed.) *Newspapers and empire*, p. 119.

³² Ibid.

³³ Michael Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish party: provincial Ireland, 1910-16* (Oxford, 2005), p. 74.

³⁴ *F. J.*, 31 Aug. 1885.

granting of self-government to the colonies were not the order of the day in such an environment. John Deasy made a particularly aggressive and bellicose speech to the Aghada branch of the National League in Cork in August 1885. 'They would tell her (England) that if they did not concede this right, which was the divine right of any nation that they would side with enemies the world over that they would glory in her misfortune and in her downfall (cheers); that they would trample upon her most cherished privileges and they would tear to pieces the constitution which she boasted so much of (cheers).'³⁵ Deasy insisted that 'behind these arguments they had force and a determined people.' Dr. Tanner, M.P. for Mid Cork, stated in a speech in Cork, 'The same spirit of nationalism lives, breathes, moves in you, whom although not called upon to shoulder the rifle for fatherland, still are ready, able and willing to do so should necessity compel them to show the constraining power of England what men can do.'³⁶ William O'Brien, in Kerry, said of the Home Rule cause, 'For it will be carried on until the fabric of Irish freedom shall ride side by side with England, or on the ruins of English greatness or of her empire.'³⁷ Thomas Mayne, Mid Tipperary M. P., stated at a meeting in Cahir, 'Let the confounded British empire go to pot (laughter and cheers).'³⁸ Mayne, in May 1885, uttered, in a slightly more mangled fashion, the Fenian cliché about 'an opportunity that was Ireland's because the difficulty was England's.'³⁹ John O'Connor, at his selection to contest the Tipperary by-election in early 1885, complimented the county on producing O'Donovan Rossa, John Mitchell and Charles Kickham.⁴⁰ Many speeches also tended to focus on parochial issues, only of immediate concern to the local constituency.

Willie Redmond, M. P. for Fermanagh North, who was to become, during the Redmondite era, one of the most conciliatory Home Rulers, made some of the most aggressive and anti-

³⁵ *Cork Examiner*, 24 Aug. 1885.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 23 Sept. 1885.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 24 Aug. 1885.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 22 Sept. 1885.

³⁹ *United Ireland*, 8 Jan. 1885.

⁴⁰ *D. E. M.*, 9 Jan. 1885.

imperial declarations of the campaign. Redmond stated, in relation to the Egyptian farrago, which was rocking the British empire at the time, that ‘the majority of the inhabitants of Ireland view with the highest degree of satisfaction every evil and disaster which overtakes the British empire.’ He stated frankly that, ‘The Irish cheer the Mahdi because he is the enemy of England.’ Redmond also pointed out, in the course of the same speech, that ‘the great bulk of the Irish people are up and in a state of rebellion, which, as my friend Mr. O’Brien (cheers) said, is merely tempered by the scarcity of fire arms in the country (loud cheers).’⁴¹ Redmond concluded another speech in Derry, in grandiloquent tones, by saying, ‘Think of the day, please God at hand, when the work of generations will be completed, when the blood of our martyrs will bear fruit, and when the rafters that rang to Grattan’s voice will again be wakened into echoing the tones of men who love liberty.’⁴² His biographer Terence Denman was to testify that Redmond later typified the ‘imperial nationalism’ that was in vogue when his brother led the parliamentary party.⁴³ Most of his speeches to the House of Commons on the third Home Rule bill contained some reference to the self-governing colonies, something absent from his speeches on platforms in Ireland prior to the 1885 general election.

The rhetoric evident in the speeches made by M. P.s, and prospective M. P.s, before the election, does not sit easily alongside Alan O’Day’s claim that Irish party M. P.s ‘neither detested the empire nor wished to see the position of Great Britain in the world decline.’⁴⁴ However, one must acknowledge that Irish nationalists were noted for being very adept at tailoring their speeches for whatever audience they encountered. Speaking to the masses in Ireland, nationalists simply did not have to build an argument for Home Rule in the same manner in which they did when speaking to British audiences, in political clubs in London, or in the Houses of parliament. Their primary concern, when speaking to Irish audiences,

⁴¹ *United Ireland*, 23 May 1885.

⁴² *F. J.*, 12 Sept. 1885.

⁴³ Terence Denman, *William Redmond*, p. 14.

⁴⁴ O’Day, *English Face*, p. 166.

especially prior to elections, was that of generating enthusiasm, and speeches detailing the development and success of responsible institutions in the colonies were ill-equipped to do this.

British politicians: Grappling with Home Rule

Gladstone committed himself to nothing (publicly) in the run up to the 1885 election but had been privately tussling with the idea of bringing in a Home Rule bill. On October 31, Parnell, usually inscrutable, sent him his 'Proposed Constitution'⁴⁵ where he fleshed out his ideas in an unusually frank way. He informed the *Freeman's Journal* that it was 'a modification of Grattan's parliament so as to meet the democratic progress of the age.'⁴⁶ Parnell's elected chamber would have had 300 members and would have the power to legislate for only domestic matters and not for any imperial concerns. The assembly could appoint and dismiss executive officials at will. Ireland would pay an imperial levy of one million pounds sterling per annum. He left it open to Gladstone as to whether Irish M. P.s would still sit at Westminster. He did not consider it a sticking point. Parnell established himself as a moderate nationalist despite his association with the Fenians and his aggressive parliamentary tactics. Gladstone's eventual bill would mirror Parnell's constitution heavily. A number of Liberals did go into the general election openly stating a vague, heavily qualified support for some measure of Home Rule. Henry Labouchere, the Radical M. P. for Nottingham and the proprietor of the *Truth* journal, had declared before the election that 'I would give to Ireland the fullest measure of Home Rule consistent with the integrity of the empire.'⁴⁷ The phrase 'consistent with the integrity of the empire' was the universal proviso of all those who offered support before the election, a platitude that could be stretched to mean almost any measure of self-government.

⁴⁵ H. C. G. Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-1898* (Oxford, 1995), p. 479.

⁴⁶ *F. J.*, 7 Nov. 1885.

⁴⁷ R. J. Hind, *Henry Labouchere and the empire, 1880-1905* (London, 1972), p. 45.

The Home Rulers and the Radicals, as expected, got a huge fillip from the extension of the franchise in 1884. The 1884 reform act allowed the same voting rights to those in the counties as it had to those of equivalent wealth and property in the boroughs. It increased greatly the proportion of Irish people eligible to vote. The new stipulations were destined to give the Home Rule party a massive majority in the coming election. The 1885 election was a triumphant moment for Parnell and the Home Rule party. They won eighty-five seats out of a possible 103 in Ireland and one (T.P. O'Connor) in Liverpool. Most Home Rulers romped home on the back of exceptionally heavy majorities, frequently taking over ninety percent of the vote in many constituencies. Most did not face contests in subsequent elections. The Liberals, relatively unpopular after five years of an unsatisfying and messy Gladstone-led government, lost seats but still emerged as the biggest party in the United Kingdom with 335 seats (helped in no small part by the broadening of the franchise) exactly eighty-six more than the Conservatives 249.⁴⁸ Parnell had hoped to hold the balance of power and end up in the same position in which O'Connell had found himself in 1835. However he now could only put Gladstone and the Liberals back into power. The general Tory distaste for Irish nationalists precluded them from being so beholden to the Home Rule party. Carnarvon's schemes were dumped unambiguously on December 14 when the Tories decided against Home Rule.⁴⁹

Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule spilled into the public domain by accident when his M. P. son, Herbert, let it slip to the editor of the U. K. *National Press Agency* on 16 December.⁵⁰ There was considerable consternation in the Liberal party about Gladstone largely failing to consult his colleagues on the issue. Gladstone was hoping that the very influential doubters within his party were inching towards an acceptance of his plan.⁵¹ Lord Hartington was the leader of the Whiggish, conservative element within the Liberal party,

⁴⁸ William Lubenow, *Parliamentary politics and the Home Rule crisis* (Oxford, 1988) p. 47.

⁴⁹ E. D. Steele, *Lord Salisbury* (London, 1999) p. 190.

⁵⁰ J. L. Hammond, *Gladstone and the Irish nation* (London, 1938) pp 440-41.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 474

who were deeply sceptical of Irish Home Rule, and Joseph Chamberlain was the most notable figure among the 'left-wing' band of Liberal unionists, whose opposition to the bill mystified Irish nationalists. Chamberlain had stood on a pro-Home Rule platform at the 1874 general election.⁵² Chamberlain's political gyrations on the issue were dwelt on heavily by Irish nationalists during the debates.

Gladstone had hoped that the Tories, on the basis of their proclamations on the issue prior to the election, would take up the cudgels on behalf of Irish Home Rule and that there could be a bi-partisan approach to the issue. However, Salisbury and the Tories pulled the rug from under Gladstone and reversed their, admittedly very weak, inclination to bring in a Home Rule bill. The Tory government which had stumbled into power in the aftermath of the December 1885 election, destined from the start to be short-lived and dependent on the votes of those it despised, was put out of its misery by an amendment concerning agricultural labourers, introduced by Chamberlain's close associate Jesse Collings, on 27 January. Salisbury himself was highly satisfied about being shunted out of office. Many of the Liberals, for their part, were distinctly sheepish and wary about the prospects of taking power at the time.

After the protracted negotiations for forming the government, on 8 April 1886 in front of a packed House of Commons, Gladstone opened the debate on the Government of Ireland bill.⁵³ He argued that this bill would be a panacea to the ills of the country. One of the primary points of Gladstone's speech was to stress that Home Rule was not incompatible with the unity of the empire. He quoted Henry Grattan as saying 'I demand the continued severance of the parliaments with a view to the continued and everlasting unity of the Empire.'⁵⁴ Gladstone asked, rhetorically, of the pre 1801 status quo, 'Did that separation of

⁵² *Hansard* 3, ccciv, 1356 (12 Apr. 1886).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1036-85 (8 Apr. 1886).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 1045 (8 Apr. 1886).

parliament destroy the unity of the British empire.’⁵⁵ He referred to the common European examples, to the separate legislatures of Sweden and Norway under one monarch, the king of Sweden, and to the flourishing Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy system. The speech was enormously detailed in laying out the particulars of the bill. The bill was accompanied by a concomitant and vaguely apologetic land purchase bill included almost as an escape clause for the Irish landlords.

Gladstone was responded to initially by three Northern Unionist members, Colonel Thomas Waring, Edward MacNaghten and Robert O’Neill, thus ensuring that the debate was rich in platitudes about the ‘loyal minority.’ There were fears that they would be harassed by the Catholic majority in a Home Rule parliament, that their land would be plundered, they would see scores of confiscatory land acts, the police force would fail to protect isolated protestants. Ulster protestants, with some exceptions, didn’t tend to engage in delicate arguments about the nature of colonial precedent, but instead talked about their extreme mistrust of the men to whom Gladstone was entrusting with a parliament in Dublin. Colonel Waring, elected for the first time for the constituency of North Down, at the 1885 general election and in a speech which, according to *The Nation*, was delivered to an almost empty house, stated that this bill involved turning ‘over those who had been England’s faithful garrison in Ireland, bound hand and foot, to the tender mercies of its bitterest enemies.’⁵⁶ O’Neill, M. P. for Mid Antrim, asserted ‘that there existed among the great mass of the Irish people an innate hatred of England.’⁵⁷ Both Waring and O’Neill were keen to allude to the fact that Parnell had said ‘No man has the right to fix a boundary on the march of a nation’ though neither quoted him directly. O’Neill implied that the Parnellites saw Home Rule as just a stepping stone. Gladstone was particularly unhappy about the idea, consistently inferred, that unionists would resort to extra-parliamentary means if the bill became law. Walter S. Shirley was the first Liberal aside from Gladstone to speak on the bill. He made

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1089 (8 April 1886).

⁵⁷ Ibid., 1093 (8 April 1886).

the important point that 'if hon. Members would study the record of parliamentary debates in any year-when the Irish parliament did exist-say in the year 1795- they would find that the unity and integrity of the empire were assumed.'⁵⁸

Unionists frequently referenced the colonies in the debate on the issue in parliament. Chamberlain stated, frankly, that, 'Canada is loyal and friendly to this country. Ireland, I am sorry to say, at the present time, is not loyal and cannot be called friendly.'⁵⁹ Hartington stated that 'The distance which separates our colonies from us makes any analogy which may be drawn between their case and that of Ireland utterly fallacious'⁶⁰ Sir Henry James, the M. P. for Bury, argued that the merely theoretical, nominal supremacy of the British parliament to repeal laws passed in Ireland was not a sufficient check on the behaviour of the Irish parliament. He did not, however, complain about the evolving constitutional relationship with the colonies. He was more willing, like all Unionists, to countenance a more relaxed approach to imposing stipulations on the governments of the colonies 'It does not occur that this right (of annulment) is constantly exercised in the colonies because they are friendly and far distant, but Ireland is in a very different position. Can we suppose that the minority in that country will not bring their grievances here for redress?'⁶¹ Some of the most hardened advocates of 'shaking off the colonies', in the words of *The Spectator*, in the 1860s and 70s, did not support Gladstone's move towards Home Rule. Goldwin Smith and John Bright had little time for Gladstone's Home Rule bill. This indicated that Ireland was viewed as distinct from the rest of the colonies. John Westlake, Liberal M.P. for Romford, on the second reading of the bill, stated this when he said 'We have long made up our minds that if ever the colonies should desire to separate from the mother country, though we should be very sorry to lose them, yet we should not make any effort to retain them by force. But

⁵⁸ Ibid., 1101 (8 Apr. 1886).

⁵⁹ Ibid., ccciv, 1194 (9 Apr. 1886).

⁶⁰ Ibid., ccciv, 1254 (9 Apr. 1886).

⁶¹ *Hansard* 3, cccv, 921 (13 May 1886).

the case of Ireland is different. Englishmen cannot make up their minds to submit with resignation to the separation of Ireland from the United Kingdom.’⁶²

The attitude of the English Tories to the bill was one of outright opposition, differing little from the kind of opposition engaged in by their Ulster Protestant cohorts.⁶³ While Joseph Chamberlain was concocting schemes for the future government of Ireland, Lord Salisbury announced, with little room for ambiguity, his alternative policy for the government of Ireland. ‘My alternative policy is to allow the government of England to govern Ireland.’⁶⁴ The Protestant Ulstermen were frequently the subject of lavish praise in the imperial parliament; platitudes about the great intelligence and industry of the Ulstermen were commonplace. They were later, frequently compared to the Uitlanders, British settlers in the Transvaal, who had travelled to South Africa after the discovery of gold in the 1880s. The habit of comparing Irish nationalists to the French Catholics of Lower Canada (or Quebec as it was re-titled after the confederation), rather than to the agitators for Canadian self-government as a whole, was a popular one for the Tory party. In this equation, the Ulster Protestants were aligned with the British settlers in Ontario. Edmund Wodehouse, Tory M. P. for Bath, pointed out that, at no point, did Lord Durham consider granting self-government to Lower Canada. Rather, he recommended the extending of the influence of the Upper Canadian British settlers over the French Catholics to the South. Wodehouse declared aggressively that the Northern Unionists were ‘the English garrison’ and insisted that it was sacrilege for the imperial parliament to ‘sell out’ any ‘English garrison’ anywhere in the empire. The only course government could advocate, following on from Lord Durham’s recommendation, was to strengthen the Union. Wodehouse quoted Durham as saying, ‘No permanent or efficacious remedy can be devised for the disorders of Lower Canada, except a fusion of the government in that of one or more of the surrounding provinces. I believe that tranquillity can only be restored by subjecting the province to the vigorous rule of an English

⁶² *Hansard* 3, cccvi, 73 (25 May 1886).

⁶³ *The Times*, 18 Sept. 1885.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 17 May 1886.

majority, and that the only efficacious government would be that formed by a legislative union.⁶⁵

Many among the opposition appeared to be able to countenance a federal solution in line with what Isaac Butt had proposed in the 1870s. During the second reading, the Tory M. P., Sir Henry King, made an intriguing contribution where he stated that he would be willing to contemplate a federal solution along the lines of the British North America Act provided Ireland was granted the limited, restricted, ring-fenced set of powers granted to the parliament of Quebec.⁶⁶ The powers granted to Ireland in this bill were much more expansive. General and unspecified powers should be left with the imperial parliament. In this breakdown Ireland equated with Quebec rather than the dominion of Canada as a whole. This tallied with what Isaac Butt, Justin McCarthy and John O'Connor Power had envisaged as a proper measure of Home Rule up to 1885. This attitude was echoed by Joseph Chamberlain on 1 June. Chamberlain talked about the prospect of provincial assemblies in Ireland under the unquestioned supremacy of the imperial parliament.

Home Rulers in parliament

The Home Rulers, as befitted members of a party who held the idea as their original, if nominal, *raison d'être*, professed no serious opposition to federalism. Tim Healy, in an intriguing role-reversal of the debates ten years earlier, peddled the Hicks Beach argument; that federalism must be instituted on the basis of a prior separation. 'The basis of federation, as I understand it, is the existence of parliaments, and you federate parliaments with the assent of the peoples.'⁶⁷The bulk of the Irish M. P. s gave the impression that the notion of federalism was something of an irrelevance. The primary objection was the length of time it would take to organise such a scheme. The Irish M. P. s were not content to wait until all the other colonies decided to join in a grand scheme of imperial federation before acquiring a

⁶⁵*Hansard* 3, cccvi, 917 (3 June 1886).

⁶⁶*Hansard* 3, cccv, 1191 (17 May 1886).

⁶⁷*Hansard* 3, ccxiv, 1210 (9 Apr. 1886).

legislature in Dublin. The Irish party were, for the moment, fully contented with Gladstone's measure of Home Rule. They were also sceptical about the intentions of the Unionists who proffered federalism as an alternative. Irish nationalist M. P. s were not interested in detail or specifics, merely principles. They regarded many of the points raised by the opponents of the bill, with regard to the Canadian precedent, as being ones characterised by nitpicking and obfuscation.⁶⁸

Gladstone's bill did not, of course, leave Ireland in the same position as either the Canadian dominion or the Canadian provinces, though it was substantially modelled on the British North America act. Canada did not contribute an annual tribute to the British exchequer and its' legislative powers were not explicitly restricted in the same manner Ireland's were to be. There was never any question of Ireland being entitled to protect its own industries. Free trade between Ireland and Britain was absolutely insisted upon by the government, whereas the self-governing colonies were entitled to protect their industries from competition with Britain. Gladstone spent the latter part of the 1860s attempting to get the colonies to take control of their own defence policy. However, he was not prepared to let the Irish parliament take charge of its own defence policy.

The Home Rulers affected to be underwhelmed by the bill when it appeared on the table, though they were fully supportive of it. Tim Harrington, M. P. for Dublin Harbour, stated, on seeing Gladstone's bill, that it 'is not all that Irishmen would desire.'⁶⁹ T. D. Sullivan, M. P. for College Green and the editor of *The Nation*, stated, on first sight, that 'though it is not all the Irish party would desire if it was free to choose, I regard it as a proposal of terms between England and Ireland in which each must be willing to yield something.'⁷⁰ The inference, throughout, was that the restoration of the parliament of 1782 would have been preferable. The legislative power was not of the almost untrammelled nature as was enjoyed

⁶⁸*Hansard* 3, cccvi, 701 (1 June 1886).

⁶⁹*The Nation* 8 May 1885.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

by Grattan's parliament. Many Irish nationalists never abandoned their reverence for the 1782 parliament. Some were quite fanatical about it, referring to its' restoration, in grandiloquent terms, as an ancient and historical right. Grattan's great-grandson, the M. P. for South Dublin, Thomas Esmonde, stated, immediately after the bill was laid on the table that, 'it practically amounts to what Grattan's parliament would have developed into had it been allowed to continue its existence.'⁷¹

Grattan's parliament had immediacy for Irish nationalists that the grants of Home Rule to the colonies lacked. James Flynn, M. P. for Cork North, stated that 'They (Irish nationalists) rested their claim to national autonomy upon the historical right of the Irish people, and also on the grounds of expediency.' He admitted that the 1782 parliament was totally lacking in executive power but insisted that this failing was rectified in the case of this bill. T. D. Sullivan disputed, wrongly, Henry Chaplin's claim that bills passed by Grattan's parliament had to be assented to by the Great Privy Seal in England before they could become law.⁷² The Home Rulers tended to gloss over the many glaring flaws of Grattan's parliament.

The majority of Home Rule M. P. s were not philosophical players in the debates, either in or outside parliament. In the House of Commons, most Irish members had a tendency to raise only local, mundane matters of concern to their own constituency. This is hardly unsurprising as it was, in many ways, unnecessary to witness a procession of Home Rule M. P. s lining up en masse in parliament or on platforms around the United Kingdom making points about Canada and Australia. Their rabble-raising speeches at home were not likely to entail detailed allusions to the self-governing colonies.

