

The Ministry April 1880 to June 1885(Liberal)

Prime Minister	William Gladstone (2 nd Ministry)
Home Secretary	Sir William Harcourt
Lord Lieutenant	Earl Cowper; May 1882 Earl Spencer
Chief Secretary	William Forster; May 1882 Lord Frederick Cavendish/George Trevelyan; Oct.1884 Henry Campbell-Bannerman
Under Secretary	Thomas Burke; May 1882 Robert Hamilton

[April 1880] Sir William Harcourt had no connection with Ireland apart from being a member of Gladstone's first ministry. Nor had Francis Thomas de Grey Cowper, 7th Earl Cowper. Nor had William Forster of the Education Act. Lord Frederick Charles Cavendish was assassinated before he could take up office. George Otto Trevelyan had no experience either, nor Henry Campbell-Bannerman the future Prime Minister. Robert Hamilton had at least been in Dublin briefly in 1874. Gladstone had paid a brief visit to Dublin in October 1877 to receive the freedom of the city. None of the cabinet had any idea what was happening in Ireland. Gladstone refused to renew the Peace Preservation Act which was due to expire, despite being warned by Lord Randolph Churchill whose father had recently been Lord Lieutenant. Lord O'Hagan was again the Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Thus the Lord Chancellor and the Under Secretary were Catholics. Lord Randolph had paid a prolonged visit to Dublin to visit his father and he acquired a wide knowledge of Irish affairs. Nineteen attempts were made on the life of William Forster.

Though this decade 1880-1889 was one of the most disturbed in terms of terrorist activity in modern Irish history one needs to remember how little that activity impinged on everyday activity. (I write as one who lived in Belfast at the height of Loyalist and Republican terrorism in the 1970s and know at first hand how little it affected everyday life. Particular atrocities fill newspapers, provoke debates in Parliament, and end in court cases and even hunger strikes with greater publicity, but that might be the only major atrocity in the Province for a whole month. Lesser crimes like car theft by terrorists just displaced car thefts by ordinary criminals. Probably the period in which occurred the greatest disturbance to everyday living was during the struggle between the Free State forces and the Irregulars after the Treaty in 1921.)

Gladstone's second ministry was not particularly noted for its legislation. An important one was the Married Women's Property Act (1882). The English common law concept of coverture, the legal subordination of a married woman to her husband, prevailed until the middle of the 19th century. The various Property Acts removed the husband's power to control his wife's property during the marriage, and they made it clear that the wife had the capacity to own and manage personal property separate from her husband's.

The Employer's Liability Act (1880) made factory owner's liable to pay compensation to injured employees, men, women and children who were injured by machinery in the course of their employment (Briggs and Jordan, Economic History, 548). An Education Act (1880) made education compulsory, to an age not exceeding thirteen years. This Act was extended to Ireland in 1892. In 1881 a Royal Commission on Technical Instruction was established and its report led to the Act of 1889 which gave local authorities in England the power to levy a rate of 1 penny in the pound for the purposes of technical education, and in the following year an enormous sum of money known as the Residue Grant under the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act (1890) was also handed to them which they might use for technical instruction.

Another was the third Reform Act, the Reform Act (1884). This Act and the Redistribution Act applied also to Ireland. The driving force behind it was Joseph Chamberlain. He equalised the county and borough franchises making all householders and £10 lodgers eligible to vote. The vote was also given, in what was called the 'service franchise' to men who occupied houses or rooms in respect of their employment. This chiefly applied to agricultural labourers. The Redistribution Act (1885) which split counties into single seat constituencies was a plot by the Radicals. Traditional Liberals were often elected in two-seat constituencies where the other seat went to a Radical Liberal. In the new scheme Radicals could win both. (The term 'radical' was not really a fixed one. In British history it referred to those in the Whig/Liberal Party who were more anxious for 'root-and-branch' reform than the main body in the party. Between 1880 and 1920 it referred to those who wanted more social legislation for the benefit of the poorer classes. Its most conspicuous representatives were Joseph Chamberlain and David Lloyd George. Increasingly, those who sought such legislation joined the Labour Party. In the 1880s many Radicals represented small boroughs, hence their desire for small single-seat constituencies.) The House of Lords

in 1884 was able to hold up the redistribution bill and prevent a possible gerrymander by the radicals and forced them to disclose the details of their scheme. This explains the retrograde character of this change, for by splitting the country into single-seat constituencies; in certain circumstances a party could get a large majority of seats on a minority of the votes. Gladstone negotiated with the Conservatives to get an acceptable compromise. Lord Randolph Churchill believed he could turn the Radicals' strategy back on themselves in single-seat constituencies (DNBGladstone; Lord Randolph Churchill). One astonishing effect of this was seen in Ireland at the general election in Ireland in 1918 Sinn Fein won 73 out of 105 seats with only 47.7% of the votes cast (LyonsIreland Since the Famine 399). In a contest between three more or less equal candidates one with 34% of the votes cast could win. The number of seats reserved for Ireland was not reduced to the mathematical proportion of the populations.

In 1882 the creamery movement began in Denmark and the first Danish co-operative society was formed. By 1887 Western Jutland had 160 of them; by 1900 there were 1,000. The great advantage they had was the consistency in the quality of their butter. As in much of Europe this period was a time of poverty and economic depression. Unlike in Ireland, when cereal prices fell, Danish farmers fought for survival by using their crops as fodder to produce butter, eggs, and bacon. They succeeded by establishing folk high schools as well as agricultural and dairy cooperatives. The result was a peasantry that was literate, well motivated, and competitive in the marketplace. Furthermore, the Danish bacon factories were started virtually from scratch in 1877 when the German government prohibited the import of live pigs. Like Ireland Denmark was a purely agricultural country with few manufactures, owing to the absence of coal and iron. The Danes then developed their bacon factories on the co-operative system (IrishFarmers' Gazette 1 Nov 1902). Denmark was half the size of Ireland, and had just lost the province of Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia.

By contrast, what should have been the gem of the system of National Education, the teaching of agriculture to most school children was steadily cut back by the Treasury, with no corresponding rise in local contributions. The Liverpool Reform Association denounced the teaching of agriculture at public expense, so the Treasury cut back on the money it made available. The model farms and schools were surrendered at a loss of over £100,000, and the Commissioners of the National Board were compelled to restrict instruction in agriculture to mere book knowledge supplemented in few cases by practical work in school farms and gardens. There are only two bright spots, the Albert Institute of the National Board of Education at Glasnevin, Co. Dublin and the Munster Institute in Cork. In the latter the number of dairy pupils has increased in 15 years between 1885 and 1900 from 40 to 110 and in Glasnevin from 40 to nearly 100. The Munster Institute barely survived the Treasury retrenchments of 1880, but it survived owing to local control and local opinion (Warder 24 February 1900).

In England this decade witnessed the growth of violent trade unionism and socialism. Socialism, especially on the Continent, was associated with revolutionary violence and confrontation with the bourgeois state, but in Britain the Fabian Society, founded in 1883 in London, guided the movement into following constitutional methods. The Fabians put their faith in evolutionary socialism rather than in revolution. The confrontational and violent tactics of the Land League were in line with those envisaged by European socialists. Nor were the 'boycotting' tactics different from those pursued in mining towns against those who opposed the local union.

There is little doubt that Gladstone had taken his eye off the ball. He had tremendous fun storming through Midlothian and neglecting to enquire about Ireland. He chose to ignore the warnings of Disraeli and Lord Randolph Churchill. But even if he had enquired among his Liberal friends in Ireland it is doubtful if they could have given him much information. The mere number of Home Rulers elected was not in itself a worry. Their number had fluctuated since Daniel O'Connell commenced his Repeal movement in the Thirties. They normally voted with the Liberals. The Liberals themselves were largely supported by Tenant Right groups whose sole aim was to gold-plate their leases, and Gladstone was prepared to pass a Land Act to satisfy them.

It is worth considering what the actual state of landlord and tenant relations were in 1878. Vaughan comments that books in the past enshrined the picture of a peasantry oppressed by high rents, insecure tenure, and goaded to violence by grievances (Vaughan, "Landlord and Tenant", in Cullen and Smout). This interpretation was based on facts all apparently true and each leading logically to its successor:

(1) The law in Ireland permitted the landlord to increase rents as they pleased, when they pleased, they could evict tenants who paid their rents punctually, and they could confiscate permanent improvements made by the

tenants. (2) Irish agriculture was backward because landlords did not improve their estates and the tenants were inhibited from improving by insecurity of tenure. (3) The country was plagued by agrarian crime provoked by landlord oppression. (4) A reform of the law giving tenants security of tenure and fair rents would have released the productive capacity of the Irish peasant while improving social relations. This traditional interpretation began to be questioned in the 1960s and serious examination of the facts was made. (It is interesting to note that the Irish Catholic priests who wrote articles about Ireland in the Catholic Encyclopaedia, scarcely thirty years later repeated the allegations as facts; see the passage from D'Alton quoted earlier in Chapter Two)

Vaughan proceeds to demolish this false picture. He points out that rent increases were lower than productivity increases. The value of output had increased by at least 40% while rents rose on average by 20%. The number of evictions was quite low, in fact about 0.2% of all tenants. Those who were evicted were heavily in arrears or had sub-divided or sub-let their farms; old abuses which landlords wished to stamp out. Agrarian crimes were even rarer; between 1850 and 1880 they exceeded 500 in only seven years. Among these murders were rare; most were threatening notices or firing at the person. The frequency of crimes was not correlated with evictions, but depended on the presence or absence of turbulent persons; of two estates managed by the same agent one might have crimes and another none. There was no indication that in areas where Ulster Custom prevailed productivity of farms was higher. The higher profits on Ulster farms can be explained by the profitable cash crop flax. Irish farmers increased their profits by turning to the more profitable livestock rearing and by taking conacre, unsecured leases for 11 months. He concludes that some historians no longer believe that discontent and agitation is always founded on actual oppression (op. cit., 224).

[1881] From every point of view the Land Act (1881) must be regarded as a mistake, in practice unworkable, and more importantly directing the attention of the tenant farmers towards outwitting the landlords and not the Danes. In the end the only solution to the problems it brought was to sell the land at a discount to the tenants, who bought at a time when land was losing its value. So oddly, the real gainers in the long run were the landlords. The tenants in return got the status of landed proprietors. Some Irish historians (Beckett, *The Making of Modern Ireland*, 391) assert that the Act was the result of pressure by the Land League. But demands were coming, as we have seen, from both Conservatives and Liberals that the demands of the long standing Tenant Right Associations should be met. Walker points out that it was the Ulster MPs who played a major role in the introduction and passing of the Land Act (Walker, *Ulster Politics*, 159-60).

Whatever about the wisdom of the Act, Gladstone was not responsible for its contents for it largely followed the recommendations of the Bessborough Committee. When Mr. Gladstone's ministry in 1880 appointed a commission to inquire into the land system in Ireland, Frederick Ponsonby, 6th Earl of Bessborough was nominated a member. His colleagues were Baron Dowse of the Exchequer Court, The O'Connor Don (Charles Owen O'Connor), Mr. Kavanagh, and William Shaw, leader of the Home Rule Party. The commission, which became known by Lord Bessborough's name, reported in 1881, advising the repeal of the Land Act of 1870, and the enactment of a simple uniform act on the basis of fixity of tenure, fair rents, and free sale. The policy of buying out the landlords was deprecated, but additional state aid for tenants anxious to purchase their holdings was recommended. Art MacMurrough Kavanagh was born with only rudimentary arms and legs, but led a very active life. He became a Conservative MP and was a very active improving landlord. He wrote a minority Report dissenting from his colleagues Kavanagh DNB). Bessborough was another improving Irish landlord. O'Connor was a Catholic landowner from Roscommon who supported Home Rule but lost his seat in Parliament when he refused to give a pledge to Parnell.

The Ulster Custom or the 'Three Fs' generally had the following features;

- 1) Fair Rent: the rent charged was a fair one not fixed by competition;
- 2) Fixity of Tenure: the tenant could not be evicted so long as he paid his rent;
- 3) Free Sale: the tenant could, with the approbation of the landlord, sell his tenant right;
- 4) All arrears of rent must be paid off before such a transaction was completed.

This custom was not recognised by law; however in general it was observed (Belfast Weekly News 24 Jan 1901)

This was largely what the Act contained. Fair rent was to be fixed by an independent arbitrator. (This was seized upon later by the Vatican who pointed out that a fair rent, or fair price, was one fixed by a magistrate or judge). Fixity of tenure was granted while the rent was paid. This was largely a theoretical concession for it was the practice of Irish landlords not to evict while the rent was paid. But Irish demagogues from Daniel O'Connell onwards were adept at transforming what a person could do into what a person would do. Free sale meant that

a tenant could sell the remainder of his lease to another tenant with the landlord's permission. If the landlord did not wish to renew the lease he had to pay compensation to the tenant for his improvements. None of the above was to apply if the tenant was in arrears. It was enacted that a Land Court should be formed to fix judicial rents. Either landlord or tenant could apply to the court, and the rent thus fixed was to last for fifteen years. There was also to be a Land Commission composed of three commissioners, one of whom would have the status of a judge, and there were to be assistant commissioners for each county. (As noted above in Chapter Three, the Land Court was in the Chancery Division of the High Court and the Land Commission Court was in the Queen's Bench Division, one of the commissioners being a judge. Appeal from the Land Court was to the House of Lords. Sir John Ross was in charge of this court from 1896 to 1921, the House of Lords always confirming his judgements (Ross DNB)). If the tenant wished to purchase his holding, the commissioners were to advance three quarters of the purchase price, and the purchase would give a full legal title to the land. There were the usual exclusions, so that those hopelessly in arrears with the rent could not apply. The Act was very complex and it was said that only half a dozen politicians fully understood it. Parnell's lieutenant, Tim Healy, was one of these and he got the 'Healy Clause' inserted and passed. This said that no rent could be charged on a tenant's improvements. Hugh Law, then the Irish Attorney General and shortly afterwards Lord Chancellor, missed the point and did not challenge the clause (Healy, Law DNB). Though this caused great pecuniary loss to the landlords, and amused his own side, and gratified his supporters, Unionists regarded it as the type of trickery one could expect from a Nationalist Parliament. It was to be thirty years before Healy recognised that confrontation was the wrong policy.

The great flaw in the Act which became apparent over time was that neither the rent nor the compensation were to be fixed by the free market but by a court which followed arbitrary rules. Arbitrary they were to the extent that they introduced factors that the free market would not consider. This Act was described by Judge O'Connor Morris, a County Court judge who had to administer the system, as "a clumsy and ill-conceived attempt to make the Three F's the mould of the Irish land system. Fair rent was to be settled by the tribunals of the state. Fixity of tenure was to be created by subjecting nine-tenths probably of Irish tenancies to leases for fifteen years, renewable practically for ever by the same tribunals, and free sale was permitted under restrictions rather vexatious and troublesome than of real value". Though it was not intended the judges felt it was their duty to reduce rents which were already comparatively low, and reduced them again at every fifteen-year valuation. So between 1881 and 1901 rents were reduced by 40%. The best landlords, those who spent most on improvements and had the lowest rents lost most, and the thrifty industrious farmer who paid his way and did not run down his farm gained least (Belfast Weekly News 31 Jan 1901). All rents in Ireland now tended to be settled by litigation; nobody gained from this except solicitors who registered a 30% increase since the passing of the Act. Also the Act reduced the incentive of the landlord to improve his estate. After 1847 Irish landlords borrowed £7million from the Board of Works for landlord's improvements to their estates besides any money they had of their own; but since the 1881 Act there as no point in borrowing (Warder 2 March 1901).

When Gladstone first appointed the members of the Land Commission of three members to adjudicate rents and compensation the character of its members was above suspicion, but the two legal members had marked tenant rights sympathies and over-ruled the commonsense of the lay member; the court of appeal routinely sustained the views of the lay member founded on common sense; but the Government of the day wished to see rents cut down and peace obtained at the expense of the landlords. Nobody can doubt nowadays that the Commissioners were not equal to the demands of the task in the face of the No Rent campaign. The first decisions were made by sub-commissioners in the various counties. These were ill-trained and ill-instructed, so appeal followed appeal to the great enrichment of lawyers (ibid).

Twenty years later a newspaper made the following observations. The Act itself gave no indication what a 'fair rent' should be, and the Commissioners themselves never attempted a definition. They did not take into account the Report of a Commission [Bessborough Commission] which said that rack-renting was extremely rare; they should have taken into account estates where rents had not been raised for a long time; they should have taken into account not only the state of the land, but whether its run-down condition was the tenant's fault; they should have foreseen that under the 1881 Act the tenant had a direct financial interest in running down his holding. The Commissioners should have given the greatest latitude to the landlord when he appealed, but did not do so; they should have ensured that the Sub-commissioners were capable, well-trained, and properly remunerated, but did not do so; these sub-commissioners or valuers were in fact the court of first instance. Having neglected to make a definition of "fair rent", the Land Commission on this subject ran into the grossest errors. It excluded the principle of competition in considering the standard for rent; it refused to allow the rents of land in a neighbouring district to be any evidence of the 'fair rent' on a given farm; it permitted rents to be fixed on lands deteriorated through the tenant's default and even deteriorated for this very purpose. Rents were reduced to an extent not contemplated by any statesman, or by any well-informed person who knew Ireland; they were fixed on principles which did the landlord cruel wrong. Agriculture declined in many districts especially as to arterial drainage and to the breeds of most farming animals, for a large expenditure was made by the landlords on this account. This, as a matter of course, has ceased, and the tenants, as a rule have done

simply nothing. In addition land bound in the fetters of a vicious tenure has been thrown into a kind of mortmain; it is all but impossible to sell an Irish estate on the open market, or even to borrow money on it (Warder 6 Oct 1900). Nor was any attempt made to value the land at market prices before and after, or to penalise a tenant who had not made sufficient improvements in the course of fifteen years. O'Grada misses the point when he says that farm incomes did not fall in late Victorian and Edwardian times (O'Grada Economic History 256-7). Land is a common good, and the point at issue whether it is held by landlords, by farmer owners, or by the state is whether the common good benefits more or less under a particular system. From this point of view it is an indictment that the farmers only held their own. Ireland should have been beating the Danes, and the taxable income of farmers soaring. But without a mechanism to weed out the worst farmers and promote the best this was never likely to happen. Forty years later the Irish Homestead was lamenting the fact that farmers were still retaining 400 gallons cows in their herds the sale of whose milk did not cover the cost of keeping them.

These paragraphs taken from newspapers written twenty years later have the benefit of hindsight. But in the historical context we must remember that it was in this period that the Danes became the leading dairy producers in Europe. George Wyndham, when introducing his Land Purchase Act (1903) was scathing about the results of Gladstone's Act (Weekly Irish Times 29 Mar 1902).

There were no public libraries in Ireland before 1850. For long Dundalk was the only town in Ireland to provide a free public library, though they became numerous in Britain. In 1877 the Dublin Corporation was asked to levy a rate for a library, but nothing was done until 1883 when a committee was formed, and the following year two libraries were opened (Warder 31 Jan 1903). In Belfast a petition of citizens regarding a Public Library was presented to the Corporation 1st July 1881 and again in 1882. The corporation took a vote of the ratepayers resulting in 5,234 for and 1,425 against, and it was decided to establish a central educational establishment worthy of the capital of Ulster. The corporation held a competition among the architects for plans, that of W.H. Lynn being chosen. The foundation stone laid by Lord Spencer the Lord Lieutenant, and building being completed in 1888. Most of the users were book-keepers and clerks, not mechanics or factory workers, as some supposed, followed by students, schoolboys and apprentices. It was noted that since the library was established there was a steady decrease in crime in the city. Of the books lent 66% was prose fiction, followed by juvenile literature at 14%; then came history and biography, useful arts and natural history, geography, voyages, and travel. Irish history and biography forms the chief single topic (Weekly Irish Times 1 Feb. 1901).

There were developments too in education. The first was with regard to teacher training. The Catholic bishops had refused to accept those teachers who had been trained by the National Board. The Sisters of Mercy became pioneers in introducing teacher training for Catholics. As early as 1856 the Sisters undertook with their limited resources the training of Catholic female teachers. In 1883 the monopoly was relaxed, and under the guidance of Sir Patrick Keenan a system of state aid to private training colleges was established (Warder 18 May 1901).

The root of the eternal squabbles over religion was the Report of the Commissioners of Education Enquiry (1812) which was accepted by the Government as the basis of all funding for education (Keenan, 1800-1850, 96). The basic recommendation was that in order to end the eternal sectarian bitterness and strife Catholic and Protestant children should be educated together. The clergy of all three denominations fought long and stubbornly to frustrate this aim, and National Education in practice became sectarian. Having children of the same religious belief in the various schools made it easy to indoctrinate them with political as well as religious dogma.

[1883] The year 1883 was a landmark for electric traction on railways. 1881 saw the first electric tram in Germany. This was followed in 1883 by one on Brighton beach and one at Portrush in County Antrim. In 1885 the Newry to Bessbrook (Co. Armagh) electric tram was opened. They operated on the third rail principle, but power could not be carried more than a mile and a half. The Americans, hearing of the successful use of electricity in Britain and America soon followed suit, and in 1884 the trolley system was applied in Kansas City (Warder 7 Sept 1901). The Tramways and Public Expenses (Ireland) Act (1883) was passed to allow the development of tramways and light railways into parts of Ireland where the returns would never justify the expense of constructing standard gauge lines. Basically, tramlines were run along public roads, while light railways required their own tracks. The Act allowed Grand Juries of baronies to guarantee a certain return to the prospectors (Flanagan, Cavan and Leitrim Railway, 7-8, 32-34). The Tralee and Dingle Light railway 3 foot gauge (1891), built under the Tramways Act 1883, had a baronial guarantee. It was built before the days of free grants

which were brought in by the Light Railways Acts which were available to the two other light railways in Kerry (Irish Engineering Review June 1904).

Under the Labourers (Ireland) Act (1883) for the housing of labourers, from 1883 to March 1905 the Treasury had sanctioned loans of £3,288,829 for 23,300 labourers' cottages. The loans were secured by the rates; the principle adopted was Treasury advances and repayment from the rates (Warder 7 July 1906). About 16,000 dwellings were constructed for agricultural labourers at a cost of nearly two millions [£125 each]. The rent of these cottages in 1900 was on average a shilling a week which represented only 11½% of the capital expenditure; the remaining 2½ to 3% being borne by the district councils i.e. about £3 per cottage per annum (Belfast Weekly News 30 May 1901). It was clear as early as 1901 that houses for the working classes would have to be subsidised, even for the most basic housing.

Because much of Belfast was only 5 or 6 feet above sea-level drainage was difficult. After 1867 £65,000 was spent on drainage. In 1887 an Act was obtained to spend £300,000 on a main trunk sewer, to collect the sewage from all the sewers and discharge it far out to sea. Its Water Commissioners obtained similar powers to collect and distribute clean water. Before 1883 its Harbour Commissioners had spent £500,000 on the quays and harbour; under an Act in that year they got authority to spend a further £2.5 millions (Irish Presbyterian August 1920).