The select few Home Rulers who contributed to the debates in parliament were happy to throw in allusions to the Canadian analogy. Politicians adopted a scattergun approach in the debates, tending to use anything they could get their hands on to either win support for, or

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² *Hansard* 3, cccv, 1327 (18 May 1886).

kill the bill. Much of the debates consisted of slanging matches between the Irish nationalists and the Unionists across the floor of the House of Commons, with M. P. s dredging up the wild and objectionable quotes of their opponents in an effort to show their opponents' unreasonableness. Supporters of the government were keen to refer Lord Salisbury's landmark speech of 15 May, where he equated the Irish with the 'Hottentot' races, and promised as an alternative to Gladstone's scheme, 'twenty years of resolute government.'⁷³

The more prominent Irish nationalist M. P. s were the most inclined to dwell on the imperial analogies. Thomas Sexton, T. P. O'Connor, Tim Healy and John Redmond were the most voluble on the question of the Canadian comparison. Redmond, one of the most thoughtful and ambitious members of the party in the 1880s, answered the claims of the opposition that Ireland consisted of two nations by pointing to the present state of sanguinity that prevailed in Canada, 'But were there not two nations in Canada? On the contrary Canada had two provinces differing in race, in religion, in language and in law. Lower Canada contained a great French population hostile to England... Home Rule was granted to Canada... Canada instead of being, as it was in 1839, the most disaffected and rebellious dependency of Britain was now the most attached to the English connection... Provinces that seemed arrayed against each other in hopeless antagonism and discord were now united together.'⁷⁴

T. P. O'Connor, M. P. for Liverpool, Scotland division, had a deep awareness of the Canadian analogy and toured Canada prior to the third Home Rule bill. He argued that 'Canada is behind the prime minister. The legislature of Canada, on the motion of the leaders of the different political parties, passed a resolution approving the policy, and to some extent the plan, of the right hon. Gentleman.'⁷⁵The Canadian parliament had consistently supported Home Rule. In May 1882, it had adopted a resolution proposed by, Conservative M. P., John Costigan and seconded by the leader of the Liberal opposition and

⁷³*The Times*, 17 May 1886.

⁷⁴*Hansard* 3, cccv, 967 (13 May 1886).

⁷⁵*Hansard* 3, ccxvi, 861 (3 June 1886).

future Home Rule M. P., Edward Blake, to the effect of arguing in favour of self-government for Ireland. It subsequently adopted a similar resolution four years later, just as Gladstone was attempting to steer his bill through the House of Commons, which stated 'That the Parliament of Canada then expressed the hope that, if consistent with the well-being of the Empire and the rights and status of the minority, some measure of local self-government might be granted to Ireland.'⁷⁶

Thomas Sexton was an inveterate contributor to debates in the House of Commons. Sexton announced most lucidly the case for the analogy between Canada and Ireland. The analogy relied 'not on details but on principles. The principles of resemblance are that Canada was discontented and rebellious till she got what she wanted, and when she obtained what she wanted she became contented and loyal... the substance of what we wanted is contained in the pages of this bill; and if that bill passed into law the settlement arrived at in the case of Canada will be precisely and absolutely reproduced in the case of Ireland.'⁷⁷ William Abraham, M. P. for Limerick West constituency, asked 'Why not try the experiment that had proven so successful in Canada?'⁷⁸

Ex-Queensland premier and former Young Irelander, Kevin Izod O'Doherty, who had been parachuted into the constituency of North Meath, was elected unopposed and helped add weight to the nationalist claims with regard to the imperial analogy. He stated 'the struggle for Home Rule in Australia and of the results which have accrued from it ought to act as the guide to the statesmen of this country in endeavouring to solve the great problem of Irish autonomy... The Australian colonies, like Ireland, had to face a very bitter and tedious struggle before they could gain autonomy. 'He talked at length about the success of the self-governing Australian colonies and compared it to what Ireland could hope to achieve under

⁷⁶ *Irish Times*, 8 May 1886.

⁷⁷ *Hansard* 3, cccvi, 701 (1 June 1886).

⁷⁸ *Hansard* 3, cccv, 1247 (17 May 1886).

a Home Rule parliament.⁷⁹ ‘I can see no reason why- the autonomy conferred upon Ireland should not be as absolutely and undoubtedly a success as the same experiment has proved in Australia.’ Tim Healy quoted, very effectively, the speech of Lord Derby from 1837 which argued against granting ‘responsible government’ to Canada in similar terms to the manner in which Gladstone’s bill was opposed by the Unionists of the 1880s.

I take the speech of Lord Derby, then Lord Stanley, on the Canadian settlement in 1837. He said-and anyone would imagine it was the member of Border Burghs (George Trevelyan) speaking-“What would be the consequence of granting the Canadian demand? The establishment of a French Republic in Lower Canada. The concession of legislative independence will remove the only check to the tyrannical power of the dominant majority.” That is the West Birmingham style. Lord Stanley continued “A majority in numbers only, for in wealth, in education and in enterprise it is inferior to the minority of settlers of British descent.”⁸⁰

Lord Stanley had also predicted civil war in the aftermath of the granting of responsible government in Canada, a prediction, Healy claimed, the subsequent history of the region mocked.

The rank-and-file supporters of Home Rule within the Liberal party were often uninterested and weary of the issue, and were accused over the years, by certain luminaries on the opposing side, most notably Joseph Chamberlain, of being slavish in their devotion to Gladstone.⁸¹ The committee stages of the 1893 and 1912 Home Rule bills would bear out that those prominent Liberal politicians who did speak on the bill in the House of Commons were more preoccupied with the colonial analogy than were the Irish politicians.

Several of Butt’s acolytes from the early 1870s were hostile to the bill. These included Mitchell Henry and E. R. King Harman. Henry had been M.P. for Galway during the 1874-80 parliament. They were, supposedly, alienated by the behaviour of the Parnellites, though the nationalist press argued that their attachment to Irish nationalism was tenuous at best. In a letter to *The Times*, Henry drew a firm line of demarcation between Butt’s Home Rule and Parnell’s Home Rule, arguing that Butt’s federalism was an entirely different proposition

⁷⁹ *Hansard* 3, cccvi, 1064-70 (4 June 1886).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 117-8 (25 May 1886).

⁸¹ *Hansard* 4, xv, 724 (27 July 1893).

from what was on offer on the Government of Ireland bill.⁸² He did not extrapolate with any degree of subtlety the differences between Butt and Parnell, but insisted that Parnell wanted Ireland to be a separate nation. He did, however, attack T. P. O'Connor for wanting 'Ireland to be like Canada'⁸³ in spite of, his mentor, Isaac Butt's protestations at a 1873 Home Rule Confederation meeting in Birmingham that, 'he wanted a parliament for Ireland which should have as much control over Ireland as the Australian parliament had over Australia and the Canadian parliament over Canada.'⁸⁴ Despite this, Colonel King-Harman, who had become frankly Unionist since the early 1880s, speculated that Butt himself would have had little time for the bill. He argued that Butt had stopped believing in his proposal by the late 1870s. Certainly, the removal of Irish M.P.s from Westminster may have disquieted Butt, though it remains difficult to speculate as to how Butt may have felt about the bill. King Harman made an apocalyptic speech as one of the preludes to Lord Salisbury's St. James's Hall address to the National Union of Conservatives of 15 May.⁸⁵

The rejection

Among British M. P. s, general apprehension and nagging fears about the unity of the empire, about the impact the granting of Home Rule would have on India and the other dependencies were the order of the day. There was a feeling that this bill amounted to the thin end of a wedge which would eventually lead to the disintegration of the empire. Salisbury, as leader of the opposition, in 1883 penned an article in the *Quarterly Review* entitled 'Disintegration' where he argued that granting Home Rule to Ireland would encourage all the dependencies of the British empire to seek a similar measure of self-

⁸² *The Times*, 6 Jan. 1886.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 25 Feb. 1873.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 17 May 1886.

government. One letter to *The Times* on Lord Spencer's surprising support for Gladstone's policy, referred to the bill scathingly as the 'Empire Disruption Bill.'⁸⁶

Some of the opponents of Home Rule themselves expressed misgivings about the course of Canadian politics since confederation, arguing that Canada was now, to all intents and purposes, independent. The chief attitude to the self-governing colonies, among the Unionists, seemed to be one of lamentation. Much of the opposition to the bill, such as that espoused by the radical Unionists led by Joseph Chamberlain and even some moderate Tories, such as Sir Henry King, had an 'imperial federationist' dimension.⁸⁷ This school of thought complained that, in practical terms, Britain had only a 'sentimental tie' with Canada. Imperial federation was an idea which had existed in the undergrowth of British political life in the years before 1870. It surfaced spectacularly in the 1890s. Imperial federationists argued that Britain and her colonies should be brought closer together by some mechanism other than the abstract 'union of hearts', with the Westminster parliament perhaps ultimately becoming a great 'council of empire' where members from Canada, Australia and South Africa would attend. The tariff reform programme of the early 1900s was another plank of the imperial federation movement. Supporters of Home Rule also formed part of the imperial federation project. Many politicians supported imperial federation in a platitudinous sense, somewhat in the manner of Isaac Butt, essentially something to be got around to, once they got other things over with first. The movement, though it was to be influential in the intellectual sphere, and in spite of the odd gesture, never acquired enough momentum in states such as Australia and Canada. The self-governing colonies were ambivalent about ceding the powers they had accrued over the previous forty years and could not be corralled by the imperial parliament into doing things they did not wish to do. They enjoyed fully their independence.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 28 Apr. 1886.

⁸⁷ *Hansard* 3, cccv, 1191 (17 May 1886).

The Home Rule bill was eventually defeated on 7 June, by 341 to 311, with ninety-three Liberal party defectors. Gladstone immediately called for the dissolution of parliament. In the ensuing general election, the Gladstonians held their ground in Scotland with George Goschen even losing his seat in East Edinburgh. Wales also went emphatically with Home Rule, as did northern England, which had a notable tradition of having individual Liberal members well disposed towards Home Rule, Cowen, Burt, Sargeant Simon and so forth. However, the south of England, already a bastion of Toryism, went strongly against Home Rule. The West Midlands, where Joseph Chamberlain was immensely powerful, saw a strong performance by the Liberal Unionists. The Tories ultimately had a majority, thus indicating a swing against the Home Rule bill in the country at large. The Tories and the Liberal Unionists together won a heavy majority, winning 393 seats as opposed to 192 Gladstonian liberals. The Irish nationalists remained more or less unchanged, winning eighty-five seats in total.⁸⁸

A composite of objections informed the opposition to this bill. Ireland's constitutional position as part of the United Kingdom was one of the most pivotal. Home Rule for Ireland involved the dismantling and re-ordering of a state in the way the grant of responsible government did not in the case of a colony such as Canada. Ireland was far more tightly bound to Britain than the extant self-governing colonies were. There was a great deal of hand wringing about Ulster which consisted of emotive talk about selling out the 'loyal minority.' Such talk was largely divorced from rational arguments about imperial concerns or precedents. However, Unionists often equated the Ulstermen with the British Protestant settlers in Canada. They insisted that Durham's much vaunted 'solution' to the Canadian dilemma in the late 1830s involved placing the power in the hands of the British Protestant minority. Unionists stated that this bill involved the 'selling out' of an 'English garrison' in a way that had not been done in Canada or any of the other self-governing colonies. The

⁸⁸ William Lubenow, *Parliamentary politics and the Home Rule crisis* (Oxford, 1988), pp 305-11.

Protestant minority would be vulnerable to spoliation, being at the mercy of a parliament in Dublin composed primarily of their enemies. There was also lingering dissatisfaction among many members of the opposition at how the colonies were governed, with many M. P. s, most notably Chamberlain, pointing out that the colonies were now practically independent. However, there was a general insistence on the part of the Unionists, that although many were merely unhappy with the way in which the colonies were being governed, all were adamant that Ireland could not be placed on the same footing. This was primarily due to Ireland's proximity to Britain. The primary reason for the denial of Home Rule was that Ireland was considered within the realm of the United Kingdom in a way that Canada, Australia or South Africa never were.

1886-93

Ensnared in power, Salisbury called for twenty years of resolute government. He had announced, on 15 May, that his alternative plan (to Gladstone's) was to allow the government of England to govern Ireland and now he sought to do just that. He had little time for any of the exotic plans that Chamberlain bandied about before the election. He simply instituted the status quo pre-1885. He remarked joyously that Home Rule was 'sleeping the sleep of the unjust.'⁸⁹ The Tory government, in association with *The Times*, attempted to discredit Parnell, and his party, by linking him to the Phoenix park murders of 1882, but the case collapsed when Richard Piggott, formerly an Irish nationalist, admitted he had forged letters implicating Parnell, in an attempt to destroy him. Ironically, this attempt came at a time when Parnell himself was becoming more conservative. He disassociated himself from the Plan of Campaign, a regeneration of the Land League agitation especially for the Arthur Balfour era, driven by William O'Brien and John Dillon.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Andrew Roberts, *Salisbury: Victorian Titan* (London, 1999) p. 652.

⁹⁰ Matthew, *Gladstone, 1809-1898*, p. 489.

In the face of the propaganda assault of the Unionist government, Parnell set up the Irish Press Agency to counter its claims. This agency printed scores of pamphlets on the coercion bills, denouncing the claims of the Unionists about the fate of Protestant minority in Ireland, and publishing speeches of Home Rulers around the country denouncing violence. These pamphlets represented epic efforts of reassurance. M. P. s such as J. J. Clancy of Dublin North and John Redmond were particularly prominent in the writing of these pamphlets. T. P. Gill, M. P. for Louth South, who did not contribute to the debate in the Commons, wrote the only pamphlet for the agency exclusively concerned with imperial policy. It was entitled *The Home Rule constitutions of the British empire*. Gill argued that the precedent offered by the Canadian and Australian analogies ‘has not been neglected by the supporters of Mr. Gladstone’s policy.’⁹¹ Gill described the parliaments of the Canadian provinces, prior to the granting of responsible government, as an ‘irritating travesty’ and ‘mock Home Rule.’ He stated that the Canadians had rebelled against these measures in the same way the Irish inevitably would against the ‘half measures like Mr. Chamberlain’s panaceas for Ireland... The fondness of certain British statesman for first offering sham Home Rule in the hope of thus stopping the demand for the real boon is a phenomenon worthy of much consideration... It has everywhere been the surest way to lead to a demand of separation.’⁹² He accused Joseph Chamberlain of wanting to apply the same thing to Ireland. Gill, noticeably, did not apply this disdain for ‘sham Home Rule’ specifically to Grattan’s parliament despite its complete lack of executive power and its strictly analogous position to the parliaments in Canada before the 1840s.

Gill then, however, defended ‘sham Home Rule’ as preferable to the system that Ireland had been governed under since the Act of Union. He outlined two reasons for this.

First, spurious and illusory though such autonomy may be, it is at least a recognition of the principle of Home Rule, and, as a matter of fact, the people of those dependencies in which it obtains have far more voice in the arrangement of their

⁹¹ T. P. Gill, *The Home Rule Constitutions of the British empire* (London, 1887), p. 2.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

own affairs than the people of Ireland. If the executive is not controlled by the legislature, it is largely guided by it; and when both are in harmony, they can pass measures affecting the dependency without having to submit them to a discussion and a vote at Westminster. Secondly, the concession of this spurious autonomy has been the preliminary to the concession of complete Home Rule wherever the colonies have demanded it.⁹³

Gill praised the British North America Act as providing a 'perfect system both of national and provincial self-government.' He stated that 'we have seen that every phase that the Irish question presents today, or has ever presented since the Union, has had its counterpart in the history of Canada.' He highlighted the 'discontent swelling to the point of rebellion... passionate hostility to England, and cries of separation; we have seen an arrogant minority self-styled the "loyal" and "British" complicating the difficulty by raising questions of racial distinction... how the policy of half-measures only led to more violent irritation.' Gill also cited Lord Dufferin as a good example of how a colonial governor should operate. He stated that the position was analogous to the position of the lord-lieutenant under Gladstone's bill. He argued that the colonial governors had greater power than was generally supposed, even though their power had been trimmed since the pre-responsible government days. In a slightly convoluted complaint, he attacked Chamberlain's idea of placing Ireland on a footing equal to that of the provinces of Canada, arguing that it gave Ireland greater autonomy than Gladstone's plan did. 'The Imperial parliament remained sovereign with regard to the Irish parliament according to the terms of Mr. Gladstone's scheme. Whatever power it gave it delegated, and could recall them (sic) again. The Dominion parliament delegates no power to the provincial legislatures. They derive their powers direct from the imperial parliament, and from such subjects as they have power to legislate upon, the power of the Dominion parliament is expressly excluded.'⁹⁴ Prior to the appearance of the Irish Council bill in 1907, Gill outlined a draft scheme of a Home Rule bill in a memorandum to Redmond. In it, he exalted the Swiss constitution above the British and colonial ones. The

⁹³ Ibid., p. 8.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

British constitution, he said, had led to messy, chaotic, short-term governments wherever it had been tried outside of a British or colonial context.⁹⁵

The four decades, from the early 1880s onwards, saw a great many visits to the self-governing colonies by Home Rule M. P. s. Richard Davis has characterised this shift in Parnellite emphasis as a 'conservative' one.⁹⁶ In Davis' estimation, Parnellite activity had earlier been geared towards U. S. funded militant agrarian radicalism whereas the new policy 'necessitated an appeal to the presumably loyalist Australasian Irish.'⁹⁷ Parnell had visited Canada in 1882, staying at the Archbishop of Toronto's palace. John and Willie Redmond had been coolly received when they visited Australasia in 1883 on the back of the Phoenix park murders. Long-time premier of New South Wales and committed anti-Fenian, Sir Henry Parkes went so far as to propose their expulsion from New South Wales.⁹⁸ The colonies frequently expressed an almost unrivalled loathing of the Fenians, combined with strong, but usually passive, support for the Home Rule movement. This echoed almost precisely the views of one of the more famous Irish colonists, Thomas D'arcy McGee, though McGee's views were atypical and resented within the Irish communities in the colonies. The Irish party, for the most part, enjoyed the warm support of the self-governing colonies in their quest for self-government, particularly after Gladstone had endorsed the concept in late 1885. The Canadian federal parliament, commencing in 1882, when future Home Rule M. P., Edward Blake, proposed the motion, carried five resolutions in favour of Irish self-government.⁹⁹ T. P. O'Connor and Richard Hazelton, future M. P. for Galway North, were frequent travellers to Canada. Michael Davitt, John Dillon, John Donovan, Joe Devlin, prominent Belfast Home Ruler, and John and Willie Redmond all travelled through Australia and New Zealand. Home Rulers, understandably, showed a far greater propensity to make allusions to the dominions when making speeches Canada, Australia, New Zealand,

⁹⁵ T. P. Gill, Draft scheme of Home Rule bill, 14 Dec. 1906 (N. L. I., Redmond papers, MS 15,248).

⁹⁶ Davis, *Irish issues*, p. 102.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Jeremiah MacVeigh, *The colonies and Home Rule* (London, 1911), p. 3.

or so forth than they did in speeches in Ireland. In Auckland, in 1888, Bernard Molloy, M. P. for King's County Birr, delivered a speech, stating, 'Home Rule had been conceded to New Zealand, to Canada, and even to Jersey and the Isle of Man, and the question was of universal application.'¹⁰⁰

Parnell's hardcore nationalism came to the fore when he was laid low by the Kitty O'Shea affair in 1890. The episode caused a schism in the Home Rule party and jeopardised the Liberal alliance, which was the only viable strategy in the aftermath the first Home Rule bill. Parnell attempted to revive the old strategy of independent opposition in response to the Liberal party's urgings to the party at large to depose him.¹⁰¹ Parnell made desperate speeches which appeared to imply latent Fenianism, however, in doing so, he was merely attempting to shore up a base within Irish nationalism.

Gladstone's second attempt: Home Rule bill, 1893

A Liberal minority government, dependent on Home Rule votes, returned to power after the general election of 1892. On 13 February, 1893 Gladstone introduced another Home Rule bill to the House, speaking of the seven intervening years between his first bill and the current one as lost years.¹⁰² The first and second readings, in particular, of the bill involved a rerun of the issues that were aired during the 1886 debates.

With the introduction of this second Home Rule bill, familiar arguments, concerning the contented situation of the self-governing colonies and the distress evident in Ireland, came to the fore once more. Liberal parliamentarians showed themselves to be somewhat more enamoured of the colonial analogy than the Irish home rulers. Those Irish nationalists who contributed to the debate in Westminster were happy to use the colonial analogy to bolster their argument. However, Irish Home Rulers were, by and large, more inclined to expound

¹⁰⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 9 June 1888.

¹⁰¹ *The Times*, 29 Nov. 1890.

¹⁰² *Hansard* 4, viii, 1241-2 (13 Feb. 1893).

on Irish historical grievances and hark back to Grattan's parliament than were English and Scottish Liberals.

Gladstone argued, once more, with the use of broad brush strokes, that imperial and European precedent argued in favour of the course he was embarking upon. Canada was riddled with discontent when governed from Downing Street, separation was warned when responsible government was advocated, and yet what occurred was a union of hearts between the two countries. Chamberlain, and the burgeoning imperial federationists, essentially argued that a union of hearts was useless and that the colonies would eventually drift away. It was acknowledged, fairly scornfully, throughout the debates that the imperial parliament had little or no power over the existing dominion parliaments. Ireland was different. Some were dissatisfied with the manner in which the colonies were governed but they were even more stringently opposed to Ireland being governed in the same way. There was never a pure, abstract formula for the government of Britain's colonies, however Gladstone would argue that the method that had been tried in the dominions had been proven to work, (and even this method was to come under attack at the turn of the century). Chamberlain stated that Ireland's geographical position precluded her from being governed in the same manner as the self-governing colonies. 'Does anyone doubt for one moment that if Ireland was a thousand miles from England she would not have long before been a self-governing colony... her political condition is controlled by her geographical position, and her interests cannot be allowed outweigh the interests of the larger country.'¹⁰³

The primary difference between this bill and the 1886 bill was that eighty Irish M. P. s were to be retained at Westminster. It was originally deigned that the Irish M. P. s would only have competence to vote on Irish and imperial matters and would be excluded from purely British issues; however this was deemed unworkable. There was no firm line of demarcation between what constituted imperial and British issues, and Gladstone himself had declared in

¹⁰³ *Hansard* 4, viii, 1720-1 (17 Feb. 1893).