In 1883 it was permitted to use Irish in schools where there were Irish-speaking children i.e. in Irish-speaking districts; this did not apply generally to all National schools. Field sports were by this time well established in Ireland. The introduction of soccer is said to date from 1878, and Cliftonville, Belfast was the first Irish club. A few years later the game was introduced to Dublin and by 1884 the matches for the Irish Cup were being played. Irish rugby football dates from at least 1874, though it had been played locally in Trinity College Dublin since 1854. The College Rugby Club claims to be the second oldest in the world.

[1884] In 1884 an association to foster what were called 'native' games, the Gaelic Athletic Association was founded. It was to become extremely xenophobic, excluding anybody who played a 'foreign' game. Michael Cusack, with the patronage of Archbishop Croke of Cashel, is generally credited with its foundation. It promoted nationalist and republican ideology and many terrorists claiming to act in the name of Ireland were drawn from its ranks. The games it fostered, Gaelic football and hurling were variations of widespread field games which were codified in the second half of the nineteenth century, and were in no way peculiar to Ireland.

The Catholic clergy and politicians also played a great part in developing the mythology of Irish nationalism. Though the influence of the clergy diminished as the party organisation of the Parnell's National League developed, it never ceased. The Nationalist Party was seen by most Protestants and Catholics as the Catholic Party. In their speeches and their writings priests, journalists and politicians borrowed from each other. They constructed a mythical picture of ancient Ireland totally at variance with what actually happened. They did not tell lies; they just suppressed the truth. (See for example *The History of Ireland* by the Rev. E.A. D'Alton with a Preface by Archbishop Healy.) A particular feature of this rhetoric was the 'elephantine memory' of the Irish Party of perceived English injustices (Campbell, Fenian Fire). To this day, Irishmen are inclined to debate any point by starting with Cromwell. They constructed a picture of Ireland as a victim nation, always innocent of wrong-doing, eternally suffering wrongs at the hands of others.

It should be noted that Parnell and his fellow MPs (and indeed all in the Fenian tradition down to 1921) were not interested in reconstructing an ancient 'Gaelic' Ireland. For them (as for many others in many countries in the twentieth century) 'independence' or 'freedom' meant simply that they controlled the rackets. It was therefore never possible for the Catholics and the Protestants to find a common ground. The issue was simple: the Protestants had taken the land, the offices, the positions, the power from the Catholics, and the Catholics were going to take them back, by force if necessary. Though they would not put it like that. A Catholic politician would be able to discern those worthy to get jobs on the public payroll, or get contracts to supply goods or services to the city, county, or Government. (For the 'trouble' he took to thus discern a worthy candidate the politician was entitled to a small reward for his labours. Whether these were in the traditional 'brown envelopes' is not recorded.) The Irish Protestants always understood this, and to this attitude there was only one possible response: 'No Surrender'. Had the Protestants occupied six remote impoverished counties there would have been little difficulty in letting them go. But they occupied six of the most prosperous counties, and two of the richest

cities in Ireland from which the bulk of the taxable revenue of Ireland was derived. There was no question of the Catholics ever letting that prize go.

It is perhaps not strange that Irish historians and sociologists have never attempted seriously to analyse what was meant by nationalism. For the state which was built on nationalist beliefs and myths has never been overthrown. When the Nazi regime in Germany, built on similar beliefs and myths, was overthrown the latter were overthrown along with it. When the Soviet or Bolshevik regimes were overthrown their myths and beliefs similarly collapsed. Yet the ideology of Irish nationalism had no more solid foundations than theirs.

Charles de Secondat de Montesquieu's masterpiece, *The Spirit of Laws*, appeared in 1748. For this historically minded lawyer, laws were not abstract rules but were necessary relationships derived from nature. The idea that moral freedom could be realized only in a regime whose laws were enacted by an elected legislature, administered by a separate executive, and enforced by an independent judiciary was to be more influential in the New World than in the Old. This idea was developed in Germany by the Idealist philosopher Georg Hegel. According to Hegel the development of all institutions in the world was influenced by a flux of 'Spirit' (Geist) in a dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The Ruling Spirit in a given age was called its *Zeitgeist* or Spirit of the Age. In the 1840s Irish Nationalists, whose name was taken from the weekly publication, *The Nation*, combined Hegel's theories with the newly emerging theories of race. Several different races, distinguished by their languages, were discovered in Europe, a Latin race, a Teutonic race, an Anglo-Saxon race, a Celtic race, a Greek race, and a Slav race. Each of these 'races' had its 'Racial Spirit' or *Volkgeist*. From the *Volkgeist* all the powers and institutions of the 'race' sprang. But a people or Volk could not develop properly if its Geist was subjected to an alien Geist. This development was not merely economic, but also cultural, legal, and political, culminating in an independent nation state. Therefore, for Ireland, which was identified as a 'Celtic' race, to develop into a prosperous nation it had to cultivate its own language, games, music, and economic and political structures. (How anybody took this nonsense seriously is a mystery, but it certainly was taken seriously both in Ireland and Germany in the twentieth century.) Nobody seriously believes in 'races' anymore, and Ireland's connection with the 'Celts' if it ever existed is now recognised to have been extremely tenuous. But Ireland in the twentieth century was to waste an enormous amount of time, energy, and money into trying to revive a completely useless language on the strength of these theories. It also, to a large extent, cut itself off from the major sports in the world.

If efforts had been focussed on what was best for the Irish people, rather than for Ireland, as people like Vere Foster and Horace Plunkett wished, the policies adopted by the Catholics would have been very different. The whole of the British Empire was open to them, as well as the most of North America. It is fashionable in the post-colonial period to decry the efforts of those who built up the British Empire. This ignores the fact that in nearly every case where the British or the French had intervened the ordinary people were crushed under arbitrary despotisms. Irish Catholics could have been trained as administrators and judges, as civil engineers who built roads and bridges and irrigation systems, as doctors. They could have been taught useful modern languages instead of a useless ancient one. They could have developed their skills in agriculture and marketing instead of hankering after protection for outdated industries and practices.

The foundation of the Gaelic Athletic Association was an important step on the way to constructing an Irish 'identity' different from the British one to back up a claim for independence. There always had been a sense of being different, and even those Irish who had most recently come from Britain felt it. They disliked British officials interfering in what they regarded as local affairs. This, in itself, was no different from the various states in America objecting to Washington taking an interest in the affairs of the individual state. Cusack, Croke, and the other founders of the GAA added the dimension of sport. Later, the dimensions of the Irish language, Irish music, Irish art, and Irish dancing were added. In every case, a local variation of a common west European practice was selected and declared to be part of the Irish 'identity'. (In France, where similar local or regional variations existed they were cherished as regional variations of folk tunes and folk dancing.)

There was a fundamental problem in devising and constructing a separate 'identity' for Ireland; should it be based on 'race' or 'nation'? A 'nation' is based on a geographical entity, Germany, Italy, United States, Australia, and so on, and all those born there, or with certain restrictions, those who migrated there, are regarded as belonging to the nation. American, Canadians, Australians, etc regard themselves as belonging to the nation. This was the approach taken by Irish Protestant Nationalists, and indeed originally by many of the writers of *The Nation*. The other is based on the popular, non-scientific, view of races. These 'races' were distinguished largely by the language they spoke, or in the case of Ireland, had spoken in the recent past. This was largely the view of the Irish Catholics. One could not say bluntly that we want independence from England so that we can control the rackets, which was the fact for most Irish Catholics. So a smokescreen of an 'identity'

based on a supposed 'Celtic' race had to be provided. Hitler too was to try to form a German nation from all who spoke German on the basis of a supposed 'German' race.

In both Ireland and Germany it was useful to have a religious minority of a different race. The fact was that ever since 1791 when Wolfe Tone declared it his ambition to unite Protestants, Catholics and Dissenters under the common name of Irishmen his real intent was to unite them against a minority, those rich and influential Protestants usually labelled the 'Protestant Ascendancy'. If they abandoned their privileges and joined him they would be safe: otherwise they would, with the assistance of the French revolutionary army, be killed. Nobody in Ireland or in Britain understood his message in any other way.

[1885] The events of 1885-6, the Home Rule Bill, had a powerful influence on the construction of an identity for Ulster. Every action in Ireland produced an equal and opposite reaction. The Ulster Protestants focussed on several points. The first was that they were Protestants whose Church had recently been robbed of almost all its possessions. Religion not language marked their identity. (This was true in the Low Countries as well.) They were the upholders of the true Christian faith and religious freedom from Popish tyranny, 'brass money and wooden shoes'. This was not a new picture, for it originated in the last decade of the seventeenth century. The great opposer of Popery, in their eyes was William of Orange, King William III (King Billy) king from 1689 to 1702 though in actual fact he was not. 'Home Rule is Rome Rule' became a popular slogan. The second strand was the insistence that Ulster was British. This was a marked change, for previously they had always insisted that they were Irish. A third strand was race. If the Catholics saw themselves as 'Celts' then Ulstermen saw themselves as 'Anglo-Saxons'. In America they joined in with the WASPs, the White, Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Lastly, and very importantly, they saw themselves as betrayed by Britain, and came to realise that they had to depend ultimately on themselves alone. The sentiment of Sinn Fein (Shin Fane, Ourselves alone) if not the actual words was born in Ulster in 1886. For Ulstermen by-and-large the Act of Union which many of them had opposed worked. They had access to British colonies round the world, to all ranks in the armed forces. One Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the Duke of Wellington, was Irish. The ranks of the administrative classes throughout the Empire were open to them. [TOP]

[Home Rule and the Land League 1880-82]

Meanwhile here were two major changes which Gladstone had ignored. These were Michael Davitt's formation of the Land League. And the second was that Charles Stewart Parnell was now directing the Home Rule Party. The events which developed were essentially peripheral to the history of Ireland. The participants were people who had excluded themselves from a central role. It would not be correct to say that they achieved nothing, for terrorist campaigns at least had the effect of concentrating the minds of those who had power causing them to make changes which would have come anyway in due course. The activities of the leading participants were essentially negative; they were not doing anything for the advancement of Ireland. Their aim was to transfer wealth and power from one group of Irishmen, almost exclusively Protestant to another group of Irishmen who were almost exclusively Catholic. In a word, their objective was to bring Tammany Hall to Ireland. Nevertheless they are regarded as heroes in the mythology of Irish nationalism and Republicanism.

Michael Davitt, when he went to America in 1878, met Henry George, a land reformer who developed Ricardo's theory of rent in a particular way. He argued that since economic progress entailed a growing scarcity of land, the idle landowner reaped ever greater returns at the expense of the productive factors of labour and capital. He maintained that since all productivity come from the soil all taxes should be abolished except a single land tax. Davitt's conclusion was a common socialist one that landlords should be abolished. The Land League he formed however rapidly became notorious throughout all English-speaking lands for murders, burnings, intimidations, slaying of animals and all the traditional tactics of the agrarian terrorists. But that was not Davitt's intention. He always maintained that the methods used should be legal and non-violent. He is always associated with 'boycotting', namely the voluntary and concerted refusal to co-operate or even speak to anyone who defied the League. Had there been great popular enthusiasm for this it might have worked. But the Fenians, like the IRA, Sinn Fein, and the Bolsheviks did not believe in letting people decide to support them or not. Refusal to boycott was not an option; the leaders of the Land League enforced it by any methods necessary. The charge against Davitt, as against Gandhi, was that when his movement was hi-jacked by terrorists, he did nothing to prevent them. Neither could turn around and assist the police.