1886 that 'it passed the wit of man' to devise such a scheme. Gladstone would have preferred Irish M.P.s to be left out of Westminster altogether and had only provided for their attendance on the grounds that he felt it would satisfy English public opinion. Their exclusion had, apparently, been a key reason for the defection of the Liberal Unionists seven years before. G. P. Taylor has argued that Cecil Rhodes was key in effecting this change in policy.¹⁰⁴ Rhodes had not supported the 1886 bill because of the omission of Irish members from Westminster. Parnell's pragmatism shone through when he accepted money, on behalf of the party, from Cecil Rhodes, in spite of the latter's zealous support for the Boers in the 1870s and his known opinions on British imperial policy in Africa. Parnell taking the money showed either extreme pragmatism or political incoherence. It has been argued by Jennifer Regan Lefebvre that Parnell was interested in imperial and foreign policy only to the extent that engagement with them could be useful to the cause of Irish Home Rule.¹⁰⁵

The second reading began on 6 April and continued for twelve days debate until 21 April. There was little fear of the bill being rejected as Gladstone had a majority in the House of Commons who, on this occasion, were aware he would bring in a Home Rule bill before the election. The bill passed the second reading on April 21 with 347 in favour and 304 against.¹⁰⁶

The Home Rulers were a fractured entity in the aftermath of the Parnell controversy. Maume has attested to the listless air that hung over the party during the 1890s and stated that this feeling was barely disturbed by the introduction of the second Home Rule bill.¹⁰⁷ The main body of the Irish nationalists, the anti-Parnellites (or the Irish clerical nationalists as *The Times* had scathingly taken to calling them)¹⁰⁸ were led by Justin McCarthy. The small band of Parnellite M. P. s were led by John Redmond. Gladstone wasn't helped by Redmond

¹⁰⁴ G. P. Taylor, 'Cecil Rhodes and the second Home Rule bill' in *Historical Journal*, xvi, (1971), pp 771-81.

¹⁰⁵ Regan Lefebvre, *Alfred Webb*, p. 133.

¹⁰⁶ *Hansard* 4, xi, 1007 (21 April 1893).

¹⁰⁷ Patrick Maume, *The long gestation: Irish nationalist politics, 1891-1918* (Dublin, 1999), pp 32-34.

¹⁰⁸ *The Times*, 15 Feb. 1893.

saying that the bill couldn't be a final solution (though Redmond had said he'd support it anyway).¹⁰⁹ Redmond, personally inspired by Parnell's later stance, emitted a much more militant air than McCarthy and the anti-Parnellites. The anti-Parnellites, or the Irish National Federation, were accused of enjoying an overtly incestuous relationship with the Liberal party, which had recommended Parnell's dismissal in 1890.

Paul Townend has referred to Justin McCarthy's positive and conciliatory attitude towards British imperialism throughout his career, which contributed to his closeness to Gladstone and those in the higher echelons of the Liberal party. McCarthy, consistently, in periodicals in the late 1870s and early 1880s, argued in favour of imperial federation and frequently referred to the Canadian and Australian examples, 'One after another, the colonies develop into States with a complete system of Home Rule... Empires are in truth more likely to be dismembered by concessions refused, than granted.'¹¹⁰ McCarthy wrote, in 1880, that, 'I do not believe that any practical Irishman now thinks of a restoration of the old Irish parliament. An Irish parliament, like that of 1782 is indeed impossible now. A new principle of government for empire with mixed nationalities has come up and has been successful wherever it has been tried. It is successful in the Dominion of Canada as well as in the United States. 'He set up his and the Home Rule party's own federalist programme in opposition to 'the passionate, inextinguishable hatred for English rule which beyond all question fills the heart of a very considerable portion of the poorer classes of the Irish population.'¹¹¹ However, as evidenced by the rhetoric prior the 1885 general election, this feeling had completely swamped the Irish parliamentary party and was the dominant emotion on platforms around Ireland in the lead-up to the election, totally overwhelming and

¹⁰⁹ *Hansard* 4, xvi, 1508 (30 Aug. 1893).

¹¹⁰ Paul Townend, 'No imperial privilege: Justin McCarthy, Home Rule and empire' in *Eire-Ireland*, xlii (2007), p. 212.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 210.

drowning out McCarthy's own genteel ideas about federalism and 'an empire with mixed nationalities.'¹¹²

The anti-Parnellite faction held their national convention in the Rotunda in Dublin on 10 March 1893. In the absence of Justin McCarthy, Thomas Sexton delivered the address. He began by harking back to Grattan's parliament. He compared the gathering in the Rotunda to the Volunteers of 1782. However, he declared that the 'constitution of 1782 contained within itself the germ of inevitable decay, because the executive government of the country corrupted the legislature and the freedom of the land was lost.'¹¹³ At the close of his speech, Sexton stated that, 'the bill conferred upon Ireland, according to the principles and practices of the constitution, was as good, as binding, as conclusive a form as existed in Canada, Australia, or any parliament of the empire, a parliament able and competent to legislate for Ireland according to the will of her own people.'¹¹⁴ The party had recruited Edward Blake, the former premier of Ontario, who was elected in South Longford in the 1892 general election, and James Hogan, a Tipperary-born journalist in Melbourne and who sat for his native county. Hogan pointed to the harmony that existed between Orangemen and Irish-Australians in Melbourne, and declared himself to be an 'imperial home ruler like all thinking colonists.'¹¹⁵

The Home Rulers argued that the opposition's harnessing of imperial precedent incorporated a great deal of casuistry, sophistry and so forth. The opposition hammered away at the powers granted to the Irish parliament, trying to extend the powers of imperial parliament over virtually all issues and to render the Irish parliament a practically useless cipher. Thomas Sexton was a prominent contributor to the debates and was one of the most important figures in the Irish National Federation. During the first reading, Sexton answered Major Darwin,

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ *Southern Star*, 11 Mar. 1893.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ *Hansard* 4, xi, 133 (12 April 1893).

who had claimed that the veto that the Imperial parliament held over Canadian legislation was a 'dead letter' and, thus, that the same set of circumstances could not be instituted in Ireland, by spelling out the argument that Charles Gavan Duffy, Gladstone and, indeed, Sexton himself, had used continually, 'I fail to appreciate the reference to Canada. Clearly the only lesson to be drawn from Canada is a lesson on our side. Canada was disloyal and bred rebellion. You granted her Home Rule. When you had done so her disloyalty became loyalty, and her convulsion became content.'¹¹⁶ In his speech on the second reading of the bill, he stated,

You had a rudimentary legislature in Canada, but the executive was divorced from the legislature and subject to imperial control. How wonderful the contrast that has arisen since 1800! for whereas the principle of centralisation was the ruling bond of this empire, the principle of Home Rule has been the law of your evolution since. You have established between 20 and 30 Home Rule parliaments within the British empire and it is the fact that at the present moment Ireland is the only considerable community in the British empire beyond the shores of this island to which Home Rule has not been extended.¹¹⁷

The views of the bulk of Home Rulers were adequately summed up by Sexton, in response to James Rentoul, 'Since I am challenged I say that Ireland is a nation, and never can be made anything else, but I see no reason why a nation should not be content with a Home Rule Constitution.'¹¹⁸

'Ulsteria', as Michael Davitt termed it,¹¹⁹ was a big factor throughout the debate. The bill was burned at a rally in Belfast in the presence of the leader of the opposition. It was thought to usher in Armageddon for the Protestants of Northern Ireland and the insistence of the Unionists, during the committee stage of the debate, for an 'operable' parliamentary supremacy in Ireland was based on the notion that a Dublin parliament would not legislate fairly as far as the Ulster Protestants were concerned. T.W Russell, M.P. for Tyrone South, examined the imperial precedent offered by Canada in an Ulster context. Russell was a

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, viii, 1314 (13 Feb. 1893).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, xi, 802 (20 Apr. 1893).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 672 (19 Apr. 1893).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, xi, 61 (11 Apr. 1893).

particularly unorthodox and thoughtful Unionist. In this particular breakdown, the French Catholics in Lower Canada were equated with the Irish majority in 1893. He pointed out that a key component of Lord Durham's solution to the Canadian problem was that it orchestrated a situation whereby the English settlers would be favoured over the French. Russell argued that Gladstone's bill was equivalent to uniting Upper and Lower Canada under a system of responsible government or Home Rule and leaving all the power in the hands of the French majority.¹²⁰ He then appeared to argue that the disunion of the province of Canada in the 1860s had left the Protestants of Lower Canada (Quebec) in the lurch. Russell was unusual among Unionists in arguing that there was a valid comparison between Gladstone's Home Rule Ireland and the current status of Quebec. However, he held up Quebec as a dark example of what Home Rule in Ireland could lead to.¹²¹ The Catholic church had its own way in Quebec, corruption had been rife and it was the only province in Canada in debt. The Liberal M.P. for Davenport, Edward Morton, disputed this. He presented Quebec's current idyllic state. He quoted John Colby, a Protestant representative in Quebec, as saying that there 'never was a minority in any country treated with more justice, with more liberality, with more generosity than the Protestant minority in the province of Quebec have been treated, irrespective of political parties.'¹²² Morton compared the English settlers in Quebec to the Ulstermen and quoted Mr. Roebuck approvingly, as describing 'English Canadians' as being 'loyal and English only when to be so is favourable to their little despicable and mischievous oligarchy.'¹²³ Edward Blake pointed out that the 'Ulster of Quebec, according to the views of the hon. Member (T. W. Russell), was to be found in that loyal and Protestant minority... The loyal and Protestant minority accepted the proposal that was made for a federation.'¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Ibid., 70-1 (11 Apr. 1893).

¹²¹ Ibid., 72-3 (11 Apr. 1893).

¹²² Ibid., 159 (12 Apr. 1893).

¹²³ Ibid., 155 (12 Apr. 1893).

¹²⁴ Ibid., 414 (14 Apr. 1893).

The committee stage, which commenced on 8 May, examined in detail the provisions of the bill. In the case of this bill, one which was considered to be of major constitutional importance, the entire house took part in the committee stage as opposed to merely a select committee. It dealt with the highly technical minutiae of the bill and met, in total, for forty-seven nights, ending in fisticuffs, on 27 July, with minimal amendments.¹²⁵ It was necessarily pedantic. It was primarily concerned with the supremacy of the imperial parliament and the extent of Ireland's financial contribution to the British exchequer. There was, subsequently, fourteen more days 'consideration' of the bill in August, which was almost an extension of the committee stage of the bill.

The committee stage was revelatory in as far as the manner of Home Rule which the Irish nationalists wished to institute was concerned. In the early stages, William Redmond, M.P. for Clare East, sought to substitute the word 'legislature' for the word 'parliament' in the bill. He acknowledged the fact that the word 'parliament' was not, excepting in the case of the dominion parliament of Canada, used in the colonies. Redmond argued 'He might be told that in none of the acts establishing colonial parliaments did the word "Parliament" occur. That was true- though indeed, he believed there was an exception in the case of the dominion parliament... It would satisfy the widespread sentiment of the Irish people... It was for the restoration of a parliament that the Irish people had longed so passionately, and worked so hard.'¹²⁶ He then, two days later, attempted to re-title the 'Legislative assembly' as 'The House of Commons.' Redmond stated, 'They were not starting a legislature in Ireland for the first time; what they were doing was restoring to the Irish people the right of governing themselves which they had before...'¹²⁷ Dr. Joseph Kenny, M.P. for Dublin College Green, stated that they rested the demand for the return of 'The House of Commons', 'not on the analogy of Canada, but on the unalterable feeling of nationality of

¹²⁵ Ibid., xv, 732 (27 July 1893).

¹²⁶ Ibid., xii, 494-5 (9 May 1893).

¹²⁷ Ibid., 654 (11 May 1893).

the Irish people and on historical continuity. They had a House of Commons and they desired again to have a House of Commons.’¹²⁸

John Redmond stated that they did not mean to reinstate the situation that prevailed during the time of Grattan’s parliament.

An hon. Member (James Parker Smith, Partick) had said this amendment was intended to prolong and perpetuate the tradition of Grattan’s parliament. If by that it was conveyed that they intended to transform the new assembly into an assembly governed by an analogy in principle with Grattan’s parliament, the hon. Member was utterly wrong, but if he meant this was to be an expression of the desire of the Irish people in their future government to perpetuate the tradition they had cherished for so long of the old Irish parliament, then the hon. Member was right.¹²⁹

J. J. Clancy, M. P. for Dublin North and editor of the Irish Press Agency, said that the amendment ‘would not add, in the least, to the force of power of the Irish legislature. The effect of adopting the amendment would simply be to gratify the national sentiment of Ireland.’¹³⁰ Clancy later defended the insistence on Grattan’s parliament.

The right hon. Gentleman (Joseph Chamberlain) had said that when Parnell said Ireland would not accept less than Grattan’s parliament, he said Ireland would accept a parliament without an executive responsible to it. Mr Parnell had not in mind at the time, and no one had in his mind, save perhaps the right hon. Gentleman, any reference whatever to an executive... Mr. Parnell meant to refer to the scope of the legislative authority... That scope was as wide as the parliament of Great Britain... Grattan’s Parliament-and this also answered the right. Hon. Gentleman with regard to O’Connell- being co-ordinate and independent (of Great Britain), if matters had been allowed to proceed along the old lines and affairs had not been interrupted by the unfortunate recall of Lord Fitzwilliam in 1795, the Irish executive would have come under the control of the Irish parliament in the same way that the English executive had come under the control of the Imperial parliament.¹³¹

As in the 1880s, Home Rulers expressed a preference for referencing the 1782 parliament rather than the colonial precedents. Jeremiah Jordan, M. P. for West Clare, but a Protestant from Fermanagh, delivered a speech in Kinawley in Enniskillen, stating, ‘Never lower the flag of Ireland a nation. This is our right more so than any British colony. Ours is an ancient

¹²⁸ Ibid., 663 (11 May 1893).

¹²⁹ Ibid., 516 (9 May 1893).

¹³⁰ Ibid., 501 (9 May 1893).

¹³¹ Ibid., xiv, 864-5 (4 July 1893).

title, out of which we were cheated for the last 100 years.'¹³² Jordan's draft speech, to be delivered to the U.I.L. convention on 11 December 1900, indicated a mild hostility and slight bitterness towards the self-governing colonies, lamenting their preferential treatment when set alongside the treatment offered to Ireland.

Exclusion from their full and fair share of responsibility of government, as in India, brings forth rooted dislike and disloyalty to that state of affairs... By way of contrast to us, nationalists are told the colonials are loyal. Yes they are, and no thanks to them, if they were not effusively loyal to England they would be the keenest fools, for they have all we want, perfect self-government, and not like Ireland they pay nothing to the imperial revenue though the British fleet protects them and Ireland has to pay about 2 million sterling per annum, for which she gets no more than the colonies who have their own government and who pay nothing for British protection.¹³³

John Dillon displayed a similar tendency in his tour of New Zealand of 1889. Richard Davis has indicated that 'Dillon's lack of enthusiasm for general imperial federation probably stemmed from the feeling that Ireland was herself a mother country, not to be equated with mere colonies like New South Wales or New Zealand.'¹³⁴ Dillon later claimed that New Zealand would find federation with Australia as clammy and uncomfortable as the Irish found the union with Britain.¹³⁵

The Unionists wanted to bring about a severe diminution of the powers accorded to the Irish parliament. They assaulted the bill in committee on all fronts. The early days of the committee stage of the debate were dominated by the issue of 'parliamentary supremacy'. Gladstone clearly had in mind, an imperial supremacy of the type exercised over the dominions. This was not acceptable to the Unionists. Westminster had a technical supremacy over the parliaments in Canada and Australia but it was rarely, if ever, exercised. James Rentoul, Tory M.P. for Down East, emphasised the Ulster Unionist position on the supremacy of the Westminster parliament. He insisted that the supremacy of the imperial parliament in Ireland 'should be the same as in Kent or Suffolk. They (the Unionists) wanted

¹³² Draft speeches of Jeremiah Jordan, 2 Jan. 1895 (P. R.O.N.I., Jeremiah Jordan papers, D2073/3/4).

¹³³ Draft speeches of Jeremiah Jordan, 11 Dec. 1900 (P.R.O.N.I., Jeremiah Jordan papers, D2073/3/4).

¹³⁴ Richard Davis, *Irish issues*, p. 155.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

a supremacy capable of being enforced in a practical manner.’¹³⁶ Arthur Balfour also insisted that the supremacy of the Westminster parliament over a prospective Irish legislature would have to be an ‘operable supremacy’ rather than the shadowy, merely theoretical, supremacy that was exerted (or as was the case, not exerted) over Canada and Australia. The opposition succeeded in passing an amendment, tabled by Henry James, Liberal Unionist M. P. for Bury, proposing the supremacy of the imperial parliament ‘shall remain unaffected and undiminished over all persons, matters and things within the Queen’s dominions.’¹³⁷ In the government’s view, this was simply restating what was already in the bill. Henry Fowler, M.P. for Wolverhampton and the president of the board of local government, argued that the proviso ‘did not add or take from the supremacy of the Imperial parliament by one hair’s breath, but which was a declaration to meet the views of certain hon. Gentlemen who entertained doubts on the point.’ He argued that it was primarily a rhetorical exercise and would have no practical effect.

Viscount Middleton, an Irish M.P. who sat for the English constituency of Guildford, and Victor Cavendish, M.P. for West Derbyshire, also introduced amendments of this type. Each argued that imperial supremacy was meaningless in the context of the self-governing colonies and there would be no way to check the power of the Irish government if the same thing was introduced in Ireland. Sir John Lawson referred to the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865 but in the course of his testimony argued that it would soon be regarded, in the words of William Harcourt, as “impolitic to raise these questions in regard to colonies having representative institutions”¹³⁸ Colonel Edward Saunderson, the leader of the Irish Tories, fulminated that the type of imperial supremacy envisaged in this bill was ‘a sham... intended to throw dust in the eyes of the British people.’¹³⁹ Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, M.P. for Sheffield Ecclesall, took Gladstone to task on his use of the colonial analogy. He said the

¹³⁶ *Hansard* 4, xii, 1104 (16 May 1893).

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1094 (16 May 1893).

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1133 (16 May 1893).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 488 (9 May 1893).

analogy was ‘exceedingly exaggerated and strained, and that the essential condition of Ireland and the colonies were totally different’ and restated the fundamental objection the Unionists had to the bill, ‘He would only ask the members to remember that the colonies were thousands of miles removed from their shores, and not one of them occupied a position of political or strategic dominance over their interests at home.’¹⁴⁰ He further asserted, with the liberal use of hyperbole, that ‘The loss of a colony, deeply as it would be deplored by everyone who values the greatness of the empire, would not be a fatal blow, whereas the establishment, as might well happen under this bill, of a separate, hostile and well-armed power in Ireland, might be a means of dealing a deadly blow at the liberty, commerce and independence of this country.’¹⁴¹

In an article in the *New Ireland Review* three years after the bill was defeated, Edward J. Gibbs, author of *England and South Africa*, commented on it from a conservative perspective. In the article, he dealt specifically with the Canadian comparison. The article was entitled ‘Home Rule in Ireland and Canada.’ He argued that the bill was disdained not because it followed the example of Canada but because it deviated from it, stating, ‘the bill of 1893 was distasteful to the English people not because it gave to Ireland such autonomy as had been given to Canada but because in its concessions and restrictions, it was completely opposed to the principles underlying the Canadian act.’¹⁴² He considered himself in favour of some measure of Home Rule but he argued that Gladstone’s bill was far too expansive and democratic. The powers of the lord lieutenant were minimal when set alongside the powers of the governor general of Canada. The lord lieutenant could not toss out bills at his own discretion but was dependent on the approval of the cabinet which was elected by the assembly, which in turn was put in place by the electorate. The lord lieutenancy was, thus, an entirely toothless role. He stated that ‘the proletariat of Ireland

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 1181-2 (17 May 1893).

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Edward J. Gibbs, ‘Home Rule in Ireland and Canada’ in *New Ireland Review*, vii, (1896), pp. 145-61.

would become its absolute masters if this bill had become law.’¹⁴³ He envisioned the Irish parliament, in a proper measure of Home Rule, as being a ‘magnified county council.’ He criticised the decision to attempt to bring in the bill long after it had become apparent that there was no enthusiasm for it in the country. In his article, Gibbs identified two strands of Home Rulers. One of these, Gibbs contended, wanted absolute separation from Britain. He included O’Connell and Parnell in this grouping. Gibbs echoed Ashmead Bartlett in his article stating that, ‘undoubtedly it would be a great blow to the power and prosperity of Great Britain if Canada left us, but it would not mean absolute and immediate ruin. On the other hand, if Ireland became independent, or subject to a foreign power, the British empire could scarcely continue to exist.’¹⁴⁴ The other strand was populated by the ‘great majority of Home Rulers’ who merely wanted an Irish parliament ‘to settle all matters exclusively Irish, and first of all the land laws.’¹⁴⁵ This claim was somewhat dubious as O’Connell and Parnell were, after all, the two most successful leaders of Irish nationalism in the nineteenth century.