The other factor was the personality of Parnell. He was no ordinary political leader. He was of a type which came to full fruition forty years later in Adolf Hitler. Both were strange magnetic personalities who exercised a fascination over those who came into contact with them. Both were passionately moved by the supposed oppression of their country and race. Both were totally without scruples, but neither of them wished to

shed blood with their own hands. They had no need too. Each had thousands of lieutenants willing to do that. Both put themselves before their people for election, and both were adored by the great majority of their countrymen. Both had minorities in their respective countries who could be made objects of hatred, and serve to unite the bulk of the people behind them. Both were in private life good friends and considerate employers. Both were masters of thrilling rhetoric, innocent-sounding in itself but which could have fatal consequences for others. Words like 'No man has the right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation; no man has a right to say to his country – thus far shalt thou go and no further' can easily be translated as 'Shoot all those who get in your way'.

As with Hitler, it is difficult actually to connect Parnell directly with violence. They had lieutenants who would do things their own way, and neither would enquire about how exactly anything was done as long as it got results. In particular, it is difficult to say how far Parnell got involved with the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) or Fenians. He courted their support, but whether he was a sworn brother is doubtful. Parnell was of a different class from them; he was of the landlord class which was ultimately to be swept away. Meanwhile he was useful in leading the Parliamentary Party. We can be sure that not only did Parnell not organise atrocities, but he was never told who was performing them. Davitt, almost certainly, was able to keep himself informed about who was doing what in each county, but Parnell almost certainly not. But had he said that atrocities must cease he would have been obeyed, at least for a while to give his alternative policies a chance to work.

There was another problem in dealing with Parnell and that was understanding his motives. Obviously, as a landlord he could have no sympathy with those who wished to destroy landlordism. We can assume he knew exactly what kind of persons the Catholic politicians were and what they wanted. (Similarly the Catholic archbishops of New York and Boston can have had few illusions about the Catholic politicians in those cities.) Nor can we easily understand what Home Rule held for him. There could be no long-term prospects for him, and it was to be only ten years before this was made brutally clear to him. The careers of some people like Mohandas Gandhi and Ayatollah Khomeini can be understood in terms of personal animosities where slights to themselves personally were transformed into slights on their native land or their religion. This was the case of Theobald Wolfe Tone who became a revolutionary when the Government refused to give him a minor appointment. It was also the case with Karl Marx who became a revolutionary when he did not made mayor of his home town. But this does not apply to Parnell. Perhaps, like Daniel O'Connell he just became intoxicated with the struggle.

The question then arises who, if anybody, was directing the terrorist activities in each parish or each county. Traditionally, the agrarian terrorists had no overall leader, but each area formed its own band and chose its own leader. (The plan was followed by the IRA until the present day.) In any given county, especially in the West of Ireland, there was likely to be three or four different organisations at work, and any individual could be a member of more than one. The first was the backers and supporters of the Home Rule Party. This could include Catholic priests, but could also include many politicians of the Tammany Hall stamp. These two could work harmoniously both in Ireland and America. Many of the prominent politicians in the Home Rule Party were or had been members of the IRB. Then there was the official Land League pledged to work by peaceful methods. But it was organised largely by members of the IRB. Davitt himself was a member of the Supreme Council of the IRB until he was expelled for his moderate policies. There was the secret society, the IRB, pledged to organise and carry on war against the British Empire. There was the Ribbon organisation, if organisation it could be called. It was especially strong in south Ulster, but its terrorist campaigns were gradually absorbed in that of the Land League.

Parnell and Davitt believed in confrontation, not conciliation or co-operation. They had a clear enemy, the Protestants, whom Daniel O'Connell had persisted in calling Orangemen. Like O'Connell, neither of them considered that the Protestants might resist the attempts to reduce them to poverty and impotence and to install Popery as the official religion of the country. As in O'Connell's day the Protestants were only a minority in the strict numerical sense. In the sense of wealth and tax-paying capacity they were the majority. One of great objections to democracy as a political system since ancient times was that if the poor common folk were enfranchised they would use their power to transfer the wealth to themselves and thereby destroy the productive capacity of the state. (If anyone thinks that this is far-fetched they should remember that the Trade Union Movement in Britain in the 1970's drove one of the great industrial powers of the world almost into bankruptcy. Or any of the states which emerged in Africa)

Davitt's long-term aim was the abolition of landlords, the ownership of their tenancies by the tenants, and the division of the landlord's demesne land among those who had little or no land. These proposals were not thought through. The problem in Mayo was that there was just too little land suitable for agriculture to be divided up among all who wanted it. Another problem was that it was impossible to decide what too much land was. One might say that a landlord with 500 acres of demesne lands had too much land. But why stop there? A man with 50 acres, or 20 acres? At this point the leaders of the Land League would be called on to surrender

their lands, but that they had no intention of doing. The Land League also promised that if any tenant lost his farm because he co-operated with the League he would get his farms back. Twenty years later it was noted that in every city in the Empire and in the United States there were men who had been duped by the League and who never recovered their farms. The restoration of lands to evicted tenants was to be a great objective of the Land League, the National League, and the United Irish League.

The Earl of Erne, as we have seen, had in the previous year allowed a 10% reduction in rents in 1879. But backed by the Land League his tenants renewed their demand in 1880 for a 25% reduction which would have brought the lands below the Griffith valuation, and their demand was refused. Charles Boycott as his agent had to issue legal processes against eleven tenants. But when in September 1880 attempts were made to serve the writs, the process servers and the police were attacked by a mob. Boycott had to be protected by policemen and soldiers. Meanwhile Parnell joined in and, on 19 September 1880 at Ennis, County Clare, urged the tenants to take steps against anyone who took the land of an evicted tenant, outlining the plan called by Boycott's name. Labourers refused to work for Boycott, his walls were thrown down and his cattle driven off. Nobody locally would sell food to him. In November 50 Protestants from County Cavan gathered his crops protected by 900 soldiers (DNB Boycott).

The immorality of the boycott was denounced by the Vatican in 1877 but as usual, Rome was ignored. As early as 1880 Cardinal M'Cabe denounced the cruelty and injustice of the Land League and the same activities were condemned by Leo XIII in 1888. Leo said that a tenant could not unilaterally diminish an agreed rent, especially as there were tribunals established to deal with cases of grievance; nor was it allowable to extort rents from tenants and deposit them in the hands of unknown persons to the detriment of the landlord; for 'it is contrary to justice and charity to persecute by a social interdiction those who are satisfied to pay the rents they agreed to, or those who, in exercise of their right, take vacant farms' (quoted in *The Warder* 12 July 1902. It should be noted that that replies like these from Rome were not infallible. They were written by a theologian, and signed by the Pope. But like decisions of the House of Lords they were binding.)

'A state of utter lawlessness prevailed and murderous outrages an almost daily occurrence. The total number of agrarian crimes in Ireland rose from 301 in 1878 to 863 in 1879, to 2,590 in 1880 and to 4,439 in 1881' (DNB Parnell). This was of course an exaggeration. Even the largest figure meant little more than 5 or 6 'outrages' in a county in a week. The police were numerically very strong. They lived in barracks and their families were little subject to intimidation. In the later IRA campaign from 1918 to 1921 the families of police officers were the chief targets, and the intimidation of police families proved a potent weapon. There was always the army and militia to provide back-up. The country gentlemen, the magistrates, the judges and the clergy were united against them. In the later period, when it was realised that Lloyd George was likely to hand over southern Ireland to the terrorists, so nobody was anxious to unduly antagonise them.

Parnell continued to gain support. He had the backing of Clan na Gael, the American branch of the Fenians, many of the Irish Fenians, of the Land League and the tenant farmers. He got the support too of many Catholic priests and bishops. It was his skill and magnetism that held these forces together for ten years. At first the Land League was welcomed by the Tenant Right Associations in Ulster, but in December 1880 an Orange emergency committee was set up to combat the League (Walker, *Ulster Politics* 7)

Gladstone took over in April 1880 when the agrarian activities of the Land League were beginning to be widely noticed. There is no point in trying to apportion the responsibility of the officers of the Land League, the National League, and the later United Irish League for legal protests and criminal protests. As in the earlier 'Tithe War' there was undoubtedly some who confined their activities to purely legal actions. Michael Davitt was certainly one. But it is like a parliamentary member of the German National Socialist Party disclaiming responsibility for the activities of the Gestapo and SS or a member of Sinn Féin disclaiming responsibility for murders committed by the IRA on the grounds that he himself never committed a murder.

At first Gladstone was preoccupied with foreign affairs, especially the unfulfilled clauses of Disraeli's Treaty of Berlin (1878). This was followed by the Franco-Prussian War, and the occupation of Rome by the Piedmontese troops. On 20 May 1880, when the Queen's Speech was read in Parliament, Gladstone was content that the Peace Preservation Act could be allowed to expire on the 1st June. The chief problem the Government had to face was that of Charles Bradlaugh, a freethinker who had finally managed to be elected to Parliament and who refused to take any religious oaths, and wished merely to affirm. It was six years before this case was settled, when a new Speaker did not insist on the oaths.

The new Irish Secretary William Edward Forster who was appointed in April 1880 was not expecting any trouble. The Liberals supported, and were supported by the Tenants Rights Associations. They expected that the Home Rulers would give some trouble on Irish issues, but by and large would support the Government on foreign and Imperial issues (Reid, Forster, II, 237). But they had no intention of conceding Home Rule. Obviously believing that tenants were being evicted because of a genuine inability to pay the rent, Forster proposed some compensation for such evicted tenants and that a Commission should be set up to examine the working of the Land Act (1870). In this he was advised by the Undersecretary, Thomas Burke. Gladstone agreed to both proposals, but the landowning classes in the House of Lords were unconvinced, and the Compensation for Disturbance Bill (1880) was defeated there. Following Parnell the Home Rulers opposed it. (The Bill was extremely modest, providing compensation for eviction if the sole reason for eviction was inability to pay because of three successive bad harvests, and not because the tenants were following the direction of the Land League as most people suspected). Forster realised that Parnell's had had been much strengthened, and furiously attacked the House of Lords. The Government decided on a major revision of the Land Act (1870) in the following session. As described earlier, a Commission under the Earl of Bessborough was set up to examine the workings of that Act. It concluded that it was unusual in Ireland to exact the amount that in Ireland would have been considered as a full and fair commercial rent, but recommended the Three Fs.

Parliament was prorogued on 7th September 1880 and Parnell and the other Home Rulers returned to Ireland determined to make trouble, especially for Mr Forster. On 19th September at Ennis Parnell made his famous speech urging the boycott. On 25 September 1880 Lord Mountmorres was murdered. Parnell and Joseph Biggar were indicted for stirring up disturbances of the peace, but were not convicted when the jury disagreed. Incitement to violence was always extremely difficult to prove in the courts for the language used would always be ambiguous. Parnell told the story of a man he met when fund-raising in America who had given him 30 dollars saying 'Here is five dollars for bread and twenty five dollars for lead' (DNB Parnell). The Land League showed they were able to defy the law. As Forster wrote to Gladstone on 8th October 1880, "Parnell and company have clever law-advisers of their own. It is not easy even to find technical proof of the connection of anyone of them with the Land League, and the Land League has hardly any written rules, and publishes no list of officers. The speeches are, if fact, almost the only evidence, and these are framed as carefully to keep within the law, as they are to tempt others to break it (Reid, Forster, II, 255). Forster was doubtful about getting convictions, as indeed he well might be. We can be fairly certain that no Home Rule MP themselves ordered or perpetrated any illegal act. These would have been carried out by the agrarian secret societies who naturally never advertised their membership. But there is no doubt that many officers in the Land League knew who they were. It is inconceivable too that Davitt did not keep himself fully informed personally on the matter.

Forster noted that the actual perpetrators were old Fenians, or old Ribbon men or mauves subjects, and all of them were known and identified by the police. (As usual the police could not touch them for nobody would testify against them.) All the hallmarks of the old Whiteboy or Ribbon societies were in evidence. A grave would be dug at night in front of a man's house, masked men would follow him or his wife by daylight, threatening letters ornamented with sketches of coffins, skeletons or daggers would arrive, his cattle would be butchered in a hideous fashion, and his stacks of corn would be set alight. All these had been commonplace among the agrarian secret societies for over a century.

As the person in charge of maintaining law and order in Ireland, Forster had no option but to introduce yet another piece of special legislation (what is called nowadays anti-terrorist legislation), the chief point of which would be powers granted to the Lord Lieutenant to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act. It was widely believed that as Gladstone had caved in over the Established Church he would do so again over the landlords. On 28th December Forster reported to Gladstone a large increase in the maiming of cattle and firing into houses, but also widespread support for the Three F's (Ulster Custom).

When the new session of Parliament commenced on 7th January 1881 the Government announced a new Land Act and a new Peace Preservation Act. Forster tried every way he could to get Parnell and the Home Rulers to denounce the outrages, always unsuccessfully. They, for their part, started a campaign to have Forster withdrawn. (This was to become a common fate of Irish Secretaries, but it was new at the time.) In fact Forster introduced two Acts, the Protection of Property (1881) Act and the Arms Act (1881), and they became law in March despite intense obstruction by the Home Rule MPs. They were on their own for the Liberals, Conservatives, and Radicals supported the Bills. Filibuster was then allowed in the British Parliament (as it still is in the United States Senate) but rules were gradually introduced to limit the obstruction tactics. The first allowed the Speaker to take the vote at any time he saw fit. Another imposed a time limit. The Irish nationalist newspapers improbably denounced him as 'Buckshot' Forster, believing that he had ordered the police to use buckshot when firing on crowds. The Arms Act (1881) amended the law with regard to the possession and carrying of weapons. It prohibited for five years the carrying of weapons in proclaimed districts in Ireland and gave powers to the police to search for them (DNB Gladstone). Anti-terrorist legislation had existed in Ireland

since the passing of the Whiteboy Act in 1776. This Act of the Irish Parliament, though permanent was rarely invoked because of the harshness of its penalties. Instead, a series of limited-time Acts, variously named Insurrection Acts, Coercion of Crime Acts, or Peace Preservation Acts were passed to deal with each outbreak of agrarian or other similar crimes (Keenan, Pre-Famine Ireland 280-285). These two Acts revived parts of the older legislation. The Protection of Property Act was to last until 30 September 1882. Forster at first applied the Act very mildly, thus giving the impression that it would never be enforced.

Gladstone then introduced the Land Act (1881) which has been described at length above under Government legislation. Most of the session was taken up with Irish affairs because of the obstruction tactics of the Home Rulers. But Gladstone had successfully argued, despite some Conservative opposition, that the United Kingdom Parliament would be made the laughing stock of the world unless it found a means to conduct its business. The session ended on 27 August 1881.

Some of the leaders of the Land League urged the tenants to rely solely on the efforts of the League and to ignore the remedies given in the Land Act. The League had by this time a very effective system of intimidation and violence. On 15th September 1881 this position was endorsed by Parnell. On the 12 October Parnell was charged with intimidation and was summarily imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol, the principal gaol of the County of Dublin and regarded as the most salubrious. He was later joined by other leaders of the Land League. On the 18th October Parnell called for a total rent strike, while the Government suppressed the Land League. The outrages increased and several attempts were made to assassinate Edward Forster. The agrarian secret societies stepped up their campaign and began systematically to murder those who opposed them. Forster had 'special magistrates' appointed who would be sent to disturbed districts. These proved very effective in the longer term. On the other hand, Archbishop Thomas Croke of Cashel who had been an early supporter of the Land League, totally disapproved of its tactics, and denounced the No-Rent manifesto.

Gladstone was induced by Joseph Chamberlain to try to get a working relationship with Parnell. Gladstone agreed in principle, though no commitments were made. In Parliament, the Radicals felt that the special legislation had failed and they considered Forster to be its author. It was openly stated in England that the policy of coercion was his alone.

Parliament was re-convened on 7th February 1882. By this time the number of outrages as detailed by the police, was falling. Forster decided to visit the worst affected districts, counties Clare, Limerick, and Galway himself, dispensing with a police escort. When this was published in the newspapers it caused astonishment, for the impression given was that Ireland was ungovernable. It was not, but the number of serious crimes, murder, manslaughter, and firing at the person had declined slightly. Parnell himself was not happy with his own position. The very last thing he wanted was an independent Ireland ruled by self-appointed murderers from the lower classes. Parnell realised, as did the young John Redmond also of the landlord class that an independent Irish Parliament would also have to act against such people (Beckett, The Making of Modern Ireland, 392). Gladstone considered it safe to release the prisoners and announced this in the House of Commons on 2nd May 1882. Forster, who did not, resigned, as did Earl Cowper. Gladstone appointed Lord Frederick Cavendish, 2nd son of the 7th Duke of Devonshire, and one time private secretary to Gladstone as Chief Secretary, and Earl Spencer, the Lord Lieutenant Forster had wanted as Cowper's successor.

Lord Frederick Cavendish arrived in Dublin on 6th May 1882 and was murdered the same day along with the Under Secretary Thomas Burke. It appears that Burke was the real target and Cavendish was assumed to be a policeman. The murders were carried out by a group of extreme Fenians calling themselves 'The Irish Invincibles' who had no connection with either Parnell or the Land League, though this was not known at the time (Irish Constabulary Gazette January 1920). The Dublin Metropolitan Police carried out a very prolonged search for the murderers and eventually discovered them. One of them named James Carey turned queen's evidence and five murderers were convicted. It was obvious that the extraordinary legislation would have to be renewed, so the Protection of Property Act (1882) was passed, to last for three years, despite the objections of some Irish judges who considered it counter-productive. Parnell and his chief lieutenants, Davitt and John Dillon in a notice in the Freeman's Journal denounced the murders and could not oppose the renewal of the Act. From 1881 to 1906 the Arms Act (1881) was renewed annually and gave the government complete control over the importation and sale of arms and ammunition (Weekly Irish Times 6 July 1916).

Discontent stirred in the ranks of the RIC, and a dangerous mutiny broke out in the ranks of the metropolitan force. The Freeman's Journal in 1883 agitated for a rise of pay for the police, improvement of conditions, etc. and the Journal threw open its letter columns to the agitators. It not only supported the case of the police but defended them. A letter from a member of the force was printed in the Journal and another

paper. An official was sent to both newspaper offices to secure the original; the Freeman's Journal refused but the other paper complied and the policeman was dismissed (Irish Constabulary Gazette 9 Feb 1900). (Another notice in the Gazette in 1900 noted that the Freeman's Journal was read in every barracks of the Royal Irish Constabulary). There is no doubt that the two Irish police forces, the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Dublin Metropolitan Police had been placed under a very severe strain at this time. The Police Act (1883) improved pay and conditions for receiving a pension, the time served being reduced from 30 to 25 years. The greatest ever strength of the RIC was in 1883 when it numbered 14,115. The owner of the newspaper at this time was Edmund Dwyer Gray, a Protestant Home Ruler and supporter of Parnell. In 1880 as Lord Mayor of Dublin he had set up a Committee in the Mansion House which collected £180,000 for the relief of the distress which had been the occasion for the formation of the Land League.

Earl Spencer was sworn in as Lord Lieutenant on 6th May 1882 with a seat in cabinet. Lord Frederick Cavendish was murdered that evening. Sir George Trevelyan became Chief Secretary on 9th May. Sir Robert Hamilton, a career civil servant in London, was made Under Secretary on a temporary basis, though the appointment was later made permanent. He came to regard Home Rule as the best solution, and was removed by the Conservatives after the defeat of the Home Rule Bill in 1886 and appointed Governor of Tasmania.

On the 19 August 1882 the nation was stunned at the news of the shocking atrocity in which an entire family had been murdered at Maamtrasna a few days earlier. Five persons, John Joyce, his wife, mother, daughter, and son were found murdered. Ten men were arrested but there was no evidence against them until one turned queen's evidence (Warder 1 Nov 1902). The incident which involved the murder of women has never been fully explained.

Parnell now set himself the task, as the other parties were doing, of establishing a national organisation for the Home Rule Parliamentary Party, the National League, and from 1884 a pledge was exacted from every candidate that he would 'sit, act, and vote with the Irish Parliamentary Party'. The Reform Act (1884) and the Redistribution Act (1885) proved of immense benefit to the Home Rulers who at times had to poll only a little more than a third of the votes to get elected.

For the next twenty five years the British Army was to be led by two Irish generals, who were not only rivals, but also heads of factions. Each had their share of triumphs. Sir Garnet Wolseley (1st Viscount Wolseley) from Dublin led the expedition in 1884 to Egypt following the siege of General Gordon in Khartoum. It reached Khartoum on 28th January 1885 too late to save the general. The other was Frederick Roberts, 1st Earl Roberts (Bobs) from County Waterford who served for much of his life in India. Roberts led the British forces into Afghanistan in the Second Afghan War (1878-1880). The campaign was famous for the well-executed forced march from Kabul to Kandahar. This was the heyday of the British Victorian army, fighting on the borders of the ever-expanding empire.

Earl Spencer and Sir George Trevelyan persevered in the slow and difficult task in combating terrorism, but it was not until about 1880 the violence had fallen to what was to be called much later an 'acceptable level'. The Government of Ireland continued, as described above, with introducing necessary legislation. Terrorists and agitators have to concentrate on one thing only, but the Government has to deal with all matters that arise. In October 1884 Trevelyan became Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, a traditional high office of state, with a seat in the cabinet. He was succeeded by Henry Campbell-Bannerman (the future prime minister) who was in office only for eight months when the Government fell.

Parnell, though he denounced The Invincibles could not afford to fall out with Clan na Gael in America. The Fenians in America launched what became known as the 'Dynamite Campaign' using the explosive power of Nobel's newly invented dynamite (1867) to blow up public buildings in England. This independent campaign lasted from 1883 to 1885 and included attempts to blow up the Tower of London and the Houses of Parliament in January 1885.

On the 8th June 1885 the Government was defeated on a clause in the budget and resigned. Six Liberals and thirty nine Home Rulers voted with the Tories. On 12 June 1885 Gladstone resigned, and on the same day the Redistribution Bill passed the Lords. Salisbury took office on the 13 June. [TOP]

The Ministry June 1885 to February 1886 (Conservative)

Prime Minister Marquis of Salisbury (1st Ministry)

Home Secretary	Sir Richard Cross
Lord Lieutenant	Earl of Carnarvon
Chief Secretary	Sir William Dyke; Jan 1886 William Smith
Under Secretary	Robert Hamilton

[June 1885] Robert Arthur Cecil, 3rd Marquis of Salisbury, during the 16 years from 1886 to 1902 was prime minister for 13 of those years of Conservative administrations. After the queen herself he epitomises the High Victorian period. He avoided European entanglements and concentrated on the Empire. He led Parliament from the House of Lords, being the last Prime Minister to do so. Richard Cross was made a knight of the Bath G.C.B. in 1880 and Viscount Crosse in 1886. Henry Herbert Molyneux, 4th Earl of Carnarvon had been largely responsible for establishing Canada as a self-governing dominion in 1867. He took part in the debates on the Disestablishment Bill in 1869 and the Land Bill in 1870 and supported both. In 1877 he introduced a Bill to form a Union of South Africa. He had great reservations regarding Gladstone's Land Act (1881) but did not put it to a vote in the Lords. He concurred with the new ministry's desire to allow the Protection of Property (1881) Act to lapse, and to give conciliation a fair trial. He arrived in Dublin on the 7th July to an enthusiastic welcome, and at an early date asked Parnell to visit him. Parnell later strongly claimed that Carnarvon had made specific promises to him, but the Lord Lieutenant later said that he was only prepared to consider a Home Rule Parliament. In view of his actions in Canada and South Africa it would be surprising if he were not willing to consider the option (DNB Herbert, Henry. His more famous son, the 5th earl, discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun). Sir William Dyke, 7th baronet, was a famous rackets player who went on to invent lawn tennis in 1873, but had no previous connection with Ireland. William Henry Smith, the founder of the firm W. H. Smith, Newsagents, was Chief Secretary only for a month. This brief ministry is chiefly remembered for its Lord Chancellor, Edward Gibson, 1st Baron Ashbourne, always remembered for the Land Purchase Act, called the Ashbourne Act. He was born in Dublin in 1837, was educated in Trinity College Dublin and the King's Inns. He was elected as a Conservative for the University seat in 1875 and spoke for the Conservatives on Irish affairs. He was appointed Irish Attorney General in 1877 and became the leading figure in the Irish Government along with Earl Cairns the Irish Lord Chancellor. (Cairns died in 1885).