R. G. Webster, Liberal M.P. for St. Pancras East, took a gradualist approach and said that when the colonies were first granted self-government, the mother country exerted a sort of quasi authority over them but this had been relaxed over time. He argued that the Irish parliament would embark on the same course.¹⁴⁶ The Irish M. P.s, who interjected in the debate, fought to preserve, more or less, the measure of independence guaranteed by colonial precedents in the case of Canada and Australia. John Redmond and Thomas Sexton, though they insisted that they accepted the supremacy of the imperial parliament, sought to obtain an unspoken guarantee that the imperial parliament would not meddle in an overbearing and systematic fashion in the dealings of the Irish parliament. Redmond sought to attain a guarantee that imperial supremacy would scarcely, if ever, be exerted. He argued that the Unionists appeared to want Westminster to turn into a court of appeal for every act decided

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ *Hansard* 4, xii, 489-90 (9 May 1893).

upon in an Irish legislature. He argued that Westminster could only intervene in the unlikely event of the Irish parliament performing an unjust act.¹⁴⁷

During the discussions on the executive power conferred on the Irish parliament by the bill, Unionists, such as the marquess of Carmarthen, Captain Naylor-Leyland and Viscount Wolmer, attempted to pass amendments which explicitly threatened 'responsible government' and tried to divorce the legislature from the executive. Edward Blake and Thomas Sexton were the only the Irish party M. P.s to answer these attempts with reference to the Canadian analogy. 'It was just such an Executive... one not created by the people themselves, but forced upon them by imperial authority, that produced disturbances in the old Province of Canada.'¹⁴⁸ Sexton stated that 'in every Home Rule Constitution in the world-in every statutory constitution-these powers were given' and referred directly to the British North America Act, 'Section 92 of the British North America Act gave general powers to the dominion parliament to amend its constitution; and Section 63, while it set forth who were to compose the executive council in the first instance, gave power to the legislature-a power which the legislature had since exercised-to constitute the executive council.'¹⁴⁹ Captain Naylor-Leyland's amendment attempted to categorise the committee responsible to the Irish legislature who were to 'advise' the lord lieutenant, as a 'consultative' rather than an 'executive' body.¹⁵⁰ Sexton instanced 'Canada' when it was asserted by Sir John Gorst that no government had ever worked well under the circumstances that were instituted under this bill.¹⁵¹ Viscount Wolmer attempted to omit the words 'on the advice of the said Executive committee' from the bill. Blake responded to the debate.

To propose a clause that in all matters the Viceroy should exercise his own independent discretion upon the question of assent would tend to give life to the

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 1123 (16 May 1893).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., xiv, 908 (5 July 1893).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 917 (5 July 1893).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 868 (4 July 1893).

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 877 (4 July 1893).

veto in the normal condition of affairs, which is contrary to recognised practice, not merely here, but in all subordinate legislatures with which I am acquainted... The invariable practice in the great dominion of Canada, with its seven or eight legislatures, is that assent is dealt with... on the advice of the Privy Council or the Executive Council as the case may be.¹⁵²

The Irish M.P.s were slow to contribute to the debates on the committee stage of the bill. They justified this on the preponderance of what they considered to be destructive, wrecking amendments that were flying around the committee. Edward Blake, understandably, was the most verbose of the Home Rule M.P.s on the issue of the Canadian analogy. Blake had been an exceptionally prominent member of the Canadian federal parliament, minister for justice in the mid-1870s and a leading figure in the 'Canada First' movement where, in spite of his own liberalism, he advocated a protectionist policy for Canada. He was employed to lend gravitas to the Irish party's claims with regard to the Canadian analogy. The Irish party appeared almost to outsource the job of making detailed allusions to the colonies to their new recruit from Canada. In a speech to the 'Eighty Club', a political club affiliated to the Liberal party, shortly after the 1892 general election, Blake stated,

If asked what effect Home Rule in Canada had had upon the relations with the empire, he would say that the long delay in grappling with the problem of the relations between the mother country and the colonies had resulted in steadily diminishing the proportion of common interests, but he believed the sentiment of attachment and respect, of loyalty and affection on the part of the mass of the Canadian people towards the United Kingdom to be widespread and deep rooted, and he was convinced it owed what strength and vitality it possessed, in a very great degree, to the concession of Home Rule in local affairs. (cheers)¹⁵³

The *Freeman's Journal* said, in relation to T. W. Russell's visit to Quebec prior to the introduction of the bill, where Russell apparently found 'a veritable goldmine of arguments against Home Rule,'¹⁵⁴ that 'we are glad that in the person of a Protestant and an Ontarian, Edward Blake M. P., will be found the man to open British eyes to the real state of that much abused, because little known, province of the Canadian dominion.'¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 986 (6 July 1893).

¹⁵³ *United Ireland*, 13 Aug. 1892.

¹⁵⁴ *F. J.*, 7 Jan. 1893.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Blake answered many of the technical, highly detailed questions about how Canada was governed and how it equated to Ireland. Sir George Bartley attempted to pass an amendment explicitly declaring the Irish parliament a 'subordinate parliament.' He charged, with some justification, that there was no indication from the speeches of Irish party M. P.s, that they regarded the legislature that was to be set up as a subordinate one. He 'had taken the trouble of reading a great many of the speeches made by those hon. Members (Irish nationalist M. P.s); and he would candidly say that in no speech was there any indication that the parliament was to be a subordinate parliament but that it was to be practically an independent legislature.'¹⁵⁶ The tone and language of their speeches on platforms in Ireland, Bartley argued, sat entirely ill at ease with the truncated nature of the legislature that was to be set up. Blake answered this attempted amendment by asserting that such an amendment would 'mark the legislature about to be created with a brand of inferiority over the smallest of the colonies having legislatures created by this parliament.'¹⁵⁷

Blake was more insistent on responsible government than a portentous parliament with exceptionally wide legislative powers. In a memorandum to Redmond shortly before his forced resignation (he suffered a stroke in 1907), and just prior to the appearance of the disappointing Irish Council bill, he wrote,

I have from the beginning felt and spoken strongly as to the vital importance of the constitution of the governing authorities, legislative and executive; deeming this to be of infinitely greater consequence than the extent of the power, executive or legislative, to be in the first instance conferred. We can always, and with increased force as we prove our capacity to use wisely what we have got, press for addition to the powers... temporary exclusions are of less consequence. But to permit the building of the unsound and anti-popular constitutional foundation would be a grave error.¹⁵⁸

This feeling probably derived from his colonial experience. He was less enamoured of Grattan's parliament than the bulk of the members in the parliamentary party. T. P. Gill, former M. P. for Louth South, and another expert on colonial constitutional precedents,

¹⁵⁶ *Hansard* 4, xii, 466 (8 May 1893).

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 478 (8 May 1893).

¹⁵⁸ Edward Blake to John Redmond, 6 Dec. 1906 (N. L. I., Redmond papers, MS 15,170).

echoed Blake's comments about the necessity of a responsible executive, in relation to the forthcoming bill, also in a letter to Redmond.¹⁵⁹

The bill was heavily watered down after passing through the committee stage. Redmond, who was none too impressed by the bill in its original form, mourned that the word 'provisional' was now pasted in 'red ink' across the bill.¹⁶⁰ (The final night of the committee stage saw surreal scenes on the floor of the House of Commons with Joseph Chamberlain accusing the, largely silent, pro-Home Rule side of 'slavishly' following Gladstone regardless of what they thought themselves. He was shouted down with cries of 'Judas' and there followed a bout of scrapping and tussling between Irish nationalist and Conservative M. P. s with Colonel Saunderson accusing T. P. O'Connor of striking him on the head.)¹⁶¹

The third reading was a brisk affair, with everyone jaded after the gruelling committee stages and the fourteen further days of consideration, and with John Redmond now thoroughly dissatisfied with the bill, albeit still inclined to vote for it. Dillon accused the opponents of the bill at the committee stage of attempting to 'smother this measure in a forest of amendment and a needless stream of talk, instead of subjecting it to an honest and faithful criticism.'¹⁶² Justin McCarthy was more positive in his attitude to the bill, and harked back to Grattan and his sacred parliament in his final words on the bill.¹⁶³ Redmond, by contrast, only voted for it because it was better than the status quo. Grattan's parliament was still pivotal in the minds of the Home Rulers, and the straight-forward language of 'The Cause' still poked its nose into the debates in the House of Commons, though it was greatly muffled, relative to the free rein it was given on platforms in Ireland. Patrick McGilligan, M. P. for South Fermanagh, spoke of the 'ancient traditions and patriotic aspirations of the

¹⁵⁹ T. P. Gill to John Redmond, 9 Feb, 1907 (N. L. I., Redmond papers, MS 15,190).

¹⁶⁰ *Hansard* 4, xvi, 1504 (30 Aug. 1893).

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, xv, 732 (27 July 1893).

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, xvi, 1651 (31 Aug. 1893).

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1744 (1 Sept. 1893).

Celtic race' and talked about the 'hope that the English parliament would in expiring years of the century make atonement and restitution for its act of spoliation and robbery in the beginning by restoring to Ireland her right to make her own laws in her own parliament in her own land.'¹⁶⁴

The Commons was slightly impotent at this point as the majority had already been established and Lord Salisbury had already indicated his determination to throw out the bill. The House of Commons passed the bill on 1 September by 301 votes to 267.¹⁶⁵ The Lords, predictably, threw out the bill. It did so after four night's discussion on 8 September by the unsurprisingly hefty margin of 419 votes to 41.¹⁶⁶ This did not result in the upheaval that followed the Lord's rejection of the 1909 budget, which was to spark a constitutional crisis, and also lay the foundation for the Home Rule crisis of 1912-14. There was a debate about the legitimacy of such an act even in the 1890s, however, it did not lead to the trimming of the Lords power. The Lords were in a sense restrained by their by their own sense of self-preservation and were aware that if they overplayed their hand they could be constitutionally rendered useless. However, on this occasion they used the veto ruthlessly and the Liberals, though there were some (Labouchere, Shaw Lefebvre, and to a certain extent, Gladstone) who were noisily opposed to the veto, didn't really have the stomach to take up the cudgels on behalf of the bill.

Conclusion

The colonial analogy did not form the centrepiece of the Home Rulers' argument. They were happy to allude to the fact that Home Rule had been conceded to the colonies but it merely sat alongside other arguments, such as the ones concerning European analogies. It was more of a tactic than a motive force. British politicians proved themselves to be greatly more inclined to dwell on the self-governing colonies than did the Irish nationalists. Grattan's

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 1640 (31 Aug. 1893).

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 1839 (1 Sept. 1893).

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., xvii, 649 (8 Sept. 1893).

parliament provided much of the historical motor behind the Home Rule demand and had more of an emotional pull for the Irish party members than pretty legislative formulas attempted, however successfully, in the self-governing colonies. Irish party M. P. s' engagement with the colonial precedents of Home Rule was, with a few exceptions, only surface deep. During the detailed and pedantic committee stage debates, Irish M. P. s, with the exception of former Canadian politician Edward Blake, Tom Sexton and occasionally John Redmond, absented themselves from the discussion.

On platforms in Ireland, Irish party M. P. s promoted a much more visceral nationalism than they did in speeches in Britain. In Britain, delineating upon the colonial precedent was an effective way of making a case for Home Rule. Home Rulers did not need to build an argument for Irish self-government when faced with Irish crowds who were ardently in favour of Home Rule anyway. They merely needed to arouse passions and their oratory reflected this.

Chapter 3:

The Redmondite era: Colonial analogies during the Home Rule crisis

This chapter analyses the parliamentary party's usage of the colonial analogy throughout the Redmondite era, with a particular focus on the constitutional crisis of 1910 to 1914. The Redmondite party, it has commonly been assumed, engaged in more sober rhetoric than the Parnellite party which, many historians have argued, was far more belligerent in its posturing. This has been attributed largely to John Redmond himself, who, it has been contended by historians such as James McConnel, developed a romantic fondness for the concept of empire.¹ However, Michael Wheatley has argued that this shift in tone was discernable in only a small proportion of M. P. s within the parliamentary party and that the rest of the party indulged in the same sentimental, tribal and visceral rhetoric it had always engaged in.² This chapter once more involves calibrating Irish parliamentarians' level of interest in the colonial precedents during the Redmondite era in comparison to the previous phases of the Home Rule movement. It analyses to what extent their increased usage by M. P. s was tied to a greater respect for the concept of empire itself. The chapter examines the context in which the colonial precedents were most likely to be harnessed by Irish nationalists.

The Irish party, which had been in a demoralised state in the aftermath of the Parnell split, had been revitalised at the turn of the century, after being partially united under the leadership of John Redmond. Redmond was a veteran of the two previous Home Rule debates and was the leader of the smaller Parnellite faction of the party in the 1890s. This chapter will analyse the extent to which the arguments made for Home Rule had altered since the Gladstone era and whether the colonial aspect occupied a more prominent place in nationalist rhetoric.

¹ James McConnel, 'John Redmond and Irish Catholic loyalism' in *English Historical Review*, cxxv (2010) pp 83-111.

² Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish party*, pp 79-84.

Colonial issues had been instrumental in uniting the party. The second Boer war issued a clarion call to the Home Rulers to unite against the policy of the Unionist government in South Africa. The original annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 had been a useful rallying point for the Parnellite wing of the party. McCracken has outlined in great detail the Irish party's reaction to the Boer war. Notably, future Irish party M. P. for Clare West, Arthur Lynch, formed a brigade that fought with the Boers during the war,³ and Michael Davitt resigned his Mayo South seat in protest at the Boer war in October 1899.⁴ The Home Rule party never achieved the level of harmony that it did during the 1886-90 period, as there remained various factions within it, with William O'Brien's supporters eventually detaching themselves from the main body of the movement.

The Commonwealth of Australia bill was shepherded through parliament by the colonial secretary, and staunch opponent of Irish Home Rule, Joseph Chamberlain, in May 1900.⁵ The bill differed from the British North America act in that it accorded more expansive powers to the provincial legislatures than did the Canadian confederation bill of 1867.⁶ It arguably lay closer to the model of Home Rule that Gladstone had attempted to institute for Ireland in 1886. The commonwealth act stated that powers unspecified by bill were left within the remit of the states rather than the central parliament.⁷ Gladstone had allowed the same latitude to the prospective Irish parliament in 1886, and this had been a bone of contention for Chamberlain, who argued that unspecified powers should be retained by the central parliament, in common with the example of the British North America act.⁸ Edward Blake, Willie Redmond and Tim Healy were the only Irish nationalist M. P. s to contribute to the brief debate on the bill in the House of Commons.⁹ In the main, they welcomed the bill, however all three lamented the fact that the same treatment had not been accorded to Ireland. Edward Blake, in keeping with his

³ McCracken, *Forgotten protest*, p. 124.

⁴ *Hansard* 4, lxxvii, 622 (25 Oct. 1899).

⁵ *Ibid.*, lxxxiii, 757 (21 May 1900).

⁶ A. B. Keith, *Dominion Home Rule in practice* (Oxford, 1921), p. 21.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Hansard* 3, cccvi, 697 (1 June 1886).

⁹ *Hansard* 4, lxxxiii, 773-784, 797-806 (21 May 1900).

longstanding tendency, and of the three Irish members to contribute, addressed the bill on the driest, most detailed, and technical level.¹⁰ Willie Redmond also welcomed the federation of Australia, but the main thrust of his speech involved complaining about the disenfranchisement of Ireland within the empire.¹¹ Tim Healy was particularly vociferous and apoplectic on that point and only referred in passing to his support for the bill.¹² The Irish members introduced a discordant note into an otherwise genial and self-congratulatory debate.

Liberal government 1905-10: Home Rule deferred

The Liberal party which had emerged from the ashes of several election defeats to win a landslide at the 1906 election, was tacitly behind Gladstonian Home Rule. The prime minister Henry Campbell Bannerman and his successor Herbert Asquith had been cabinet ministers during the later Gladstone administrations. Asquith had even been one of Parnell's lawyers, during the Piggot forgeries debacle. Home Rule was a party aspiration, albeit not one the Liberals were itching to implement. They knew the political strife it could bring about and hesitated. Lord Rosebery's cautious attitude to Home Rule partly held sway in the Liberal party in the early 1900s. H. W. McCready has indicated that many of the Liberals were wary of their attachment to Home Rule, and tended to minimise it as a factor before the electorate.¹³ Speculation abounded in late 1906 and early 1907 that a Home Rule measure was about to be brought forth, but, in the end, the Irish Council bill of May 1907 turned out to be an extremely truncated half-measure that was contemptuously rejected by Irish nationalists. The eventual decision to bring in a more complete measure of Home Rule was precipitated by the Home Rulers holding the balance of power after the 1910 general election.

¹⁰ Ibid., 773-84 (21 May 1900).

¹¹ Ibid., 797-801 (21 May 1900).

¹² Ibid., 801-06 (21 May 1900).

¹³ H. W. McCready, 'Home Rule and the Liberal party: 1899-1906' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xiii, no. 52 (1963) pp 316-48.

The Irish Council bill of 1907, introduced by the new Liberal chief secretary, Augustine Birrell, was a severe letdown for Home Rulers, who were anticipating a larger measure. Redmond had, prior to the bill's appearance before parliament on 7 May, declared that 'nothing could settle the Irish question but a measure which would show full trust in the Irish people- the concession to Ireland of a free constitution- such a constitution was accorded to the Boers in the Transvaal only a few days ago.'¹⁴ The months before the bill's appearance saw a great deal of detailed discussion on what form Home Rule would take. Redmond had consulted heavily with figures such as Edward Blake and T. P. Gill. Gill, who had authored a pamphlet for the Irish Press Agency in the late 1880s on *The Home Rule constitutions of the British empire*, forwarded a draft scheme of a Home Rule bill to Redmond in December 1906. Gill expressed a preference for the Swiss constitutional model rather than the British colonial one. He pointed out that in Switzerland, the executive was elected purely by the assembly for a set period of time (three years), whereas in Britain and the self-governing colonies, the lord-lieutenant appointed the government from what he deemed to be the majority in the assembly.¹⁵ The British model, in Gill's estimation, resulted in chaotic, short-term governments wherever it had been tried in Europe. Whereas in the British and colonial context, this model was well practised, as it had emerged organically from history. Gill also stated, with regard to a possible veto over the Irish parliament's legislation, that the Irish party should insist upon the colonial precedent as the model which should be followed. Redmond, while hesitant about the Council bill when it appeared, offered a mild endorsement of it in the House of Commons.¹⁶ However, he performed a meek volte face two weeks later at the National Convention of the United Irish League when confronted with the widespread opposition to the measure in Irish nationalist ranks.¹⁷

Asquith's Government of Ireland bill was introduced to the House of Commons on 11 April 1912. As an indicator of how arduous and protracted the debate was, the bill only passed in the

¹⁴ *I. I.*, 19 Mar. 1907.

¹⁵ T. P. Gill, *Draft scheme of Home Rule bill*, 14 Dec. 1906 (N. L. I., Redmond papers, MS. 15, 248).

¹⁶ *Hansard* 4, clxxiv, 112-28 (7 May 1907).

¹⁷ *I. I.*, 22 May 1907.

House of Commons on 16 January 1913,¹⁸ and was rejected by the Lords fourteen days later.¹⁹ However, the removal of the House of Lords veto, brought on by the government's response to the Lords' rejection of chancellor David Lloyd George's 1909 people's budget, meant it could now only delay the Home Rule bill coming on to the statute book for two years.

The Unionist opposition, however, was frantic, frenzied and startling. Andrew Bonar Law, the leader of the Conservative party, made Salisbury and Randolph Churchill's opposition look tame and reserved. The removal of the Lords' veto gave the bill an air of imminent success that Gladstone's bills had lacked. The Unionists' passionately held view was that the government was attempting to pass an unconstitutional act. They thus held that parliament had no right to pass the act, and that it had to be passed by plebiscite. The situation called for an immediate dissolution of parliament and for the bill to be placed before the country in similar circumstances to those that pertained during the 1886 election. The panicked insistence of the Unionists on a dissolution became louder and louder towards the close of the debate. Prominent Irish Unionist, Walter Long, proposed an amendment to the queen's speech at the beginning of 1914, saying that it would be disastrous to proceed with the bill unless it was put to the people. Constitutional theorist A.V. Dicey in a letter to *The Times* on 16 July 1913, argued that 'the present crisis demands utmost energy on the part of every unionist. No one ought to shrink from the expenditure of money, time and labour on exciting throughout the United Kingdom a demand for immediate dissolution of parliament.'²⁰

The Redmondite clique

Terence Denman has accused the Redmondite party, as a whole, of being overly preoccupied with developments in the colonies, charging that this tendency led them to be unconscious of

¹⁸ *Hansard* 5, xlvi, 2417 (16 Jan. 1913).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, xiii, 815 (30 Jan. 1913).

²⁰ *The Times*, 16 July 1913.

the political rumblings and mutations at home.²¹ The Redmondite clique that governed the direction of the movement during the early twentieth century was certainly more imperially minded than the Parnellite party. James McConnel and Pat Walsh have both attributed this to Redmond as leader of the party. The received view of the period is that the Irish parliamentary party in the Redmondite era was, as it had been in the Parnellite era, a highly regimented, centralised entity.