In Ireland, any action by the Catholics to seize power from the Protestants inevitably produced an equal and opposite reaction from the Protestants. So in face of the common threat the differences between Liberals and Conservatives were diminished. By 1885, in the three southern provinces the Cork Defence Union to protect people targeted by the Land League and National League was formed, and also the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union whose aim was to put up a single Unionist candidate in each constituency where a Home Ruler was standing. Everyone realised that this was the only possible way to defeat Parnell after the Redistribution Act (1885) where gaining just over a third of the vote would give victory to a Home Ruler (Buckland, *Irish Unionism*, 95-99; Walker, *Ulster Politics*, 176). Pro-Union vote in the South, outside Dublin and Cork averaged 10%. The Union remained active politically until 1922. The Conservatives in Ulster began systematically to organise the constituencies, and the Orange Order made its presence felt, though neither the Conservatives nor Liberals used the Order for constituency organisation. The constituency organisation of the Liberals began with the formation of the Ulster Reform Club 1st January 1885 (Walker, *op. cit.*, 177-201). The Nationalists, as the Home Rulers now were called had difficulties of their own. The National League had dissociated itself from Davitt's land nationalisation programme which Parnell categorically denounced in 1884. Davitt had a strong following among Ulster Catholics. Davitt in 1885 supported the Conservatives against Parnell. Thereafter Davitt acted independently.

Carnarvon's first action, along with Lord Ashbourne, was to introduce another Land Bill. The Conservatives always maintained that they originated the policy of land purchase and brought it to its conclusion. Land purchase was not compulsory, although the Land League and the Tenant Right Associations wanted it so (Walker, *Ulster Politics*, 9). Nor were Irish Nationalists the last people on earth to bribe their supporters with promises of other people's land. Horace Plunkett in his book *Ireland and the New Century* cites the Connemara peasant who stopped planting potatoes in 1886 when the Home Rule Bill seemed ready to bring the promise of the millennium; his statement must be credited considering the universal belief among the Irish peasantry that Home Rule would mean free farms and universal luxury.

The main problem with a Purchase Act was to find the money to pay for it. Gladstone had skipped this nicety when he confiscated Church property, but no Parliament largely composed of landowners would propose confiscating landlords' property. Under the Land Purchase Act (1885) the Government would advance to the tenant the whole cost of his holding to be paid back over 49 years. The tenant paid £4 for every £100, of which £3 2/6 represented the annual interest on the land and 17/6 was placed in a sinking fund to pay off the capital

(Beckett, *Modern Ireland*, 394; *Weekly Irish Times* 21 February 1903). This charge amounted to about 70% of the rent the tenant had been paying, and the £5 million voted for the purchase was soon exhausted and further grants had to be made. This method was very expensive to the Government who paid up front and the debt would not be paid off for 49 years. The total amount advanced under three Land Purchase Acts up to 1903 was £25.5 million which purchased 71,754 farms (*Weekly Irish Times* 5 August 1905).

On 14th August 1885 Parliament was prorogued on the understanding that a general election under the new Acts would be held in November. Carnarvon spent a week in August visiting Galway and Sligo and received deputations from mayors and corporation. In September he went to Belfast. On 18th September Gladstone wrote to his constituents in Midlothian and said he considered Ireland should be given a measure of devolved local government. Parnell considered he had obtained better terms from the Conservatives and urged Irish voters in Britain to support the Conservatives. In Dublin on 24th August 1885 he defined for the first time the powers he would require for an Irish Parliament. There should be an Irish Parliament with one chamber sitting in Dublin and controlling the Irish executive. It should have legislative powers to manage Irish affairs, develop Irish industry, impose tariffs on British goods, control Irish education, deal with Irish land, and direct the national, religious, and commercial life of the people. Its programme was therefore to be highly protectionist. The Catholic bishops presumably understood his desire for an Irish Parliament to control education in the sense that the vast majority of the MPs would be Catholics and would legislate as their bishops desired them.

The result of the election in November 1885 was 335 Liberals, 249 Conservatives, and 86 Irish Nationalists. The latter two exactly equalled 335. The Tories continued in office with the support of the Parnellites. Carnarvon resigned on the grounds of ill-health, and Dyke did so at the same time. William Henry Smith, with a seat in the cabinet, replaced Dyke, but no replacement had been found for Carnarvon before the Government collapsed. Gladstone in the meantime had been refining his ideas about what he would be prepared to concede in the line of Home Rule for Ireland. Parliament met on 21 January 1886. Agrarian outrages had somewhat increased since the Protection of Property Act (1882) had lapsed, and Salisbury proposed passing a similar Act. Parnell denied that the National League had anything to do with acts of terrorism which he attributed to the oppressions of the landlords. On 21 January 1886 Queen Victoria opened Parliament in person, and, as it happened, for the last time. On 26 January, the Liberals and Nationalists defeated the Government on an amendment to the loyal address. Gladstone and the Liberals returned to office, but depended on the Irish Nationalists. Gladstone promised a Home Rule Bill. Salisbury resigned on 1st February 1886. [TOP]

The Ministry February 1886 to July 1886 (Liberal)

Prime Minister	William Gladstone (3 rd Ministry)
Home Secretary	Hugh Childers
Lord Lieutenant	Earl of Aberdeen
Chief Secretary	John Morley
Under Secretary	Robert Hamilton

[February 1886] Hugh Childers was an able administrator who completed Cardwell's army reforms. In 1882 he became Gladstone's Chancellor of the Exchequer. In this post he was very successful, but his budget in 1885 to pay for the heavy cost of military expeditions overseas resulted in a defeat of the Government. In 1886 he concurred with Gladstone's views on Home Rule. John Campbell Gordon, 7th Earl of Aberdeen and 1st Marquis of Aberdeen, as his name and title indicate, was Scottish, and a grandson of the 4th earl who had been Prime Minister. His father and two older brothers died or were killed in swift succession and so, a third son inherited the title. He first met Gladstone in the Midlothian campaign and in 1886 was offered the post of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. John Morley was a Radical and ally of Joseph Chamberlain. He was to be Chief Secretary again from 1892 to 1895. He supported Gladstone on Home Rule as Chamberlain was moving away from the idea. He told Chamberlain 'I have thought, read and written about Ireland all my life' (Morley DNB). He, not Aberdeen, had a seat in the cabinet. Aberdeen was a very colourless figure.

The first opposition to Gladstone's Home Rule Bill came from Queen Victoria. She complained he had not consulted her, nor had he put the matter to the country at a general election. She personally was totally opposed to Home Rule and let everyone know it. She believed that Gladstone was making concessions to the forces of disorder. Lord Hartington, second only to Gladstone in the Liberal Party, also complained he had not been consulted. This lack of consultation was a bad calculation on Gladstone's part. The Bill was a very modest one,

being little more than a large measure of local government, and which might have received the support of Parnell (Lyons, Ireland since the Famine, 186). As it was he nearly plunged Ireland into civil war.

The question must be asked, even if it cannot be answered, Why did Gladstone change his mind? The answer may possibly be that he was a rather innocent and unworldly kind of person, devoted to religion and to the uplifting of fallen females. It may never have occurred to him that the chief purpose, and only real purpose, was to enable the Catholics to control the rackets. This was however obvious to everyone else. (Lloyd George, much later, had no such illusions for he was the most corrupt British politician in modern times.)

Of his own party, leading figures like Lord Hartington, Mr Goschen, and Sir Henry James refused to join his ministry. Joseph Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan at first accepted places but resigned on 26 March 1886. Lord Randolph Churchill, who had been the chief architect of the attempted Tory rapprochement with Parnell, went to Belfast to campaign against the proposed Bill.

The people of Ulster had three main objections to Home Rule. One they were a rich minority who would be despoiled by the majority. Two, they were Protestants who would be subjected to Popish priests. Three, Ulster was doing extraordinarily well under free trade. Shortly five of the largest industries in the world would be in Belfast. Tariffs and protectionism might benefit weak and failing industries, but would cripple strong ones. For example, ship-building could be crippled either by tariffs on the import of iron and coal, or if Britain placed retaliatory tariffs on ships and shipping lines. A simple analysis was made of thirty speeches reported in the Belfast News-Letter to see the frequency of the principle arguments used against Home Rule. The most important was the subjection of Protestants to the Roman Catholics and their clergy (27 times). Next came the loss of the imperial connection with Britain (25 times), the terrorism of the Land League (17 times), the superior ability of the Westminster parliament to assist Ireland (5 times), and heavier taxation of Ulster (4 times) (Pearse, Lines of Most Resistance, 89).

In 1912 Sir Edward Carson added another point with regard to the year 1886. 'After the surrender of the Liberals in 1886 to the forces of lawlessness and disorder in Ireland, the horrible and detestable crimes of murder, boycotting, intimidation, firing into dwelling houses, maiming cattle, and resistance to the forces of the crown were not only daily condoned by the Liberal party, but I was myself present on many occasions when Liberal Members of Parliament thronged the courthouses of Ireland with a view to encouraging those who were being prosecuted and intimidating the magistrates! In the House of Commons the magistrates and the whole administration of the law were held up to odium and ridicule even by Mr Gladstone and Lord Morley (then John Morley) who came to Ireland to give evidence against the police of a riot which was got up for his special edification' (Weekly Irish Times 24 August 1912).

It is safe to assume that the cases being tried were rent cases, but the Liberal MPs were encouraging not only defiance of the law but the intimidation of magistrates. The second point was the artificial riot got up to impress a visiting Government minister. This tactic was to be used in future for propaganda purposes to aid fund-raising in America. A rent strike would be organised, and evictions take place with American photographers conveniently on the spot to record them.

Ulster prepared to defend itself; advertisements for the supply of 20,000 rifles and for competent drill instructors appeared in the newspapers. Lord Wolseley declared that he would place himself at the head of Ulster resistance (Colles, History of Ulster IV, 219). 'Ulster will fight; Ulster will be right' wrote Lord Randolph Churchill on 7 May 1886, giving his full backing to armed resistance. It is just amazing how Gladstone got himself into this mess; his ignorance of Ireland was profound. Very important too was the so-called 'Orange vote' or 'Orange card'. This has often been misunderstood as an appeal to religious bigotry, but was in fact an appeal to the recently-enfranchised labouring classes who formed the basis of the Orange Order. The Conservatives, and E. S. Finnegan, a local organiser, realised that the interests of the ordinary worker were different from those of the tenant farmers and businessmen who formed the backbone of the Liberal Party in Ulster. Finnegan was proved right, though the policy is often attributed to Lord Randolph Churchill (Walker, Ulster Politics, 255). It has often been pointed out how the changes in the rules for elections benefited the Catholic Nationalists, but often overlooked is the fact that it had an identical effect on the Unionists in their part of the country. Had the constituencies been increased in size to three seats instead of being reduced to one, it is likely that the course of Irish history would have been very different. As it was politics in Ireland became polarised between the Catholic Nationalists and the Protestant Unionists. Nor was the proportion of the clergy active in politics very different on either side (Walker, Ulster Politics, 255-7). The year 1886 also saw the great increase in religious rioting in Belfast which has continued at frequent intervals until our own day.