Redmond was generally keener to draw attention to the colonies than Parnell. Most historians have attributed to Redmond a far more imperial cast of mind than to Parnell, or indeed to the rank and file of his party. Almost all of his speeches in Britain in the period leading up to the introduction of the Home Rule bill contained some reference to the colonial precedents of Canada and Australia. Walsh has indicated that Redmond shifted from being one of the more nationalist and unaccommodating members of the Irish party in the 1890s, to one of the most conciliatory and pro-imperial Home Rule M. P. s by the time of the third Home Rule bill. He had been exceptionally hostile to the Liberal alliance in the 1890s and regarded the 1893 Home Rule bill with scepticism and disdain. Matthew Kelly has even referred to the 'Redmondite-Fenian nexus' that existed within the party in the 1890s.²² However, the South African solution was, in the eyes of Walsh, pivotal in bringing about the transformation in Redmond's attitudes.²³

Michael Wheatley has argued that there was a radical divergence in attitudes and ideology between the small Redmondite clique within the party and the bulk of the organisation. He claimed that the direction in which the governing Redmondite elite took the party led to its implosion in the following years.²⁴ The emotional Fenians that were rife within the grassroots of the party couldn't countenance the decisions Redmond made with regard to the First World War.

²¹ Terence Denman, *A lonely grave- the life and death of William Redmond* (Dublin, 1995), p. 14.

²² M. J. Kelly, *The Fenian ideal and Irish nationalism* (Oxford, 2006), p.71.

²³ Pat Walsh, *The rise and fall of imperial Ireland: Redmondism in the context of Britain's conquest of South Africa and its great war on Germany, 1899-1916* (Belfast, 2003).

²⁴ Wheatley, *Nationalism and The Irish party*, p. 240.

The politicians with a greater respect for Ireland's imperial responsibilities were generally more inclined to reference the analogy with the self-governing colonies regardless of their environment. The coterie of Redmondite politicians included figures such as P. J. Brady, Stephen Gwynn, Sir Walter Nugent, Tom Kettle, William Redmond, William A. Redmond, Thomas Scanlon, Swift MacNeill and T. P. O'Connor. All of these figures demonstrated some tendency to allude to the colonial precedents within the empire. There was a crossover between those M. P. s that were most ardently in favour of Ireland joining the war effort, and those with the greatest tendency to allude to the colonial analogy in debate. Redmondism has been, subsequently, almost defined by imperial awareness.

The Redmondite elite contrasted violently with the intellectually leaden majority of the party. The composition of the parliamentary party had altered somewhat with the emergence of the United Irish League in 1898, the organisation which had helped prompt the re-unification of the party in 1900. The U. I. L. selected the candidates who were to stand for election on the Home Rule platform, and they frequently nominated local 'fixers' rather than the more thoughtful and aloof grandees that were pushed on the constituencies in the 1880s and 90s.²⁵ Redmond implored local branches to select candidates who would be of use to the party in the House of Commons rather than engage in their usual populist and parochial tendency to pick someone because he was 'a good fellow or a good nationalist.'²⁶ Stephen Gwynn fell foul of the new method of selection on two occasions. Redmond attempted to foist Gwynn on two constituencies, Kildare in 1904, and West Clare in 1906. On both occasions, he was unsuccessful. Fergus Campbell has profiled John Halpin, the man who defeated Gwynn for the West Clare nomination.

Halpin may have been deficient in the House of Commons but he was a very effective local constituency M. P. who as sometime Fenian, prisoner, Land Leaguer, National Leaguer, United Irish Leaguer, county councillor, Poor Law Guardian, and builder of the sea wall at Lahinch worked tirelessly for his constituents at both local and national levels. Men like Halpin played a critically important role in binding together the

²⁵ Fergus Campbell, *The Irish establishment, 1879-1914* (Oxford, 2009), p. 166.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

leadership and rank-and-file of the Home Rule movement, and representing the interests of large farmers and shopkeepers among the Irish establishment.²⁷

Halpin emerges as very characteristic of the type of politicians who were elected for the party in the early 1900s. Such politicians were unlikely to engage in philosophical ruminations or historical defences of Home Rule based on imperial precedents in any environment.

Cosmopolitanism was a factor which determined whether an M. P. was likely to reference the colonial analogy in his speeches. It is clear from this study that there was a correlation between those who did not live in the constituency they represented and those who were most likely to harness the colonial analogy in debate. McConnel has already borne witness to the fact that those M. P. s who did not reside in their constituencies were more likely to make speeches in Britain, either in or outside Westminster. Willie Redmond, for instance, one of the most consistent contributors to House of Commons debates and the parliamentarian who used the colonial analogy most frequently in the committee stages, was harangued by his West Clare constituents for doing 'practically nothing for his constituents' and contenting himself with 'flying visits' to his constituency.²⁸ Aloof figures that were somewhat withdrawn from their constituents were more inclined to make reference to the colonial precedents in their speeches, and to deliver speeches in Britain generally.

Wheatley has alluded to Sir Walter Nugent as one of the more pro-imperialist M. P. s in the party.²⁹ Nugent was happy to reference the colonial dimension in his own constituency, an unusual trait among Home Rulers. Regional figures, such as John Hayden, M. P. for Roscommon South, J. P. Farrell, M. P. for Longford North and Larry Ginnell, M. P. for Westmeath North, who often addressed the same rallies as Nugent, did not tend to allude to this element of the debate. Nugent stated, in a speech to the South Westmeath branch of the U. I. L. that, 'they were there to make their own laws in their own country (cheers). What he meant by

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

²⁸ McConnel, 'The view from the backbench', p. 184.

²⁹ Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish party*, p. 76.

Home Rule was that he wanted Ireland to be placed in the same position as Canada and Australia' and closed his brief announcement by saying that 'he, for one, would never cease to strive until Ireland was placed in the same position as Canada and Australia (loud cheers).'³⁰

The following year, he made similar comments at a demonstration in Athlone.

What objection was there then, they would ask, to other or both of the English parties, a final treaty of peace with them which would make them friends forever- which would wipe out the past and enable them to turn hopefully to the future, which would do for Ireland what a similar policy did for Canada; what it was doing for South Africa, and make the Irish people the strongest supporters, and most valuable props of the British empire.³¹

Stephen Gwynn, arch-Redmondite M. P., also referred to the colonial dimension to the U. I. L. branch in Barna in his constituency of Galway, 'The new King wanted to make friends with his Irish subjects and the only way to do so was to grant them the same liberties as was granted Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Boers.'³²

Michael Davitt, one of the most cosmopolitan figures in the movement, also showed a propensity to reference the Canadian and Australian precedents regardless of his audience. He travelled to Australia in the mid-1890s, writing of his experiences, and resigned from parliament at the commencement of the Boer War in 1899. At a demonstration in Rochford Bridge in 1904, he referred to the 'magic influence of recognised national existence for our country akin to that which has made Canada contented and progressive and Australia free and happy (cheers)... Believe me, my friends, in conclusion, that it is only by continued firm and dignified assertion of the right of self-government of the right of constitutional self-government, such as Canada enjoys, that we will ever win it.'³³ At a speech shortly before this, in Drumkeerin in Co. Leitrim, he had alluded to Sweden and Denmark as suitable comparisons and examples for Ireland.³⁴

³⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 24 Aug. 1907.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 24 Oct. 1908.

³² *Connacht Tribune*, 5 Nov. 1910.

³³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 24 Sept. 1904.

³⁴ *Leitrim Observer*, 20 Aug. 1904.

P. J. Brady, elected M. P. for Dublin, St. Stephen's Green at the 1910 election, stated, in a speech to his constituency in late 1910, that 'Canada had a problem like theirs (Ireland) many years ago, and it was settled in a statesmanlike fashion by giving the Canadians the right to make their own laws, a privilege which so far from dismembering the empire brought that great dominion closer still to the mother country.' As if to demonstrate the duality of tone that Michael Wheatley wrote of, William Field, M. P. for Dublin, St. Patrick's, followed him by singing 'Who fears to speak of '98' and declaring that the public were embarking on 'the same fight as Wolfe Tone, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Napper Tandy, and the men of '98 had engaged in.'³⁵

John Redmond also troubled himself to reference the imperial dimension in a speeches in Ireland. Almost all of Redmond's public proclamations in the period between the Liberals return to power in 1905 and the collapse of the Home Rule movement contained some reference to one or other of the self-governing colonies. Redmond discussed in detail the development of self-governing institutions in Canada in a speech to his constituents in Wexford.

Canada was absolutely in the field against England. She got Home Rule and Canada, today, is well-affected and contented. Australia was disaffected. She has got Home Rule and now she is prosperous and contented. South Africa was in arms, as you know, for three years, under the leadership of Louis Botha (cheers). She has now got Home Rule, and today she is peaceable and contented, and Louis Botha is the Prime minister of South Africa... The liberty which was given to the French Canadians in Canada, and the Dutchmen in South Africa, should be given to the Irishmen in Ireland.³⁶

Delineating upon the colonial precedents in such an environment as one's own constituency was a strictly Redmondite tendency in the 1900s.

In the main, the tendency to refer to constitutional precedents within the empire in speeches in Ireland was not a common one within Irish nationalism. A propensity to allude to the colonial analogy, in such an environment, generally betrayed moderate sensibilities. Sir Walter Nugent, for example, was attacked by his own constituents for failing to support the Boers during the

³⁵ *F. J.*, 27 Sept. 1910.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 28 Nov. 1910.

1899-1902 war. Michael Wheatley has argued that ‘the “passive background noise” of day-to-day nationalist political rhetoric was suffused with a vocabulary of heroic struggle, suffering, grievance, injustice, and enemies.’³⁷ Wheatley, perhaps because his study was centred heavily around the border/midlands/west region, referred to figures such as Jasper Tully, M. P. for Leitrim South from 1893 to 1905, J. P. Farrell, M. P. for Longford North and John Phillips, M. P. for Longford South from 1908 to 1917, as being among the most bellicose and aggressive in their public pronouncements.³⁸

The Home Rulers again showed a marked tendency to refer to issues such as the colonial analogy in delicate, persuasive speeches made in Britain rather than in their more rabble rousing speeches in Ireland. Redmond declared, in a speech to the Reform Club, in November 1908, that ‘Home Rule for Ireland was in its essence nothing but the application of a democratic principle on which the Liberal party had often acted in the colonies. Was it not hard that Ireland, which had helped the Liberal party to give Canada and Transvaal their Home Rule, should herself be denied the right.’³⁹ His speech in Limerick, of 12 September 1910, by contrast, made no reference to the colonies, other than to include Canada among the list of nations who displayed sympathy for Home Rule.⁴⁰

Most of the speeches the bulk of Home Rulers made to their constituents had a generic stamp on them and followed the same pattern. They tended to speak in very general terms about ‘nationality’ and would allude to the supposed imminence of Home Rule bill before dismissing the claims of the O’Brienite or Healyite nationalists. McConnel has stated that ‘personalised oratory had given way to “nationally integrated political rhetoric.”⁴¹

³⁷ Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish party*, p. 94.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 79-83.

³⁹ *I. I.*, 16 Nov. 1908.

⁴⁰ *F. J.*, 13 Sept. 1910.

⁴¹ McConnel, ‘The view from the backbench’, p. 183.

The Irish nationalists were consistently keen to allude to the worth of the colonial precedents in England and Scotland, where the analogy could be of use to them. Swift MacNeill, M. P. for North Donegal, wrote an article for *English Review* on the historical basis for the Home Rule in which he dealt extensively with the colonial analogy.

I do not ask to do anything further than is done in Canada and Australia- to allow us to have in Ireland a parliament to manage our local affairs, a parliament growing up in Ireland just as it had it done in Canada, within the imperial constitution, and beside the imperial parliament to which we would still leave the management of imperial affairs.⁴²

MacNeill insisted upon the authority of the imperial parliament in the imperial sphere. The Westminster parliament would have an 'overruling, supreme authority over the Irish legislature, such as it possesses today over the various legislatures in Canada, Australia, South Africa, and other portions of the empire.' He listed the realm of states that had been granted local self-government, expressing mild incredulity that some of the smaller states had been granted Home Rule while Ireland was denied it.

The thirteen states of America before the revolution had each a local parliament; Nova Scotia has a local parliament; Newfoundland, Jamaica, and several other West India islands have their local parliaments. A local parliament is, perhaps, springing up in the Cape of Good Hope; British Guiana, though under Dutch dominion, some years hence will have a parliament, and even Botany Bay has its own legislature. So that, from the first to the last, the British dependencies are allowed to have a parliament. There is one everywhere except in our native land.⁴³

Joe Devlin conducted a tour of Britain in March and April 1911, in which he made speeches brimming with references to the colonial aspect of the debate. In a speech in Sheffield, he praised Campbell-Bannerman stating, 'with the skill of a great statesman and the sagacity of a man who had read the story of Ireland, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman said to the people and to General Botha, "Physician, heal thyself"- in South Africa, in Canada, so in Ireland (hear, hear)'⁴⁴ In the course of the same speech, he lamented that British politicians frequently dredged up aggressive speeches of Irish M. P. s, and pointed out that General Botha and the Boers had been encamped against Britain to a far greater extent and were now trusted with responsible

⁴² *F. J.*, 14 Jan. 1911.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *F. J.*, 3 Apr. 1911.

government.⁴⁵ A few days later, in a speech in Coatbridge in Scotland, Devlin explained away the frenzied Irish-American opposition to the Anglo-American alliance.

There was not a Tory or a Liberal statesman in England who did not know as well as he did that it was because of England's misgovernment of Ireland, because she refused to Ireland the same system of self-government within the empire which made the British colonies free and contented and, consequently, prosperous and loyal (hear, hear). Give Ireland the same reasons for being loyal as Canada, or Australia, or South Africa and the same results would be achieved.⁴⁶

John Boland, M. P. for Kerry South, also toured England, delivering a speech to the West Cumberland Liberal association, stating that, 'Ireland had never begged or prayed for Home Rule; it demanded it as a right. Canada, Australia, and South Africa when they came to manhood were trusted to manage their own affairs.'⁴⁷ His fellow Kerry M. P. Tom O'Donnell, later told the Kilorglin and Milltown branch of the National volunteers after the commencement of the First World War, that 'he (O'Donnell) declared that he had been on a hundred platforms from Northumberland to Cornwall... and had stated clearly that if the Irish nation got her liberty such as was given to Canada and South Africa, Ireland would be as loyal as they were.'⁴⁸

Redmond had revived the Irish Press Agency in the lead up to the bill. The agency, through its pamphlets, toured the panoply of arguments in favour of Irish Home Rule. Jeremiah MacVeigh, M. P. for South Down and Stephen Gwynn, M. P. for Galway, were particularly prominent in the writing of Home Rule pamphlets at this time. The agency's editor, Gwynn, was a particularly ardent Redmondite, and authored the first biography of Redmond shortly after the subject's death. Among the pamphlets he wrote for the Irish Press Agency, was one entitled *Ireland's need*. In it, he revealed himself to be more conciliatory on the subject of the safeguards than most, 'We all recognise the geographical facts which govern the relation. It is at least arguable that Canada and Australia should have a separate military system, but while Ireland remains subject to the British crown, the military control of these islands must be

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ *F. J.*, 8 Apr. 1911.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 3 Dec. 1913.

⁴⁸ J. A. Gaughan, *A political odyssey: Thomas O'Donnell M. P.* (Dublin, 1983), p. 124.

unitary.’⁴⁹ Gwynn also stated, rather fancifully, in relation to Grattan’s parliament, ‘I do not think that any sane Irishman doubts that that parliament, with all its amazing vices, contained within itself the seed of peaceable and constitutional growth.’⁵⁰ Most Home Rulers, while they admitted its deficiencies, were not ready to talk in such terms about Grattan’s parliament. Gwynn contributed heavily to the debates on the South Africa bill in 1909. Gwynn insisted that he was opposed to the provision in the South African constitution excluding the coloured natives from the legislature, however he opposed a House of Commons amendment proposing their inclusion. He stated that he was absolutely opposed, in principle, to amendments being made in the House of Commons to a bill that was largely agreed upon in South Africa.⁵¹ In a motion on Home Rule for Scotland shortly before the introduction of the third Irish Home Rule bill, proposed by Dr. Chapel and seconded by Mungo Ferguson, Gwynn announced, in support of the motion, that ‘Home Rule has meant in political history the tendency towards the federal idea.’⁵² Gwynn did concede that ‘Ireland is not asking for Home Rule in the interests of the British empire.’⁵³ In the debates, Joseph Devlin reinforced this opinion stating, that he wanted ‘a change, for Ireland first, and for the empire afterwards.’⁵⁴

Jeremiah MacVeigh contributed heavily to the agency. He wrote a large pamphlet entitled *Home Rule in a nutshell*. The foreword to the pamphlet was written by Winston Churchill, the former colonial secretary, who, after crossing the floor in opposition to Joseph Chamberlain’s tariff reform programme, advocated ‘Home Rule all-round.’ MacVeigh adopted a much more generic nationalist position than Gwynn did. He declared that ‘sentiment ruled the world.’⁵⁵ The North Tyrone M.P. between 1906 and 1910, Tom Kettle, wrote a series of articles on the Home Rule question, which, in 1912, were bound into a polemic entitled *The open secret of Ireland*. Kettle was a highly intellectual Home Ruler, and his articles account for the most succinct and

⁴⁹ Stephen Gwynn, *Ireland’s need* (London, 1909), p. 3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Hansard* 5, ix, 1575-79 (19 Aug. 1909).

⁵² *Ibid.*, xxxiv, 1471 (28 Feb. 1912).

⁵³ Stephen Gwynn, *Why Home Rule is needed for Ireland and for England* (London, 1911), p. 4.

⁵⁴ *Hansard* 5, xxxviii, 106 (6 May 1912).

⁵⁵ Jeremiah MacVeigh, *Home Rule in a nutshell* (London, 1912), p. 7.

sophisticated analyses of the Home Rule demand ever committed to paper or expounded on a platform or in the House of Commons by a member of the parliamentary party. In an article called 'The obviousness of Home Rule', he singled out 'the fact of nationality' as the most important reason for the concession of Home Rule.⁵⁶ He defined self government as a 'spiritual reality.'⁵⁷ It must be conceded that Kettle, in common with many Irish nationalists, was very imprecise about specific ideological differences, enlisting Wolfe Tone, Thomas Davis, Henry Grattan and Isaac Butt together in the same tradition. Kettle devoted a large part of the article to the colonial analogy. He praised Lord Durham's report of the late 1830s and the current happy state of the North American colonies. Kettle rehearsed the common Home Rule argument with regard to the colonies, 'the foolishness of England in Ireland finds an exact parallel, although on a smaller scale and for a shorter period, in the early foolishness of England in her own colonies.'⁵⁸ However, he differentiated between Ireland and the extant self-governing colonies in that they were 'at most nations in the making, she (Ireland) was a nation made.'⁵⁹ His article 'The mechanics of Home Rule' displayed sympathy towards the notion of imperial federation, but with the proviso that Irish Home Rule must be a prerequisite of it.⁶⁰

Irish ties with the colonies

The Irish party, as in the 1890s, was keen to recruit figures from the self-governing colonies that would lend force to the Home Rule claims with regard to the colonial precedents. Charles Devlin was a former and future Canadian politician who sat for Galway between 1903 and 1906. John O'Donnell, M. P. for Mayo South from 1900-10 and prominent figure within the United Irish League, alluded to Devlin's, apparently useful, influence with the Canadian government, in a letter to Redmond, just prior to Devlin's election in early 1903.⁶¹ Another M.P., the

⁵⁶ Tom Kettle, *The open secret of Ireland* (London, 1912), p. 41.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁶¹ John O'Donnell to John Redmond, Feb. 1903 (N. L. I., Redmond papers, MS 15, 218).

fervently pro-Boer Arthur Lynch, was born in Australia and sat for the constituency of West Clare. James McConnel has referred to the familial links many of the Home Rule parliamentarians had in the empire, Matt Keating, M. P. for Kilkenny South, was married to a New Zealander, John Boland, M. P. for Kerry South, was married to an Australian and both John Fitzgibbon, M. P. for Mayo South, and Sir Walter Nugent, M. P. for Westmeath South, had brothers living in Canada.⁶² Richard Hazelton, when he was declared bankrupt in 1915, informed Redmond that he was moving to Canada.⁶³ Thomas Esmonde made comments that were full of warmth towards the British empire, though he did not make any specific and detailed allusions to the Canadian precedent. Esmonde stated, 'we Irish people have no rooted antipathy to the empire. The empire is quite as much our empire as yours... We are quite prepared to join in defending the empire, and to do what we can to consolidate it, provided we are admitted in the empire on terms of international equality.'⁶⁴ Vincent Kennedy, M. P. for Cavan West, quoted 'one of the leaders of the Labour Party' as saying, 'The British empire could not be kept together if they (England) treated the self-governing colonies-Canada, Australia, South Africa and others-as they treated Ireland.'⁶⁵

In 1907, the Irish party hosted a banquet at which five of the prime ministers of self-governing colonies attended, including Sir Wilfrid Laurier of Canada and Louis Botha, the prime minister of Transvaal. The *Westmeath Examiner* hastened to add that the prime minister of the Australian commonwealth, Alfred Deakin, failed to attend not out of 'want of sympathy' for Irish Home Rule and, indeed, had earlier professed his support for it in the Australian parliament.⁶⁶ In speeches on the plinth and in parliament, Irish party M. P.s routinely referred to the fact that the self-governing dominions were supportive of Home Rule. In response to the Tories' claims that the issue called for a dissolution of parliament and a plebiscite of the United Kingdom, the Home Rulers liked to argue that there should instead be a referendum of the entire empire.

⁶² McConnel, *Irish backbench M. P.s*, p. 74.

⁶³ Richard Hazelton to John Redmond, 1915 (N.L.I., Redmond papers, MS 15, 195).