On 8th April 1886 Gladstone introduced his Home Rule Bill (1886). He pointed out that the question of Home rule and the question of land were interlinked so he said he would introduce two bills, a Home Rule Bill and a Land Bill.

There would be no repeal of the Act of Union (1800). There would be a legislative body sitting in Dublin with competence to deal with purely Irish affairs. The Irish representative peers would no longer sit in the British House of Lords. Ireland would tax herself in all branches of taxation except customs and excise (i.e. no tariff barriers). The Irish customs and excises would be paid into the Irish Exchequer after deductions for commons services. Certain powers regarding the crown, armed forces, foreign policy, and such like would be reserved to the crown. The Irish legislature would be expressly forbidden to endow any religious body. There would be two 'orders' but not two chambers. One order would consist of the 103 Irish MPs now sitting in Westminster plus a further 101 elected in the same way. The other order, with only revising and delaying powers would consist of the existing 28 representative peers plus 75 other members with estates of at least £200 a year elected every two years. The Irish legislature would control the Irish Executive, except in reserved matters. The Lord Lieutenant would hold office permanently. Judges and civil servants would have the right to retire on full pensions if they so wished. The Royal Irish Constabulary, so long as it existed would remain under imperial control, and the Imperial Exchequer would pay one third of its cost. To the general expenditure of the United Kingdom Ireland would contribute £3,244,000 per annum. There could be appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (Gladstone DNB; Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, 185). The Bill was given its First Reading without a vote.

On 16th April 1886 Gladstone introduced the Land Bill (1886). He began by blaming the landlords for the mischief they had done. This in itself shows how far out of touch with the realities of the Irish situation Gladstone was. Unusually for a British politician in the nineteenth century he regarded his opponents as essentially evil. This political viewpoint became common in the following century. He would therefore allow them to sell their estates and withdraw from Ireland (Gladstone DNB). The Irish legislature would set up a state authority to be the instrument of purchase, and the requisite sum would be advanced through a 3% stock. All agricultural landlords would have the option of selling their estates, and the tenants would become the proprietors. A tenant whose annual rent was less than £4 would not be compelled to buy, and in the Congested Districts, the Government would become the proprietor. The terms would be twenty years purchase on judicial rents, i.e. the annual rent multiplied by twenty. The amount of stock to be issued immediately would amount to £50 million with the possibility of going to £100 million. This idea of using Government stock, which the Government would have to borrow from the financiers in the City of London, instead of cash was not in fact put into practice until 1891. A landlord wishing to sell would be given the value of the farms in 3% Government stock, saleable on the Stock Exchange. The tenant would pay a rent charge to the new Irish Executive which would have the duty of collecting it. (As this was to part of the new Executive's revenue it could obviously be continued as a land tax, though at a lower rate than the rent.) Despite fears, Wyndham in 1903 pointed out that there were few defaulters on existing purchases. Though Nationalist politicians always claimed that even judicial rents were too high to be paid. But that was part of the game (Pearce, Lines of Most Resistance, 53-4). (As usual there is confusion with regard to Irish taxation, whether the taxes paid in Ireland were greater than the Treasury subsidies for prisons, policing, education etc (op.cit. 54). The Bill was read a first time but got no further.

Even Gladstone appears to have recognised that Home Rule would mean 'Pay-back time' for the Catholics and wished to give the opportunity of selling out and leaving the country. He, and many Liberals, assumed that because the Irish Protestants had made little fuss about disestablishment after the Act was passed they would make little fuss this time. However, the Irish Protestants were being thrown to the wolves and they knew it. His Land Bill too upset many of his own followers in Parliament. The Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill (1886) commenced on 10 May and continued until 7 June. The speakers against were powerful and bitter, and only Gladstone and Morley on the Government's side made much defence. Gladstone's lack of preparation of his own followers became obvious. He made a last effort on the 7th June to save his Bill, but a division was called, and the Bill was rejected by 343 votes to 313, 93 Liberals voting against the Bill.

The following day Parliament was dissolved, though Victoria objected as it was only six months from the last General Election. Gladstone however got his way, but met with disaster. At least this time the issue of Home Rule was put squarely to the electorate. The Conservatives had 316 MPs returned, the Liberal Unionists (as they called themselves) 78, Gladstone's followers 191, and Home Rulers 85 as before. On 20 July 1886 Gladstone resigned, so the Queen sent for Lord Salisbury. Though the Conservatives were in a minority, 316 against a combined 354, and the Liberal Unionists refused to form a coalition with him, Salisbury set about forming a ministry. The Conservatives were to be in office for 17 out of the next 20 years

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The Ministry July 1886 to August 1892 (Conservative)

Prime Minister	Marquis of Salisbury (2 nd Ministry)
Home Secretary	Henry Matthews
Lord Lieutenant	Marquis of Londonderry; 1889 Earl of Zetland
Chief Secretary	Sir Michael Hicks Beach; March 1887 Arthur Balfour; Nov 1891, William Jackson
Under Secretary	Robert Hamilton; Dec 1886 Sir Redvers Buller; Oct 1887 Sir Joseph Ridgeway

[July 1886] Henry Matthews, whose family came from Herefordshire in England, had a Catholic mother and was reared as a Catholic. Being debarred from Oxford and Cambridge he went to the University of Paris, London University, and Lincoln's Inn. In 1868 he became a QC, and was elected as a Conservative for the Irish borough of Dungarvan at a cost he later said of 800 bottles of whiskey. He however supported Gladstone over disestablishment and university education. He became a friend of Lord Randolph Churchill and was elected for East Birmingham in 1886. He was the first Catholic to sit in the cabinet since 1689. An arrangement had to be made that any ecclesiastical patronage attached to the office of Home Secretary should be transferred to the Prime Minister. Charles Stewart Vane-Tempest-Stewart, 6th Marquis of Londonderry, was from a County Down family, whose most famous member was Lord Castlereagh (1769-1822) who together with the Duke of Wellington from County Meath ended the ambitions of Napoleon. In 1878, as Lord Castlereagh, he was elected for County Down which he represented until he succeeded on his father's death to the House of Lords as Earl Vane. (Many Irish peers also had lesser English peerages to allow them to sit of right in the House of Lords.) Two years later he was asked by Salisbury, at a time of great turmoil, to be Lord Lieutenant. The wife of Lawrence Dundas, 3rd Earl of Zetland was a cousin of Lady Gore-Booth of County Sligo. The Countess of Fingall used to take Lady Gore-Booth and her daughter Constance to vice-regal parties (Fingall, *Seventy Years Young*, 190; this entertaining book is essential background reading for the period covering the next forty years. Her husband was the State Steward at Dublin Castle and so responsible for state banquets etc. In this way she got to know all the Lords Lieutenant and the wives.) Arthur Balfour was the Marquis of Salisbury's nephew on his mother's side. He was educated at Eton and Cambridge and became a writer on philosophical subjects. In 1874 he was elected as a Conservative, but for some years played little part in the House. Mr William Jackson held the office for a few months after Balfour became Leader of the House. Sir Redvers Buller was a very experienced army officer who, in addition to other campaigns, became chief-of-staff to Lord Wolseley in the Sudan campaign. In August 1886 he was sent in a civil capacity to a disturbed district in Kerry. Salisbury decided that discipline and morale should be tightened up in the Royal Irish Constabulary, so he was appointed Under Secretary in December 1886, Robert Hamilton being regarded as too closely involved in the Home Rule Bill (1886). Sir Joseph Ridgeway was appointed in 1887. He worked so closely with Balfour that the Liberals removed him in turn in 1893. He was from Essex and was an officer in the Bengal Infantry until in 1869 the Viceroy, the Earl of Mayo (Lord Naas) selected him for civilian administration in Central India. He then became political secretary to Major General Frederick Roberts (Bobs) and accompanied him on the march to Kandahar in 1880. With brevet rank of lieutenant colonel he continued operations in Afghanistan, and was then involved in boundary negotiations with the Czar Nicholas II in July 1887.

Peter O'Brien (Baron O'Brien) a Catholic barrister was made Solicitor General in 1887 and Attorney General in 1888. In 1889 he became Lord Chief Justice when Michael Morris was promoted to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. He worked closely with Arthur Balfour, Edward Carson, and Stephen Ronan who was Assistant to the Attorney General or 'Attorney General's devil'. Carson succeeded Ronan in that position in 1887. Michael Morris (Lord Morris and Killanin), a Catholic from Galway became Lord Chief Justice in 1887. Under O'Brien's clear and firm lead terrorism was gradually conquered. The entry on Stephen Ronan in the Dictionary of National Biography claimed that if he belonged to one of the major political parties he would rapidly have been made a judge. As it was he was sixty seven before he was promoted to the bench.

In the year 1886 there occurred the greatest sectarian rioting in Belfast for a generation. The next rioting on a similar scale was in 1907. One former member of the Royal Irish Constabulary blamed it on the structure of the police force. Like the army (and the National Board of Education) it recruited its policemen and police officers separately. In the Belfast riots in 1886, he maintained, the rioting was fanned by incompetent RIC officers who did not know their own way back to barracks; he had spoken openly to criticize his superiors at the special commission of enquiry that followed. For this he was totally discredited and condemned; the Lord Lieutenant's guarantee that constabulary witnesses would be protected was blatantly disregarded, and since he retired on pension every indignity was heaped on him. He blamed it on the system of cadet officers, sons of gentlemen,

who alone are promoted to the higher ranks. The ordinary constable on the beat who starts at the bottom, and who knows policing, has little chance of promotion. If the cadet has friends in the Castle he is sure of rapid promotion (Constabulary Gazette 10 February 1900.) It was a grievance that did not go away, even though Sir Redvers Buller was drafted in to deal with the discontent. The police, already in 1883, had been agitating for higher wages. An English Catholic judge, Sir John Day, in October 1886 chaired a Royal Commission to enquire into the riots (Day DNB). The origin of the riots was alleged to be a remark of a Catholic shipyard worker to a Protestant that after the Home Rule Bill (1886) was passed, no jobs would be given to Protestants. The attacks of the Protestants on the Catholics which led to a loss of 40 lives continued sporadically until 19th September. Thirty public houses, 28 Catholic-owned, were burned, and 3,000 people were driven from their homes. A rumour was spread that Catholic policemen were to be sent to Belfast to deal with the Protestants (Pearce, Lines of Most Resistance, 95-6).

The year 1886 was not noted for its legislation. However the state of local government at the time can be gauged by the regulations concerning rabies. Rabies was first scheduled as a disease under the Diseases in Animals Acts by an Order in council in 1886 which enabled the local authorities, the 159 Boards of Guardians, to make regulations including one for the muzzling of dogs. The magistrates in the 608 petty sessions districts in Ireland and about 119 other local authorities of boroughs, towns, and townships also had powers under the Dogs Act (1871), when a case of rabies or suspected rabies was found in their district to make regulations for restricting dogs not under control. There were also over 700 sanitary districts, with various other powers. There was however little concert among these numerous local authorities in the exercise of the various powers vested in them, while there was considerable overlapping of authority, resulting in conflicting and confusing, however well-intentioned, regulations (County Councils Gazette 4 May 1900).