⁶⁴ *Hansard* 4, xxxvi, 1490 (11 April 1912).

⁶⁵ *F. J.*, 13 Oct. 1908.

⁶⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 11 May 1907.

Jeremiah MacVeigh, in his pamphlet *Home Rule in a nutshell*, pointed out that ‘every prime minister at the imperial conference was a Home Ruler, and all of them were guests of the Irish Party at a banquet given in their honour... Home Rule has been the salvation of the empire. Where it was granted, the possessions were retained; where it was refused (as in the case of the United States) the possessions were lost.’⁶⁷ Willie Redmond, in a speech delivered specifically to Australian envoys in London, challenged the Tories to ‘take a plebiscite of the empire on Home Rule. If they did they would find that Australia, New Zealand, and he was sure Canada also, would plump in favour of granting Ireland her national rights.’⁶⁸

Willie Redmond had earlier written of his experiences travelling across Australia, in *Through the new commonwealth*. He lionised Australia as an example of what Ireland wanted to achieve, writing of the country in idyllic and romantic terms, remarking frequently on the Irish influence in the colony. The final chapter of his book was entitled ‘Australia and Home Rule for Ireland’ where he discussed the attorney general H. B. Higgins’ motion in the federal parliament in favour of Irish Home Rule.⁶⁹ Redmond wrote that ‘it is not understood (in Australia) why Ireland should be denied those powers of self-government without which Australia would not be satisfied for one single day.’⁷⁰ Terence Denman, in his biography of Willie Redmond, pointed out that Redmond came to regard Australia as a second home.⁷¹ J. J. Mooney, M. P. for Newry, cheekily asked Bonar Law in the House of Commons, if he would take account of what the colonies were saying with regard to Home Rule.⁷² In the second reading of the debate, T. P. O’Connor referred to the premier of British Columbia, Sir Richard McBride’s support for Home Rule, saying ‘The prime minister of British Columbia is a good conservative and tariff reformer and yet he is a Home Ruler.’⁷³ Colonel Arthur Lynch, M. P. for Clare East, wrote to Redmond from prison, while awaiting trial for treason over his Boer war activities, saying ‘Australia and

⁶⁷ MacVeigh, *Home Rule in a nutshell*, p. 18.

⁶⁸ *Sunday Independent*, 10 Nov. 1912.

⁶⁹ William Redmond, *Through the new commonwealth* (Dublin, 1906), p. 200.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁷¹ Denman, *William Redmond*, p. 14.

⁷² *I. I.*, 11 Dec. 1911.

⁷³ *Hansard* 5, xxxvii, 226 (15 Apr. 1912).

Canada, with their importance, are recognising more and more effectively the justice of Irish claims.’⁷⁴ Eugene Crean, M. P. for Cork South East, also alluded to the support Home Rule enjoyed in Canada and Australia, at a U. I. L. meeting in Ballinhassig, Co. Cork.⁷⁵

The *Irish Independent* detailed the congratulatory messages sent by prominent politicians in the colonies to John Redmond on the introduction of the Home Rule bill. The list included figures such as Louis Botha, premier of South Africa, Senator Costigan of the Canadian federal parliament and John Gavan Duffy in Melbourne, as well as prominent politicians in the United States, a large percentage of whom had noticeably Irish surnames.⁷⁶ Denman, in his biography of Willie Redmond, accused the Home Rulers of exaggerating the influence of the Irish emigrants in the colonies on the struggle at home.⁷⁷ Home Rulers, from the early 1870s onwards, were quick to pay homage to the Irish living in the colonies and the United States. Eleven days before Asquith’s bill was delivered to the House of Commons, Joseph Devlin delivered a rousing platform oratory in O’Connell Street. Much of the speech was given over to rejecting the claims of the Ulster Unionists. He did state that, ‘England gave Home Rule to Canada, to Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa in order to conciliate a comparatively small number of white men. But by giving Home Rule to Ireland she would not only conciliate more than four million Irish people in Ireland but over twenty million people of Irish birth and blood.’⁷⁸

Boer Home Rule

The Union of South Africa, passed by parliament on 20 September 1909, posed an interesting problem for the Home Rule party. Irish nationalists generally supported the provisions and sought to harness them for Irish purposes. Willie Redmond, in November 1910, stated in Waterford city, that ‘Only the previous day, a new parliament was opened in South Africa, and

⁷⁴ *Southern Star*, 16 Aug. 1902.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 25 Oct. 1902.

⁷⁶ *I. I.*, 15 Apr. 1912.

⁷⁷ Denman, *William Redmond*, p. 14.

⁷⁸ *F. J.*, 1 Apr. 1912.

now, in freedom, and in a united parliament, Dutchmen and Englishmen could guard their country. What was done in South Africa would be done in Ireland (cheers).⁷⁹ Gwynn, at a meeting in Cappoquin the same day, stated 'The freedom of South Africa is a strength, not a weakness to the British empire; and believe me, the omens in South Africa today herald the dawn of freedom in Ireland tomorrow.'⁸⁰ John Dillon, commonly identified as one of the more militant figures within the parliamentary party, referred to 'Boer Home Rule' as the minimum standard of Home Rule that he was prepared to accept. During a debate in Cambridge University, a forum many nationalists seemed to regard as a more appropriate place in which to dwell on the colonial analogy than a platform rally in Cork or Roscommon, he asserted that 'such a Home Rule measure that had been granted to the Transvaal should speedily and could safely be granted to Ireland.'⁸¹ Dillon referred a great deal to the South African comparison in the lead-up to the third Home Rule bill. In the House of Commons, in the debate over the parliament bill, he alluded to Bonar Law, 'describing the awful sufferings of the loyalist minority and the tyranny of the Boer majority and of an association called the Het Volk in very much the same language as the Ancient Order of Hibernians has been in the case of Ireland.'⁸² Swift MacNeill also alluded to the Transvaal solution in a speech in Aberdeen.

Home Rule has been granted to the inhabitants of the Transvaal and of the Orange River colonies, with the happiest results, to people who were at war with Britain only a few years ago, while responsible government is denied to Ireland, which 109 years ago was robbed of her parliament not by the British democracy but by the privileged classes in these countries who have been the enemies of Ireland.⁸³

MacNeill dusted off that speech, making almost identical comments in a speech in Manchester two years later.

Surely there is more fear in the case of separation in the case of the Dutch of South Africa than there can be in the case of Ireland?' He alluded to the probability of the House of Lords vetoing a possible Home Rule bill, 'It is a remarkable fact that responsible government would never have been given to the Dutch states in South Africa if Mr. Balfour had his way, and if the House of Lords could have prevented it.'⁸⁴

⁷⁹ *F. J.*, 7 Nov. 1910.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *F. J.*, 9 June 1909.

⁸² *Hansard* 5, xxiv, 1407 (24 Apr. 1911).

⁸³ *F. J.*, 30 Mar. 1909.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 4 Feb. 1911.

The South African arrangement departed from both the Canadian and Australian examples, in that it established an essentially unitary system. The parliaments of Cape Colony and Natal were dissolved and were replaced by heavily truncated provincial councils. The Irish nationalists tended to equate Natal, which was the most reluctant province to join the Union, pre-1910, with the Ulster Protestants. The Natal had a majority British population and was, at first, unwilling to join the Union. Willie Redmond declared, during the debate in the House of Commons, that 'Natal said it would never consent to join the Union. Ulster says the same. Today, Natal, the warlike and the dissenting, is a loyal, contented and satisfied part of South Africa.'⁸⁵ However, Unionists such as William Mitchell-Thompson, M.P. for North Down, sought to answer this claim by equating Ireland with the Transvaal province, 'The first use the Transvaal made of it (free institutions) was to surrender its local autonomy, and to enter the South African Union... The Transvaal is now contented and is now happy because it is an integral part of united South Africa.'⁸⁶

Federalism rebuked: campaigning in the colonies

T. P. O'Connor was one of the most insistent of the Home Rulers on the settling of the Irish question along 'Canadian lines'⁸⁷, so much so that his name became associated with the idea. Sinn Fein described him, with some measure of disdain, as the 'unrepudiated spokesman of the parliamentary party in Canada.'⁸⁸ O'Connor toured Canada on more than one occasion in the years prior to the introduction of the third Home Rule bill. In his late 1910 tour of Canada, contradicting John O'Connor Power's designation of his political inclinations twenty-four years previously, O'Connor disclaimed any desire to see Ireland put on the same footing, constitutionally, as the dominion of Canada.

⁸⁵ *Hansard* 5, xxxvii, 144 (15 Apr. 1912).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, xxxviii, 117-8 (6 May 1912).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, xlii, 1081 (15 Oct. 1912).

⁸⁸ *Meath Chronicle*, 19 Nov. 1910.

Sometimes we are described as wanting the same thing as the Dominion of Canada has. I wish we could get it, but I know we cannot- not in my time at any rate. Canada has full fiscal liberty, she has the right to raise a navy, she has practically complete self-government. She sends representatives to other powers to make treaties. Under no system of Home Rule that has ever been proposed by an Irish leader have we even thought of anything approaching these powers. I know that analogies are difficult, but our demand is more like the position of one of the states of the United States, or one of the provinces of Canada in relation to the Federal parliament.⁸⁹

Almost simultaneously, John Redmond, in the United States, was making similar statements in an interview with the New York correspondent of *The Daily Express*.

We are entirely loyal to the empire as such, and we desire to strengthen the imperial bonds through a federal system of government... We mean by Home Rule the same measure of local government that exists in each American state... We do not demand such complete local autonomy as the British self-governing colonies possess, for we are willing to forgo the right of making our own tariff... We do not want to discontinue our representation at the House of Commons when Home Rule comes.⁹⁰

It was rare to hear Irish nationalists specifically ruling out the placing of Ireland on the same footing as the dominion parliaments. There was always a vague inference, even from the moderate Isaac Butt, that Ireland wanted a parliament 'which should have the same control over Ireland as the Australian parliament had over Australia and the Canadian parliament over Canada.' John O'Connor Power, in his pamphlet of 1885, had alluded to T. P. O'Connor's support for placing Ireland in the position of a dominion colony, which O'Connor had specifically denied in his Ottawa speech of October 1910.

The nationalist opponents of Redmond attacked him, and his cohort, for these statements. Tim Healy attacked O'Connor, in front of his own supporters, for suggesting his favourability towards the scheme, 'But it does appear there were three or four gentlemen in this room in favour of this provincial Canadian system that Mr. O'Connor is enamoured of, and accordingly we have shown them the door, as we will show Mr. T. P. O'Connor's programme the door.'⁹¹ In a speech in Dublin in November 1910, Healy referred to the measure of self-government

⁸⁹ *F. J.*, 26 Oct. 1910.

⁹⁰ Michael Wheatley, 'John Redmond and federalism in 1910' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxii, no. 127 (2001), p. 354.

⁹¹ *F. J.*, 4 Nov. 1910.

granted to the Isle of Man as ideal. The Isle of Man had full fiscal autonomy, a power Redmond and O'Connor had almost decided to forsake in their North American interviews, and a power that was not within the remit of the Canadian or Australian provinces. Healy stated that, 'he conceived that the kernel of Home Rule was finance. If any system was proposed such as that outlined in the rejected Redmond interview, whereby the control of their money remained with the British parliament, he would fight it as long as he had life in his body.' He would say to the English people, "Why cannot you give Ireland and Irishmen as much liberty and as much freedom as you give Manxmen?"⁹²

Wheatley has alluded to the fact that the Irish nationalist press, even the newspapers which were favourable to the Redmondites, reacted with dismay to the sentiments displayed in both Redmond's and O'Connor's North American proclamations.⁹³ The bulk of nationalist M. P. s were not in line with such thinking and many chose to regard the Redmond interview with disbelief.⁹⁴ Redmond backtracked vigorously, repudiating the article and declaring, in vague terms, that 'I stand where I have always stood, and O'Connor stands with me. I stand for the absolute government of all Irish affairs by Ireland and the Irish.'⁹⁵

O'Connor was often chided for his inconsistency. His declarations, in Canada, in favour of federal Home Rule were dredged up, in parliament, by Conservative M. P. for Kingston, Sir George Cave, who stated, correctly, that O'Connor had advocated 'a federal scheme of government for the four kingdoms of the British Isles such as the provinces of Canada enjoy.' O'Connor, in response, denied flatly that he had formulated anything definite. After the re-introduction of the bill in the House of Commons on 10 June 1913, Redmond, along with his opponent, William O'Brien, quoted approvingly Earl Grey.⁹⁶ Grey, the governor general of

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Michael Wheatley, 'John Redmond and federalism in 1910' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxii, no. 127 (2001), pp 360-2.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 359.

⁹⁶ *Hansard* 4, ciii, 1487 (10 June 1913).

Canada, had argued for provincial Home Rule as a solution to the Irish problem, specifically ruling out ‘national Home Rule’⁹⁷ and had opposed Asquith’s Home Rule bill. Swift MacNeill wrote an article for the *Westminster Gazette* entitled ‘Home Rule and the federal idea’, where he displayed support for the federal idea, and referenced Cecil Rhodes’ ideas a great deal. Ardent expressions of desire with regard to imperial federation implied moderate inclinations and pro-imperial sensitivities. Thomas Scanlon, M. P. for Sligo North, displayed his impeccably moderate credentials in a speech in Glasgow, arguing in favour of imperial federation.

His conviction was that Home Rule was not only a certainty, but it was coming to them with as much grace, and with as much general acquiescence as the grant of self-government to South Africa (cheers)... It was as true now as when Cecil Rhodes negotiated with Mr. Parnell (cheers) that the burning question between Great Britain and her colonies was an imperial federal arrangement in which all the colonies and dominions would take their part side by side with the mother country. The standpoint of the Irish leaders, from O’Connell’s time down to our own day, had been a federal arrangement which would fit in the fullest development of the imperial idea of great unity with local autonomy in every part of the empire.⁹⁸

Richard Hazelton, M. P for Galway North, and William A. Redmond, future M. P. for East Tyrone, elected at the 1918 general election, and the son of the Irish leader rather than a son of his namesake, conducted a tour of New Zealand in the autumn of 1911. In a speech in Auckland, Hazelton declared that, ‘What Ireland wants is the control of affairs that were purely Irish, just as New Zealand, Canada and South Africa enjoyed... it was national self-government that enabled Canada to become the most loyal of British possessions.’⁹⁹ Redmond reiterated this claim in his speech afterwards.¹⁰⁰ Redmond later scripted an article for the *Westmeath Examiner* specifically entitled ‘Ireland and the empire’ where he alluded to the universal support the Home Rule cause enjoyed in the colonies, ‘As fair minded and truly democratic British subjects, enjoying the blessings of self-government themselves, they cannot deny the same privilege to any other portion of the King’s dominion.’¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ J. E. Kendle, ‘The round table movement and ‘Home Rule all round’’ in *Historical Journal*, xi, no. 2 (1968), p. 334.

⁹⁸ *F. J.*, 17 Mar. 1917.

⁹⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 Aug. 1911.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 15 Feb. 1913.

The colonial analogy and the All for Ireland League

Disenchanted nationalist William O'Brien dallied with Tories from 1905 onwards, proffering a conciliationist line to moderate Unionists. His alternative movement, set up long after his falling out with the Redmondites, attempted to bring Protestants and Unionist landlords into the nationalist fold. He founded his party in 1910, giving it the rather twee and pompous title, The All for Ireland League. He had dreams of a strange coalition incorporating Sinn Féiners, Home Rulers and moderate unionists. His main antipathy appeared to centre on the Liberal alliance and the highly centralised, dictatorial nature of the Home Rule party under John Redmond. The moderate line of conciliation and consent he proffered towards unionists seemed to consist mainly of sentiment rather than anything concrete in a constitutional sense. The A. F. I. L. won eight seats at the 1910 general election compared to the seventy-three won by the Irish parliamentary party.

A certain vagueness and imprecision about what constituted Home Rule was encouraged by the leadership, with O'Brien insisting that the only prerequisite for joining the movement was an attachment to the principle of self-government.¹⁰² His movement welcomed those who held very moderate, tenuous views in relation to Irish self-government. Moreton Frewen, an Anglo-Irish advocate of tariff reform, was elected on an A. F. I. L. platform in Cork North East in 1910.¹⁰³

Frewen was an exceptionally moderate federalist. In his only speech on Home Rule during his brief spell in the House of Commons, on Viscount Castlereagh's attempted amendment to the Parliament bill whereby the House of Lords could still exert a veto over Home Rule legislation, he expressed a desire to have the Irish problem settled along federal lines. He alluded in a very detailed fashion to both Canadian federalism and United States federalism and offered criticism of Home Rule in the Gladstonian sense, characterising it as 'distinctly anti-federal.' He alluded,

¹⁰² Patrick Maume, *The long gestation: Irish nationalist life, 1891-1918* (Dublin, 1999), p. 107.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

somewhat mischievously, to T. P. O'Connor and John Redmond's notorious interviews in Canada, where they 'announced themselves to be good federals (sic).' He referred to a conversation he had had with the first federal prime minister of Canada, Sir John MacDonal, in 1879, where the statesman extolled the virtues of the British North America act. He also quoted one of the statesmen, referring to him only as the then leader of the opposition, who feared the creation of a separate legislature in Quebec, and said that the property of protestants would be 'plundered by papists.' 'No property has been plundered by Celtic Catholics. The relations of the states within Canada to one another has become closer and closer... I should feel perfectly happy if there was a state legislature in Dublin with those powers which each of the federal states, both of Canada and the United States possesses.'¹⁰⁴ Frewen charged, on another occasion, that Home Rule would have been granted but for the 'truculent language of John Dillon.'¹⁰⁵

Frewen vacated his seat in 1911, partly to make way for his associate, Tim Healy,¹⁰⁶ and partly, because his proclamations were far too moderate and conservative for even the ranks of the A. F. I. L. movement. The A. F. I. L. found common cause with Tim Healy via their shared disenchantment with the Irish parliamentary party. This was somewhat unusual given Healy's association with clerical elites who were suspicious of O'Brien, and also, Healy's insistence on fiscal autonomy. Healy was prepared to accept such federalist sentiments from the mouth of Frewen in a way he was not from T. P. O'Connor and John Redmond.

O'Brien emitted an air of moderation from the early 1900s onwards. He was generally enthusiastic towards the various Tory devolutionist schemes that were mooted in the period leading up to the third Home Rule bill, particularly those put forward by Lord Dunraven.¹⁰⁷ He was supportive of the doomed Irish council bill of 1907.¹⁰⁸ The A. F. I. L. in March 1913 called

¹⁰⁴ *Hansard* 5, xxiv, 1410-4 (24 Apr. 1911).

¹⁰⁵ *F. J.*, 6 Dec. 1910.

¹⁰⁶ Maume, *The long gestation*, p. 117.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

for the solution of the Irish crisis through consent.¹⁰⁹ After the brief re-opening of the debate in the House of Commons in June 1913, O'Brien declared that he was in South Africa at the time the constitution was established, 'The four states elected their delegates and sent up their most important men... They did not approach the matter as antagonists. They approached it as statesmen. Not a single man had any desire to revive old sores or to score on the other party. They wanted to build up a new constitution in which all could join for the benefit of the country.'¹¹⁰ He also praised Walter Long, an influential Irish Tory who criticised the Irish Home Rule movement relative to the Canadian home rule cause, 'He (Long) then refers to the case of Canada, and explains how by conferences an agreement was gradually brought about. He said: "Did they try to force their measures on parts of Canada?... They met every objection they could. They appealed in every way to the sympathies and the hearts of men, and eventually laid the foundation of that magnificent structure known now as the Dominion of Canada, one of the greatest glories of the British empire."¹¹¹

James Gilhooly, O'Brienite nationalist M. P. for Cork West, similarly stated, in a speech in Bantry, that 'Mr. O'Brien's policy is the uniting of all classes and creeds in the demand for Home Rule, to get the two great parties of the state to join in passing a Home Rule bill, which they could be got to do as easily as they were to pass the bill granting self-government to South Africa'¹¹²

O'Brien's later sentiments would indicate that this grandiose and magnanimous talk of compromise and consent was pious fluff, devoid of substance. In a letter to the ardently friendly *Cork Free Press* in January 1914, O'Brien attacked the concessions offered by T. P. O'Connor (who he identified as the conduit between the parliamentary party and the government) which, in O'Brien's view, amounted to conceding ground on customs, postal services and the

¹⁰⁹ Smith, *The Tories and Ireland*, p. 83.

¹¹⁰ *Hansard* 5, liii, 1330 (9 June 1913).

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1331 (9 June 1913).

¹¹² *Southern Star*, 25 Mar. 1911.

appointment of judges. This, O'Brien wrote, 'would reduce the Irish parliament to exactly the same power and dignity, as the legislature of Saskatchewan.' O'Brien insisted that he was in favour of 'the largest measure of self-government on the Canadian model- in other words full colonial Home Rule- if England could be reconciled to so bold measure.'¹¹³

Harnessing the colonial precedents in parliament: The government of Ireland act

As with the 1880s, only the higher echelons of the party contributed major speeches to the debates specifically on the issue of Home Rule in the House of Commons. T. P. O'Connor, John Dillon, John and William Redmond were those to figure most prominently. Joseph Devlin and Thomas Scanlon both contributed. Tom O'Donnell asked a question specifically on the Irish issue, Samuel Young, M. P. for Cavan East, spoke on the second reading in 1912,¹¹⁴ and on the Agar Roberts amendment of June 1912,¹¹⁵ and Richard Hazelton, M. P. for Galway North, delivered a brief speech at the close of the third reading in January 1913.¹¹⁶

The Irish M.P.s again insisted upon the nominal nature of the parliamentary supremacy, in line with the manner in which it was exercised in the self-governing colonies. However, the Healyite rump dissented from the party, with Maurice Healy, M. P. for Cork, quibbling with the opinions expressed by John Dillon and Joe Devlin, that the privy council was a toothless body and that the safeguards in the bill were purely nominal, 'It is suggested that the limitation placed upon our legislative powers are paper safeguards, but I do not admit that... Is the poll vested in the privy council giving them power to declare an act of the assemblies in Canada, Australia and South Africa unconstitutional a paper safeguard?'¹¹⁷ The Healyites appeared to display outright antipathy to the colonial precedent.

¹¹³ William O'Brien to *Cork Free Press*, 28 Jan. 1914 (N.L.I., W. O'Brien papers, MS 8557).

¹¹⁴ *Hansard* 5, xxxviii, 1770 (30 April 1912).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, xxxix, 1529-32 (18 June 1912).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, xlvi, 2385-8 (16 Jan. 1913).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, xxxviii, 245 (7 May 1912).

Tim Healy was alone in openly distancing the Irish demand from the colonial analogy. He did so consistently during the debates on the third Home Rule bill. In the Commons, at the opening of his speech on Asquith's bill, he stated 'We have heard about Saskatchewan and Alberta, Moose Jaw and Medicine Hat, but very little about Ballyhooley or Kilmallock... Analogies are generally false. In dealing with Ireland you are dealing with a condition, which exists, I believe, nowhere else in the world except Poland.'¹¹⁸ On the debate over judiciary appointments, during the committee stage, Healy stated,

We have suggestions of analogies drawn from Canada and Australia, and the Cape of Good Hope. I would as soon draw them from Morocco and Persia, and they would have just as much reality or actuality in them. The peculiarities of Ireland and its peculiar circumstances will not be provided for by bills, either from Canada or Australia or the Cape of Good Hope.¹¹⁹

He later declared, during the debate on the composition of the Irish senate that,

I made a proposal which was businesslike, namely, that instead of drawing your analogies from the Cape of Good Hope, Botany Bay and other parts of the world we hear so much of and know so little, you should take the country as it is, with its divisions, with its apprehensions expressed, with its dread of turmoil and disorder, and with the fact that for about two hundred years, from 1613 to 1800, there was practically a Protestant government in Ireland...¹²⁰

In the debate concerning when the act came into force, Healy, while attacking the proposed eighteen month delay, rejected the appropriateness of the colonial precedent as applied to Ireland.

It was therefore a most reasonable thing to give the colonies, who had to make certain federal arrangements, and to provide for devolution being made to a central authority, a period of twelve months in which to make up their minds. The same may be said of the South African parliament. I think I am right in saying that there was in the Orange Free State, in the Transvaal, in Cape Colony, and in Natal- certainly in three of the four places- existing legislatures... A natural and proper delay was therefore interposed... the people of Ireland are keen and anxious that the measure should be put into force.¹²¹

Redmond attacked Healy for declaring, in a speech in Dundalk, that anything other than the reinstatement of Grattan's parliament in its entirety was a 'betrayal of the national cause.'¹²²

Healy was particularly close to the owner of the *Irish Independent*, fellow Bantry man and

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, xxxvii, 237 (16 April 1912)..

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, xlv, 2157 (3 Dec. 1912).

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, xlvi, 1059 (7 Jan. 1913).

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 1823 (13 Jan. 1913).

¹²² *F. J.*, 12 Sept. 1910.

former Irish party M. P., William Martin Murphy. Murphy's paper published a number of articles heavily critical of what could be termed provincial Home Rule. 'To offer her a parliament with no more extensive powers than that, say of Alberta would be but to whet the appetite for the "real article."' Tim Healy and Murphy were particularly adamant (at least for the sake of faction) that the financial autonomy that the dominions enjoyed must be conferred on Ireland (a shift of opinion Healy had undergone since 1893). The *Irish Independent* certainly had a very clear sense of the distinction between provincial Home Rule and dominion Home Rule, unlike the Redmondite party which, similar to the parliamentary party throughout its existence, was often deliberately vague on the issue. The paper insisted, in its editorial of 5 Feb. 1910, upon dominion Home Rule as the only satisfactory course.

If the interests of the British empire could be promoted by giving complete autonomy to Canada without exacting any annual contribution from her, why should not full self-government on the same lines conferred upon Ireland likewise promote the interests of the British empire? When Mr. Asquith speaks of "full self-government" does he mean putting Ireland on the same footing as the dominion, the commonwealth, or federated South Africa?¹²³

Irish parliamentary party figures often declared, in a fairly open-ended fashion, that they were in favour of Ireland receiving the right to levy protective tariffs on imported goods. Walter Kavanagh, of the long-standing Kavanagh dynasty in Carlow and one of the more conservative figures in the party, resigned his seat for that constituency in 1910, on the grounds that he supported tariff reform while the parliamentary party opposed it. In the course of a letter to the *Irish Independent*, challenging Tom Kettle's attitude towards tariff reform, he stated that he believed Ireland should be entitled to the same fiscal latitude in the realm of protective tariffs as Canada and Australia.¹²⁴

The fiscal autonomy plank was a contentious one. Home Rulers frequently referred to a desire to 'foster and encourage Irish industries.'¹²⁵ However, they deemed that this did not amount to installing a tariff wall between Britain and Ireland, with the aim of injuring Britain. Swift

¹²³ *I. I.*, 5 Feb. 1910.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 28 Feb. 1910.

¹²⁵ *F. J.*, 8 Nov. 1908.

MacNeill had expressed a desire to 'foster and encourage' Irish industry and was harangued by Lord Dunraven, for proposing to put in place a tariff 'designed with actual hostile intentions to Great Britain.' The *Freeman's Journal* defended MacNeill, with reference to the example of the dominions.

Canada and Britain are not engaged in a tariff war, though the Canadian parliament is endeavouring to foster and encourage Canadian industries. Australia and Great Britain are not at war... Why is Ireland's desire to follow the natural ambition of the British dominions beyond the seas to be misrepresented as motived (sic) with hatred of Great Britain?¹²⁶

The Irish-born Liberal M. P. for Islington, Thomas Lough, the most ardent Home Ruler in the Liberal party, introduced an amendment at the committee stage proposing to exclude the restrictions on Ireland's trade policy that were inserted into the bill.¹²⁷ Laurence Ginnell, John Boland and Tim Healy spoke in favour of the amendment, with Ginnell being particularly harsh on the government for inserting such a restriction. Healy, by way of compromise, asked that if the government were to impose restrictions on the Irish parliament's control over trade policy, that 'any place out of Ireland' was too broad and the Ireland should be allowed 'within the ambit of the empire... to make representations namely, with Australia, Canada... South Africa.'¹²⁸

The committee stage debates were greatly preoccupied with the colonial analogy. The British politicians who contributed most frequently to the debate tended to reference the Canadian and South African analogies a great deal. Unionist politicians were the most assiduous contributors to the committee stage. The colonial precedent was leant on by both opponents and supporters of the bill in debates over the proposed legislative powers of the Irish parliament,¹²⁹ the second chamber,¹³⁰ the naming of Ireland's representative body,¹³¹ and Sir Agar Roberts' notable

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Hansard* 5, xlii, 1141 (15 Oct. 1912).

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1156 (15 Oct. 1912).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 1078-187 (15 Oct. 1912).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, xliii, 477 (30 Oct. 1912).

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, xxxix, 1581 (18 June 1912).

amendment to exempt four counties, Antrim, Derry, Down and Armagh from the bill.¹³² The Canadian novelist and Conservative politician, Sir Gilbert Parker, delivered a speech exclusively concerned with the colonial analogy. He stated that there 'was no speech devoted to that point alone.' Parker claimed that the colonists overseas who had expressed favourability towards the idea of giving Home Rule to Ireland did not understand Ireland's constitutional position. They had an idea that Ireland had no democratic and responsible institutions. They were not aware that Ireland was part of a Union and thus had immense power in the imperial parliament. He also enlisted the Union of South Africa as an argument on behalf of the Union between Britain and Ireland. He criticised the lack of precision from the Home Rulers on the colonial analogy and asked the question as to whether they equated themselves with smaller provincial parliaments or dominion parliaments. The Home Rule M. P. s, from Butt to Redmond, never appeared to give this question serious thought. 'It is constantly contended that we are giving to Ireland the kind of government that was given to the Transvaal, and thereby giving Ireland self-government, and they compare also, in a very confused fashion, the government given to South Africa when the Union was accomplished.'¹³³ This was the more nuanced Unionist position with regard to the colonial analogy. Sir Samuel Roberts, and even the fanatically unyielding Edward Carson, echoed this point.

In both cases (Australia and South Africa) you have a number of separate states with simply one connection, the simple thin thread of the crown. What has happened? These states voluntarily came to the conclusion that it was to their mutual interest to combine in one union power, and they did, but in order to that they had to give up their rights as separate states. They give up their rights of taxation, they gave up their imperial rights of defence, and in Australia and South Africa each state was left with little more than what we could call country council government.¹³⁴

The veteran Scottish Unionist, Sir Robert Finlay, approached the issue of the colonial analogy from a different angle. He dealt with the Ulster question through the prism of the colonial analogy. Finlay aligned the Protestant Ulstermen with the Britishers of Natal, alluding to the

¹³² *Ibid.*, 771 (11 June 1912).

¹³³ *Ibid.*, xxxviii, 667 (9 May 1912).

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, xxxix, 1135 (13 June 1912).

fact that a plebiscite was taken of Natal to ascertain whether it wished to join the South African union.¹³⁵

The verbose Sir Gilbert Parker also referenced the South African analogy when attacking the notion that the Irish parliament should take charge of the police force even after a period of six years, as stipulated in the bill, 'In South Africa at the present time there has been yielded up by even the Transvaal the control of the constabulary to a union government over the whole of the union.'¹³⁶ The debate on the control of the police force, as with almost all the debates during the committee stage, was rich in allusions to the colonial precedents on offer. Irish nationalists, however, absented themselves from this debate save for a couple of insignificant interruptions from Michael Flavin, M. P. for Kerry North, and John Dillon.

William Redmond showed himself to be the Irish nationalist M. P. most inclined to dwell on the colonial analogy. When Philip Snowden, M. P. for Blackburn, a supporter of Home Rule, attempted to move an amendment insisting that the Irish parliament be elected on the basis of universal female as well as male suffrage, Redmond, an erstwhile supporter of female suffrage, opposed the amendment on the basis that issues of franchise should be left within the remit of the Irish parliament. He stated that, 'my recollection at the moment is that in every one of the constitutions framed by this House for the various self-governing portions of the empire, matters of franchise, and particularly this very question of conferring voting powers upon women, have been left to the local parliaments themselves... I submit that the proper and consistent course today is to follow the precedents and to do what was done when establishing parliaments in every other portion of the empire.'¹³⁷ Redmond contributed to the debate on the attempted amendment of James Hope, M. P. for Sheffield Central, which argued that the executive power of the Irish parliament should be suspended in a time of war. Redmond said, 'They (the Irish people) believe that Home Rule will do for Ireland what it has done for every

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, lx, 1222 (1 Apr. 1914).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, xliii, 163 (28 Oct. 1912).

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1077 (5 Nov. 1912).

other portion of the British empire, that it will make people locally contented in exercising control over their own local affairs, and at the same time anxious to take part in the development, extension and preservation of the empire... If hon. gentlemen above the gangway had their way, instead of being presented with addresses of welcome, General Botha would have been presented, as we are today, with addresses containing long extracts from those bitter and violent speeches he made before and during the war when he was a stronger, more bitter, and more powerful enemy of England than the Irish people have been at any time.¹³⁸ In the committee stage debate surrounding the executive authority of the Irish parliament, Redmond stated that Ireland had an even greater claim to Home Rule than the self-governing colonies, 'The claim of the colonies for national self-government in some respects not so strong as that of Ireland. In many of the colonies the establishment of free institutions was no doubt necessary, but at the same time it was more or less in the way of experiment. These were large new countries which were sparsely populated, and which had no experience in the past. We in Ireland are asking for no experiment to be made whatever; we ask for the re-establishment of which we had for centuries, and held with success.'¹³⁹

John Redmond, Joseph Devlin and Samuel Young, M. P. for Cavan East contributed to the debate on Agar Roberts' amendment attempting to exempt the four north-eastern counties from the bill. Devlin and Young's contributions were devoid of references to the colonial dimension, with the latter dwelling exclusively on the long-time historical controversies between Protestants and Catholics.¹⁴⁰ Devlin stated at the close of his speech that he would not accept provincial rather than national Home Rule.¹⁴¹ Devlin's speeches, surely owing to the fact that he sat for a constituency in Belfast, were mainly taken up with references to the Ulster question.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, xlvi, 239-40 (31 Dec. 1912).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 646 (2 Jan. 1913).

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, xxxix, 1529-32 (18 June 1912).

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1167 (13 June 1912).

The issue of the appointment of the judiciary was also dominated by the colonial precedents. The prime minister defended the provision in the bill by pointing to the fact that every self-governing colony had the power of appointing the judiciary.¹⁴² The opposition pointed out that the dominion parliaments in Canada and Australia had the power to appoint the judiciary and not the provincial legislatures.¹⁴³ T. P. O'Connor and T. M. Healy contributed to the debate, however, O'Connor did not allude to the colonial dimension and Healy explicitly rejected it.¹⁴⁴ O'Connor alluded in a detailed fashion to colonial precedent in the debate over the composition of the senate, 'A most important fact in connection with this argument, drawn from analogy, is that there are a great many of the states and provinces of the empire in which there is no second chamber at all. For instance, British Columbia has only a single, and two or three more of the western states are without a second chamber of their own deliberate choice. They were left to choose between the unicameral and a bicameral system.'¹⁴⁵ In the third reading of the debate in July 1913, O'Connor referred to the Canadian theme, 'There is not a single apprehension which has not been expressed, there is not a single menace that has been used by the Orangemen of north of Ireland, that were not used by the Canadian loyalists when it was proposed to extend self-government to Canada.'¹⁴⁶

In the debate concerning the special provision of constitutional questions, M. P. for North Sligo, Thomas Scanlon, one of the most pro-imperialist members of the Home Rule party, contributed. Scanlon stated, 'It is admitted by the right hon. and learned member for Trinity College (Sir Edward Carson) that in providing machinery for appeal to the privy council the government in this measure have made such appeal much more easy of access than previous governments have made them in connection with the constitution afforded to the different self-governing colonies of the empire.'¹⁴⁷ Felix Cassel, M. P. for St. Pancras East, sought to bring in an amendment

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, xlv, 2124 (3 Dec. 1912).

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2130 (3 Dec. 1912).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 241-257 (3 Dec. 1912).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, xlvi, 1039 (7 Jan. 1913).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, lv, 104-5 (7 July 1913).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, xlv, 2337 (4 Dec. 1912).

retaining the House of Lords as the final court of appeal rather than the judicial committee of the privy council as specified by the bill. Always conscious of colonial precedents, Scanlon opposed the amendment vigorously.

No one has ever entertained the idea in regard to Canada, Australia or South Africa, that the conferring on the peoples of those great dominions and colony of their constitution was denying to them the privilege of protection by our constitution. The most valued privilege of the colonies and the dominions, and the provision in the constitution which brings them nearest to the heart of the empire, is the decision of their cases by that august tribunal, the judicial committee of the privy council.¹⁴⁸

J. J. Clancy, M. P. for North Dublin since the 1880s, also defended the provision in the bill establishing the privy council as the final court of appeal, stating, 'I do not think it is possible to imagine the House of Lords would take a more detached view... as this body composed of lawyers... I was astonished to hear the argument of the hon. and learned member for St. Pancras, who said this spelt separation. Is it to be supposed that Canada is no longer part of the empire, or that the Australian commonwealth is no longer part of the empire, or that the South African union is now separated from the empire.'¹⁴⁹ The debate on the position of the lord lieutenant was entirely taken up with the colonial analogy.¹⁵⁰ In the third reading of the debate, T. P. O'Connor, John Redmond, Richard Hazelton and William O'Brien contributed speeches from the nationalist benches, but only Redmond alluded to the Canadian and South African precedents. Tim Healy and John Dillon briefly interjected in the debate. The Lords rejected the bill in the aftermath of its passage in the House of Commons, however, as a result of the Parliament Act of 1911, the upper chamber could now only stall the bill for two years.

Tom O'Donnell, M.P. for Kerry West, argued in favour of the usage of the Irish language in the Irish parliament on the basis of the solutions reached in Canada and South Africa, which freely allowed the usage of French, in the case of Canada, and Dutch, in South Africa, in parliament, 'In Canada, when the act of 1867 was passed, a special clause was inserted to secure that whoever wished to speak in French or in English in that parliament could do so... When the

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 1460 (9 Jan. 1913).

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 1423 (9 Jan. 1913).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 1477-1531 (9 Jan. 1913).

South African constitution was set up under the act of 1899 special provisions were made for the speaking of English and Dutch in the House of Commons there.¹⁵¹ Gilbert Parker argued that the analogy was not exact as the French and Dutch languages were in use more so than Irish, which was not spoken enough to justify the same treatment. Parker argued it would be used to discourage those who spoke English only from participating in public life.¹⁵² John Boland, his fellow Kerry M. P., contributed to the debate on the Irish language and described Gilbert Parker's claims that the Irish language was not the equal of the French language in Canada as a 'taunt.'¹⁵³

'Ulsteria' reached an incredible pitch in the period 1912-14. Bonar Law, the Canadian who led the Tory party, announced at Blenheim palace on 27 July 1912 that there was no form of opposition to Home Rule that he would be unwilling to support.¹⁵⁴ The Ulster Solemn League and Covenant was signed on 28 September. Jeremy Smith has alluded to the fact that many of the moves towards compromise centred around whether the four, or six, or indeed nine, northern counties were to opt out of a Home Rule Ireland.¹⁵⁵ The government suggested a compromise whereby four counties in the north-eastern part of the country, Antrim, Derry, Down and Armagh, would be exempted from the bill for six years.

The discussion on Walter Long's attempted amendment to the bill in early 1914 was dominated in its early days by talk of compromise arrangements, specifically some watered down form of federalism and the potential exclusion, temporary or otherwise of some of the northern counties. The Unionists also asked once more for a referendum on the issue. The specific alternative plan was that Ulster should remain outside the jurisdiction of a Home Rule Ireland until a comprehensive scheme of Home-Rule-all-round was devised for the entire United Kingdom. The Irish parliamentary party hadn't shifted its stance on Home-rule-all-round. Most

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, xlii, 1987 (22 Oct. 1912).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 1989-90 (22 Oct. 1912).

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 2008 (22 Oct. 1912).

¹⁵⁴ *The Times*, 1 Aug. 1912.

¹⁵⁵ Smith, *The Tories*, pp 97-104.

parliamentarians were largely indifferent to the issue and individual members were entitled to have differing views on the issue. The Home Rulers were, first and foremost, anxious that self-government be granted to Ireland. Dillon stated frankly that he was opposed to federalism, 'you cannot standardise Home Rule for each country, and Ireland must have priority in this matter... personally I am against federalism, as I understand it, for this country.'¹⁵⁶ Both T. P. O'Connor and John Redmond insisted that they were sympathetic to federalism, in principle, but both were wary and dismissive of the course of federation that was being advocated by the more conciliatory unionists. O'Connor stated, 'I quite agree there is not the same point of view on this question between my right hon. friend the member for East Mayo (Mr. Dillon) and myself. I am, and I always have been, in favour of Home-Rule-all-round', however, he opposed the plan whereby Ulster would be excluded until a plan of federalism was instituted in the United Kingdom, purely on the grounds that he did not believe federalism would occur and Ulster would be excluded permanently.¹⁵⁷ Redmond stated that he was in favour of federation, however he did not see Ireland as being on the same plane as Scotland and Wales in terms of self-government, 'I am in full sympathy with federalism, and with federalism as the ultimate solution of this question... But I want to know if the present Home Rule bill, before it is to be passed is to be watered down until, so far as the powers of the parliament are concerned, to what would be considered necessary, say, for the peculiar needs of Wales or Scotland?... There is no such thing anywhere in your empire or anywhere in the other nations of the world as what the prime minister would call a cast-iron standardised system of federation. In Canada, the constitutions of the various states differ one from the other. In Australia the constitutions of the various states differ one from the other...' Redmond then instanced the United States and Germany as examples of countries where there existed federal constitutions in which the states had divergent constitutions and differing levels of power accorded to them.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ *Hansard* 5, lx, 1216 (1 Apr. 1914).

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1431-2 (2 Apr. 1914).

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1660 (6 April, 1914)

Sinn Féin and the colonial analogy

Sinn Féin emerged in the early 1900s espousing the Hungarian case of dual monarchy as the best course on which to proceed. Sinn Féin's critique of the official parliamentary party attitude to the colonial analogy tallied with that of Tim Healy and the *Irish Independent*. They attacked the Irish party for being willing to accept the provincial measure of Home Rule of Quebec or Ontario. Griffith's movement were not hostile to the colonial analogy, but they believed the parliamentary party were merely aiming at the truncated measure of self-government enjoyed by the Canadian and Australian provinces.

We do not know where the "twenty subordinate parliaments" of the British empire exist. We know that the parliaments of Canada, Australia and South Africa are not subordinate parliaments but sovereign legislatures in their respective countries... The imperial parliament was powerless to interfere when Canada was on the verge of signing a reciprocity treaty with the United States, which would have injured England's commercial interests. And it would be equally powerless to interfere with Australia or South Africa in similar circumstances tomorrow. We know that under any scheme of Home Rule Ireland would be debarred from acting with the freedom of Canada, Australia and South Africa in relation to her own interests.¹⁵⁹

Sinn Fein certainly offered a coherent interpretation of the powers accorded to the dominion parliaments and those accorded to the provincial bodies, something to which most Irish parliamentary party M. P. s. were seemingly oblivious.

Further although prominent politicians refer to Australia and Canada as models, there is no analogy in the case of those countries. Australia and Canada possess the powers over customs, tariffs, excise, the conclusion of commercial treaties and the maintenance of military and naval forces which may be denied to Ireland, and yet Ireland possesses self-government in the opinion of many of her political leaders and a considerable section of her people.¹⁶⁰

Sir Thomas Esmonde briefly defected to the Sinn Féin party and Charles Dolan, M. P. for North Leitrim, resigned his seat and re-fought it, unsuccessfully, on a Sinn Fein platform. Again, as Maume has argued, disenchantment with the Liberal alliance was a key reason for their alienation with the parliamentary party.¹⁶¹ Esmonde declared that 'the Sinn Féin policy is the logical outcome of the Home Rule agitation rather than any new party. It must not be regarded

¹⁵⁹ *Meath Chronicle*, 21 Oct. 1911.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 19 Nov. 1910.

¹⁶¹ Maume, *The long gestation*, p. 89.

as being necessarily in opposition to the nationalist party in parliament... It combines with the objectives of self-government and improved commerce, those of preserving the Irish language and encouraging all the national sentiment which in the case of the two great colonies, Canada and Australia, has undoubtedly added to rather than detracted from their prosperity and prestige.¹⁶² A supporter of the parliamentary party, W. G. Fallon, stated, in a letter responding to the Sinn Féin claim that the Irish party were responsible for the 'lessening of the Irish demand', that 'Grattan's parliament was not to be compared with the colonial idea of Home Rule, as understood in Canada, the Transvaal and elsewhere.'¹⁶³

Conclusion

The Redmondite clique which governed the direction of the party in the early twentieth century showed a greater inclination to allude to the colonial precedents of Home Rule than any other incarnation of the movement throughout its existence. 'Redmondism' as a persuasion, in and of itself, has come to signify an awareness, within Irish nationalism, of British imperial concerns and sensitivities. Redmondites consistently displayed a tendency to reference the colonial analogy in speeches even in Ireland when it was not profitable or necessary to do so. However, as Michael Wheatley has indicated, moderate Redmondite politicians did not constitute a majority of the parliamentary party. British politicians, both those supportive of the bill and those opposed to it, showed a greater predilection to allude to the colonial analogy than did Irish politicians. The empire was the most important aspect of the debate for most British politicians. The simple 'fact of nationality' was the most important thing for most Irish nationalists.

The audience was the most important factor in the formation of Home Rulers' arguments. Irish party figures were far more likely to reference the safe colonial precedents in speeches in England as this demonstrated concern for the empire. When touring the colonies themselves,

¹⁶² *Irish Times*, 17 Aug. 1907

¹⁶³ *Meath Chronicle*, 6 June 1908

they naturally referenced the history of the colony in which they were speaking. One of the principal reasons the rank-and-file M. P. s were less inclined to raise the colonial analogy than the prominent figures within the party was that they did not tend make speeches to audiences in England or in the colonies. Most Home Rulers did not contribute, for instance, to the committee stages of the Home Rule debate in the House of Commons, which were intensely concerned with the colonial analogy. Irish nationalists were generally happy to throw the Canadian and Australian precedents into the mix when making arguments for Home Rule but it was not foremost in their minds. Tim Healy was unusual in that he deliberately scorned the colonial analogy. Healy's stance on this arose partly from personal awkwardness and mischievousness, and he remained the most detested of all the independent nationalists by the parliamentary party.

Of the analogies harnessed by Home Rulers, the colonial precedents were the most popular and often discussed. Home Rulers were liable to use any analogy they could in order to further their aims. The colonial analogy was thought, particularly by the Redmondites, to have more persuasive power for sceptical British politicians as it demonstrated that Home Rule was within British imperial tradition. More advanced nationalists, as evidenced by Sinn Féin's position, exhibited a slight preference towards the Austro-Hungarian solution, as the crown remained the only link between the two countries. Other precedents, such as the Icelandic-Danish separation, the Russia and Finland quarrel were also harnessed occasionally by Home Rulers, however none of the contemporary European analogies were referenced with the same regularity as the colonial example. The analogies with the British colonies were thought to be more relevant to the debate by British politicians and thus the debate on the issue was conducted largely through this prism. Within the setting of the House of Commons in particular, the colonial analogies of Canada, South Africa and Australia came more easily to hand.

Conclusion

In the gamut of arguments Home Rule M. P. s deployed when trying to make the case for Irish self-government, the colonial analogy was among the more prominent ones. Discussion of the Canadian, South African and Australian precedents of self-government dominated, in particular, the committee stages of the debates on Home Rule in Westminster. British politicians frequently appeared to regard the analogy's implications as almost the sole guarantor of whether Home Rule for Ireland would be worth instituting. Throughout, British M. P.s proved themselves to be more consistently preoccupied with the colonial aspect of the debate than the Irish nationalists. Irish politicians were thus obliged to engage with the issue of Home Rule on those terms in the House of Commons, placing it an imperial context in a manner that was not required in speeches to their constituents or to gung-ho rallies in Ireland generally.

However, only a small elite segment of the parliamentary party contributed to the Home Rule debates, apart from the odd intervention from an incongruous source. During the debate over the first Home Rule bill, fifteen of the eighty-six Irish party M. P. s contributed to the debate in Westminster. Parnell, William O'Brien, John Redmond and Tim Healy were the most common contributors. During the 1893 debates, Thomas Sexton, Edward Blake and John Redmond held the floor. Whereas, in the 1912-14 period, John and Willie Redmond, Joe Devlin, T. P. O'Connor, and Tom Scanlon were the main contributors from the Home Rule benches. Home Rulers, with the exception of Tim Healy, did not generally disavow comparisons with the self-governing colonies but, for the most part, drawing analogies was a minority phenomenon in the party.

Ide Ni Laithain, in her short biography of Sligo North M. P., P. A. McHugh, subtitled it *Foot-soldier of the party*.¹ This is, typically, how most Irish parliamentary party members have been regarded. The bulk of nationalist politicians simply tended assiduously to their own narrow electoral patch and they were content to be used as voting fodder by the higher echelons of the

¹ Ni Laithain, *P. A. McHugh*.

party. Many rank-and-file M. P.s' interventions in the House of Commons concerned matters in their own constituencies. James McConnel has argued that the clientelist model of politics, so prevalent in modern Ireland, was well developed in Irish politics during the Home Rule era. Most Irish party M. P. s busied themselves with this type of constituency work.² McConnel noted, for instance, that Irish politicians were at the forefront when it came to asking questions in parliament specifically relating to their own constituencies. Most parliamentarians were not philosophical players in the Home Rule debate inside the House of Commons.

Felix Larkin, in his essay examining the *Freeman's Journal's* attitude to the empire, concluded that the Irish parliamentary party, of which he claimed that the *Freeman's Journal* was almost the official press organ, was woefully imprecise in its understanding of the colonial analogy.³ He contended that Irish nationalist parliamentarians did not recognise the colonial analogy or the Canadian and Australian precedents as applicable to Ireland. He argued that the measure of Home Rule envisaged by Irish party figures wasn't as expansive as the measure of self-government implied by the Canadian precedent. By contrast, Ian Sheehy, in his essay examining the attitudes towards the empire of the Irish nationalist journalists based in London, indicates that Irish nationalists did consider the Canadian precedent as being applicable.⁴ The differing conclusions resulted from the fact that Larkin viewed the Home Rulers through the prism of the moderate, Dublin-based *Freeman's Journal*, whereas Sheehy examined the party through the lens of the Irish nationalist journalists in London. The present study has concluded that Irish nationalists were more likely to harness the colonial analogy when confronted with English audiences rather than in speeches to the, usually, passionately nationalist crowds in Ireland.

Larkin is undoubtedly correct in asserting that Irish politicians, with a few exceptions such as T. P. Gill, Edward Blake and T. P. O'Connor, were ignorant of the details of the colonial constitutions. He contends that politicians merely pointed, in broad terms, to the existence of self-government in the colonies, and lamented that Ireland had not yet received this boon. Irish

² McConnel, 'The view from the backbench', pp 177-80.

³ Larkin, 'The dog in the nighttime' in Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and empire*, pp 109-24.

⁴ Sheehy, 'The view from Fleet Street' in Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and empire*, pp 143-59.

nationalists, to the extent that they were interested in the colonial precedents at all, generally dealt with the issue in terms of broad brush strokes. Tom Sexton declared, during the debates on the Home Rule bill in the Commons, that Irish nationalists' interest in the colonial analogy rested on basic principles, and did not extend to specifics, before accusing the opposition of sophistry, casuistry and various other dishonest debating tacks.⁵

There was some confusion over whether the measure of Home Rule to be granted to Ireland would be along the lines of the measure of self-government enjoyed by one or other of the provinces of the Canadian dominion or whether it was to equate with the total measure of Home Rule granted to the dominion itself. Irish parliamentarians often appeared to be quite fuzzy on the issue. Even Butt, who in his official manifestos specified that the form of Home Rule granted be, roughly, on a par with that granted to the provinces of the Canadian dominion, frequently blurred the boundaries. Larkin has insisted that dominion status for Ireland was never seriously mooted by Home Rulers in the pre-war period. However, Maume has pointed out that William Martin Murphy, for one, was enamoured of dominion status.⁶ Michael Wheatley has also demonstrated that there was considerable consternation and disbelief among rank-and-file Home Rulers when John Redmond and T. P. O'Connor, in their tour of Canada, explicitly referred to the provincial Home Rule of Quebec, as being the measure of Home Rule they sought.⁷ Irish nationalists often declared in emphatic fashion that they were only interested in 'national Home Rule.' However, British politicians, both those supportive of, and in opposition to, Home Rule, assumed that the only appropriate analogy was with one of the provinces of the Canadian dominion.

Gladstone's bill indicated that the prospective Irish parliament would be placed in a similar position, in terms of its legislative scope, to the provincial legislatures in the colonies. However, the analogies were never exact. There was never a uniform model of devolved self-government

⁵ *Hansard* 3, cccvi, 1064-70 (4 June 1886).

⁶ Patrick Maume, 'The *Irish Independent* and empire, 1891-1918' in Potter (ed.), *Newspapers and empire*, p. 136.

⁷ Michael Wheatley, 'John Redmond and federalism in 1910' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxii, no. 127 (2001) pp 360-2.

within the empire. The Australian commonwealth act of 1900 granted greater autonomy to the state legislatures than the Canadian provinces were allowed under the British North America act.⁸ In South Africa, by contrast, the provincial parliaments were in an even more emaciated footing than they were in Canada, after the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1909. Irish nationalists, however, demonstrated little awareness of these distinctions, and used these examples interchangeably. The various Irish Home Rule bills did not mirror precisely any of these precedents. Despite the declaration that the 1912 Home Rule bill was to be the first plank in a broader United Kingdom federation plan, none of the bills conformed to the federal structure that was in operation in Canada or Australia. The prospective Irish parliament, as stipulated by the three Home Rule bills, perhaps resembled most closely, in terms of its legislative scope, the state legislatures of Australia after federation.

The profile and composition of the audience was the most important determining factor, when it came to the usage of the colonial precedents of self-government by Irish nationalist parliamentarians in the formation of their arguments. Home Rulers tended to dwell on the Canadian and Australian analogies in speeches in England, or in the colonies themselves. However, in speeches in Ireland, where politicians did not have to construct an argument for Home Rule in the same painstaking manner, they engaged in a more generalised, imprecise and aggressively nationalistic rhetoric which was designed to generate enthusiasm and mobilise the crowd.

Home Rulers did often allude to the self-governing colonies in speeches in Ireland in the emotive context of the large Irish communities that resided there. Irish nationalists were also quick to refer to the support they justifiably claimed the cause of Irish self-government enjoyed within the colonies. Politicians frequently grouped together figures such as Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet and Isaac Butt within the same tradition.⁹ The party claimed the legacy of the '67 Fenian rising as their own. 'God Save Ireland' was the anthem of the parliamentary party, a militant

⁸ Keith, *Dominion Home Rule*, p. 21.

⁹ Kettle, *The open secret*, p. 47.

ballad written in honour of the ‘Manchester Martyrs.’ The bulk of Home Rule M. P. s, when making speeches in, for instance, their own constituencies, eschewed the business of making detailed references to the self-governing colonies. Making reference to the colonial precedents in such an environment generally betrayed moderate sensibilities.

Generalised nationalistic sentiments touching on the era of Grattan’s parliament, the colonial precedents, and the examples of self-government within a broader empire on the Continent were all common staples of Irish party rhetoric throughout the period. Ultimately, the sentiment of nationality came first. References to the colonial precedents of Home Rule in Canada and Australia were merely used to buttress the argument. In his article, ‘The obviousness of Home Rule’, Tom Kettle, North Tyrone M. P. and arch-Redmondite, outlined, in much more sophisticated and academic language, the most characteristic reasons the Irish parliamentarians gave, by dint of their public proclamations, for endorsing Home Rule.¹⁰ He alluded to the ‘fact of nationality’ as the most salient factor in the debate. He stated that this feeling did not have to be defended logically, it merely had to exist. Arguments in its favour, or against it, were beside the point. Towards the end of the article, he referred to the colonial precedents of Canada, South Africa, Australia and others, stating in the course of his ruminations, that Ireland deserved self-government to an even greater extent than the colonies. M. P. s such as Jeremiah Jordan and A. M. Sullivan also petulantly implied this in their speeches on Home Rule, arguing that Ireland was a nation more so than the self-governing colonies.¹¹ There was a nagging sense in some of the rhetoric that Canada and Australia were merely outposts of the British empire, concocted communities that deserved self-governing status to a much lesser extent than did Ireland. Sullivan even lamented that an ancient nation such as Ireland was denied Home Rule, while ‘communities born of the outpourings of the jails of England’ were granted self-government. Abrasive, quasi-Fenian rhetoric was pervasive in the movement throughout the entire period, with exception of the early 1870s. In the 1880s, Home Rulers of nearly all stripes engaged in

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Draft speeches of Jeremiah Jordan, 11 Dec. 1900 (P.R.O.N.I., Jeremiah Jordan papers, D2073/3/4), *The Nation*, 7 Oct. 1871.

aggressive rhetoric. Even Willie Redmond, who was later characterised as one of the figureheads of moderate 'imperial nationalism', referred to the paucity of arms in the country as the only factor inhibiting rebellion. Thomas Mayne uttered the Fenian mantra about England's difficulty being Ireland's opportunity.¹² Usually, anything between twenty and twenty-five percent of the parliamentary party were former Fenians.¹³ However, Fenian sensibilities and background did not preclude politicians from endorsing the ultimately very truncated measure of self-government that Gladstone and the Liberals envisaged for Ireland. Gladstone's Home Rule had elements borrowed from provincial Home Rule in Canada and some elements that departed from this model.

A much more permanent and popular fixture in the rhetoric of the Irish party throughout the period was Grattan's parliament. Home Rulers, most intensely in the 1880s, certainly dwelt, in grandiloquent tones, on Ireland's 'ancient parliament' and the 1782 constitution more so than it did on the contemporaneous examples of Home Rule either in the colonies or on the Continent. During the 1893 committee stage debates, for instance, nationalists such as Willie Redmond, J. J. Clancy and Dr. Kenny, sought to substitute the title of the prospective Irish parliament, from the prosaic word 'legislature' to either 'parliament' or 'House of Commons', two phrases that were more redolent of 1782.¹⁴ It would be absurd to suggest that the Home Rulers desired to reinstitute the exact circumstances that pertained during the era of Grattan's parliament. However, they did wish to establish a parliament that would have same scope in the legislative sphere that the 1782 parliament enjoyed. As an aside, they often conceded that Grattan's parliament had no executive power attached to it. Home Rulers were also enamoured of the grandiosity and pomp that had become attached to Grattan's parliament, and liked to insist that they were advocates of 'restoration' rather than revolution. Because Grattan's parliament was rooted in Irish history, it had more of a hold over the Irish parliamentarians than examples of Home Rule from abroad. For many nationalist politicians, Grattan's parliament was an easier

¹² *United Ireland*, 8 Jan. 1885.

¹³ McConnel, 'The view from the backbench', p. 14.

¹⁴ *Hansard* 4, xii, 494-5 (9 May 1893).

port of call when trying to build an argument than the Canadian or Australian examples of self-government, which many M. P.s hadn't thought about especially deeply.

Examining the rhetoric of the Irish party throughout all its incarnations from the 1870s until 1914, the Redmondite clique that led the parliamentary party in the early twentieth century was the most enamoured of the Canadian and Australian precedents. Redmondite politicians such as Sir Walter Nugent, P. J. Brady, Stephen Gwynn, Tom Scanlon, and the Redmond brothers themselves, were happy to allude to the precedents of Home Rule, particularly in South Africa, and in Canada, even in speeches to their own constituents. This was uncommon territory in which to make such allusions. Michael Wheatley has indicated that 'Redmondism', as a persuasion, has almost been defined by imperial awareness and sensitivity.¹⁵ But, Wheatley was quick to acknowledge that not even John Redmond himself would have fitted this designation at all times.

Senior Home Rulers were promiscuous about the use of analogies and were liable to harness any analogy that could further their aims. During the Home Rule debates in the 1870s, Chevalier O'Clery, for instance, was particularly insistent on the Austro-Hungarian model, referring at length to it in speeches both in parliament and in his constituency of Wexford.¹⁶ A. M. Sullivan also referred to the Austro-Hungarian solution on multiple occasions in parliament.¹⁷ *The Nation*, then edited by Sullivan, referred to the attainment of the measure of Home Rule achieved by Hungary as the dearest aspiration of Irishmen.¹⁸ In the early twentieth century, more advanced nationalists developed a particular fondness for the Austro-Hungarian analogy. Arthur Griffith, the founder of Sinn Féin, highlighted the dual monarchist system in place in Austro-Hungary as the ideal model for Ireland.¹⁹ In Austria-Hungary, the crown was feted as the only link between the two countries and Sinn Féin insisted that the Hungarian case offered greater fiscal autonomy than the somewhat moderate and slightly complicated

¹⁵ Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish party*, pp 77-80.

¹⁶ *Hansard* 3, ccxx, 765 (30 June 1874).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, ccxxxvii, 151 (17 Jan. 1878).

¹⁸ *The Nation*, 21 Oct. 1871.

¹⁹ Arthur Griffith, *The resurrection of Hungary: a parallel for Ireland* (Dublin, 1904).

provincial model the Canadian precedent frequently implied. Irish parliamentarians offered no challenge to this and were never inclined to disavow any analogy that could be of use to them. Sinn Féin arguably displayed a greater grasp of the subtleties of the colonial comparison by arguing that the Home Rulers were imprecise in their use of the analogy, arguing that the form of Home Rule proffered by Liberal governments up to 1914 did not leave Ireland in an equivalent position to Canada or the Boers. T. P. Gill, M. P. for Louth North from 1886 to 1890, and a guru within nationalism when it came to drawing detailed analogies with foreign states, favoured the Swiss constitution as a model for Ireland rather than the British colonial model.²⁰ The Swiss executive was elected purely by the assembly for a set period of three years whereas the colonial executives were technically elected by the lord-lieutenant who selected the government from what he deemed to be the majority in the assembly.

In the main, the colonial precedents were the most frequently harnessed of the analogies on offer. In the House of Commons, on the part of British politicians, they were thought to have the most relevance to the debate. The Irish politicians, in the main, leant on the Canadian and Australian precedents with far greater regularity than they did on the European precedents of Home Rule that existed at the time. The Redmondites, in particular, felt the former would have far greater force for wavering British politicians, as they demonstrated that Home Rule was imperially sound and was within the British tradition.

The colonial precedents of self-government within the British empire were an important plank throughout the debate. Irish nationalists seized on them as evidence of the benign consequences of Home Rule. However, the colonial analogy sat at the level of rational argument. The usage of this rationalising rhetoric was largely restricted to environments where nationalists had to construct an argument for Home Rule, and was generally eschewed in the more enthusiastic rallies on the subject in Ireland. 'Imperial nationalist' rhetoric was not visceral enough to hold the crowds at these more rabble-rousing events. Such rhetoric was also not, generally, in evidence at the more sedate and routine environment of a U. I. L. meeting, where more petty

²⁰ T. P. Gill, 'Draft scheme of Home Rule bill', 14 Dec. 1906 (N. L. I., Redmond papers, MS 15, 248).

and parochial concerns were often the focus of the assembled, and returning to first principles was often unnecessary. When not focused on parochial issues, generalised, nationalist rhetoric was the currency in which a large majority of nationalist M. P. s dealt, when addressing sympathetic audiences in Ireland. The great majority of Home Rule M. P. s did not contribute to the debates on Home Rule in Westminster, give speeches to debating societies in British universities, or address Liberal party association meetings. Irish nationalists, with the exception of Tim Healy, never disavowed outright the colonial analogy but it was not foremost in the minds of the majority of Irish nationalist parliamentarians.

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