In this year the milk separator was introduced into Ireland. The invention of the centrifugal separator marked a new era in dairying throughout the world. Carl Gustaf de Laval in Sweden in 1883 first used a steam turbine to drive a milk separator. The introduction about 1886 into Ireland of the Petersen separator was the beginning of a notable advance in this country. Though quickly obsolete it was the basis of all subsequent machines, and it was based on the principle that when a liquid is spun in a circular vessel it is forced to the outside, with the heavier parts furthest out and the lightest remaining in the middle. The older method relied on gravity for separation, namely the milk was allowed to stand in a container so that the lighter cream rose to the top, from where it was skimmed off by hand. The centrifugal separator formed the basis of all future butter manufacture. About three years later it was recognised that if the milk were heated the separation was better, and at the same time the dairy thermometer came into use. The Petersen was followed by the Alexandra and it by the Alpha Laval. Mechanical milk testers were also developed, and the next 14 years saw a transformation in Irish dairies (Farmers' Gazette 30 May 1903).

To this year may be dated the beginning of the modernisation of Irish farming. Irish farmers read the farming magazines and the best of them were not far behind the Danes. But Irish farmers never matched the systematic approach of the Danes and their embracing of wholesale, retail, and producers' co-operatives and a programme of systematic agricultural education. In 1886 the Co-operative Retail store on the Rochdale system was opened in Belfast. The bulk of the capital was owned by working men and women. Besides the profits the members had the benefit of insurance schemes and educational facilities. Four co-operatives were opened at the time in Belfast but only one survived (Irish Industrial Journal 26 March 1910).

In October 1886 the Royal Irish Agricultural Society and the Royal Dublin Society were amalgamated. This merger, in itself, was an indication that the drive towards agricultural improvement which had marked the 1840s was running out of steam. In 1879 the Earl of Pembroke leased 15 acres of land at Ballsbridge to the Royal Dublin Society and it was in the process of erecting buildings there and transferring the shows from Kildare Street (White, The Royal Dublin Society, 125). In 1886 the brewing firm of Arthur Guinness was floated as a limited company.

Between 1815 and 1870 steam propulsion and the electric telegraph had revolutionised communications round the world. Within a few hours the Vatican could notify the great majority of the Catholic cardinals around the world on the death of a Pope, and a Cardinal in Chicago, for example, could set out for Rome, knowing to the minute the time he would arrive.

The next few decades were to witness an astonishing series of inventions, 1873 barbed wire, 1874 the Remington typewriter, 1876 the telephone, 1877 the phonograph/gramophone, and the use of phosphoric ores in steel-making, 1878 Otto's internal combustion engine, Swan and Edison's incandescent electric light bulb, 1880 discovery of the transmission of malaria by the mosquito, 1883 the machine gun, Benz's motorised tricycle,

1885 Parsons' staged steam turbine, the Rover safety bicycle, 1888 the Eastman Kodak camera, the Hollerith punch card, 1892 diesel engine, 1895 X-rays and first cinema projector, 1896 radio-activity of uranium, 1898 discovery of radium, the modern double-hulled submarine, 1900 use of radio waves, and 1903 the first flight by the Wright Brothers. All of these appeared in Ireland within a few years of their invention, though sometimes it was a few decades before they were widely adopted. One of earliest and most popular inventions was the Rover safety bicycle with wheels of equal size and driven by pedals and chain. It played an important part in the emancipation of women who were allowed out on their own on their bicycles.

Salisbury's remedy for Ireland was 'twenty years of resolute government'. Sir Michael Hicks Beach returned to the office he had held twelve years before, but he was not happy, for he felt that he might be obliged to enforce landlord's rights. When Lord Randolph Churchill, whose views on Ireland were more akin to his own, resigned from the Government in December 1886, he felt himself isolated in the Cabinet. He resigned in March 1887, pleading ill-health and was succeeded by Salisbury's nephew, Arthur Balfour (Beach DNB). Writing of Balfour's period in office the Irish Times noted in no other period was so much ameliorative legislation introduced, drainage acts, light railway schemes, new purchases of land Bills which created the Congested Districts Board, and in 1891 an appeal for relief of those suffering from the potato failure (Weekly Irish Times 19 July 1902).

About this time began Parnell's involvement with Kitty O'Shea the wife of Captain William Henry O'Shea whose election in Galway Parnell had secured in 1886. Mrs O'Shea began to live permanently with Parnell from 1886 onwards though she had been his mistress for several years before that. Tim Healy felt that this entanglement was causing Parnell to lose interest in politics. In addition, Parnell's health began to decline though he was only forty. At this time also some of his more extreme assistants began to act without consulting him. John Dillon and William O'Brien began to 'organise' the tenants on the Marquis of Clanrickarde's 56,000 acre Galway estate. Much of this was wasteland, but he had 1,159 tenants. He was not a harsh landlord, and there is no indication that the tenants were unable to pay the rent. But the Land League had been determined in principle to force down rents, and the marquis decided in principle not to reduce them. Of the tenants 186 were evicted and other tenants installed in their place. This led to an outbreak of murders, but the marquis, who lived in the Albany in Piccadilly in London, asked 'Do they think they will intimidate me by shooting my bailiffs?'

The measure Dillon and O'Brien devised and called the Plan of Campaign was simple. Tenants would not refuse to pay their rents absolutely; they would offer to pay the landlord what they considered a fair rent, and if he refused to accept their offer they would pay the money into a fund for supporting evicted tenants. Parnell disapproved of the plan which had in fact two major drawbacks. The first was that it was illegal, and the second was that it was immoral. In February 1887, O'Brien was convicted of a conspiracy to intimidate tenants so that they would refuse to pay their rents. He was sent to prison. But unlike Daniel O'Connell and Parnell he was not given special treatment but was treated as an ordinary convict (Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, 188-190, 195; DNB O'Brien, Dillon).

[1887] It was typical of the attitude of the Catholic Church that while two Archbishops, Croke of Cashel (possibly) and Walsh of Dublin (definitely) approved of the 'Plan' two other bishops wrote to Rome complaining about boycotting and the involvement of priests therein. The Pope, Leo XIII sent his own emissary, Mgr Persico to Ireland in 1887 and the reply from Rome in 1888 was unequivocal. The Plan of Campaign involved grave sins of injustice and so required restitution before absolution could be given. The activities were condemned by Leo XIII in 1888; Leo said that a tenant could not unilaterally diminish an agreed rent, especially as there were tribunals established to deal with cases of grievance. Nor was it allowable to extort rents from tenants and deposit them in the hands of unknown persons to the detriment of the landlord. For 'it is contrary to justice and charity to persecute by a social interdict those who are satisfied to pay the rents they agreed to, or those who, in exercise of their right, take vacant farms' (Warder 12 July 1902). Archbishop William Joseph Walsh, a political priest and strong nationalist, was appointed Archbishop of Dublin in 1885, having formerly been president of Maynooth College. His outspoken views on politics meant that he never was made a cardinal. His views on education were similar to those of Cullen and MacHale.

Though the estates targeted by the 'Plan of Campaign' were not very numerous, extending to only 116, and the number of tenants evicted for non-payment of rent was not more than 1400 at any one time, yet the associated violence and intimidation was such that Hicks Beach and Balfour with their Irish advisers decided on a perpetual Crimes Act instead of the various temporary Acts passed from time to time. It fell to Balfour to introduce the Criminal Law and Procedure Act (1887) or Crimes Act (1887) which allowed the Lord Lieutenant to have trials by special juries in proclaimed districts, and allowed the Lord Lieutenant by proclamation to prohibit or suppress 'dangerous associations', and described them as those who interfere with the administration of the law and disturbed the maintenance of law and order. From 1881 to 1906 the Arms Act (1881) was renewed annually and gave the Government complete control over the importation and sale of arms and

ammunition. The Explosive Substances Act (1883) applied to the whole of the United Kingdom, and contained severe penalties for the unlawful possession of explosive substances including ammunition (Weekly Irish Times 8 July 1916). Like the temporary Acts the Crimes Act gave power to designate by public proclamation those parts of the country deemed to be disturbed, to state the limits of the area, and the limits of time when the powers given under the Act could be invoked. This was called popularly 'proclaiming a district'. It was strictly speaking a power to issue an Order under a given Act. Powers to issue Orders became very common in the twentieth century when various ministers were given permanent powers to issue Orders under a given Act. It was not long before there was need to invoke the Act. A clash at Mitchelstown, County Cork resulted in three deaths and two woundings. This was a gift to the terrorist propagandists who promptly labelled the Chief Secretary 'Bloody Balfour'. Their propaganda was directed at the Liberal Party in England. They claimed they were only trying to get free collective bargaining. The propaganda was successful and opinion in the Liberal Party began to swing towards Parnell. In Ulster, some persons were prosecuted for drilling. They were defended by James Campbell, a future Lord Chief Justice.

Despite the emphasis in nationalist propaganda, enforcing the law was only a minor part of the Irish Government's activity. In October Sir Redvers Buller left, and the office of Under Secretary was given to Joseph Ridgeway just home from St. Petersburg. The normal process of law-making continued. By the Land Act (1887) a whole new class of leaseholders 50,000 in number were admitted to the benefits of the Land Act (1881). Under the Land Purchase Act (1888), the money advanced under the Ashbourne Act being exhausted, a further £5 million was advanced to the Land Commission for land purchase. In 1888 no fewer than 67 members of the Nationalist Party voted against the Land Purchase Act. Balfour came to recognise that the existing system of land tenure brought in by Gladstone's Land Act (1881) was unworkable and began to consider compulsory sale and purchase, but could not get support in the cabinet. Land purchase was opposed by the Liberals and Nationalists and became a distinctive Conservative policy (Beckett, *Modern Ireland*, 406; Weekly Irish Times 26 July 1902).

Balfour wished to proceed further with land purchase, but his Bill was constantly obstructed by the Liberals and Home Rulers. Some years later the Chief Secretary, Wyndham, pointed out the problem the Nationalists had: they could not agree among themselves on a policy. He said 'The trouble in Ireland does not rest with the police or the Government. It rests with those who find it easier to inflame the peasants of Ireland by rhetoric than to persuade the House by argument. It is far easier to organise an agitation than to master a problem for remedial legislation and present it in a convincing manner. The charge against the Irish Government is that they do not proceed in the right direction, or fast enough with their remedial legislation. Two different policies were thrown at their heads at the same time. Immediate compulsory and universal purchase was one policy; another was the policy of dividing all the large farms and distributing them amongst those in possession of only small holdings. These two could not be carried out at the one and the same moment' (Weekly Irish Times 26 July 1902). The Home Rulers were in the meantime pursuing their strategy of bankrupting the landlords through the Land Court whose policy it had become always to reduce the rent at the fifteen year review.

But at last, the Land Purchase Act (1891) was passed. It proved unpopular with the landlords for they were to be paid in land stock backed by the Treasury which was subject to fluctuations in market value. Wyndham pointed out that some landlords sold under this Act and the 1896 Act but many did not. The remainder were prevented from selling because they cannot afford it now that land stock has fallen from 111 to 92 to 94, and partly from two practical obstacles; the first of these is the high legal cost of proving title, and the second is the distribution of the purchase money. In fact the legal costs of selling an estate of 5,000 or 6,000 acres are out of proportion to any return from the sale. Another is the prevalence throughout Ireland of holdings which are very poor and very small, often too small to support a family, sometimes in detached plots at some distance from each other, and with occupiers who have vague and undefined rights to cutting turf. The Land Commission often refuses to advance money from the public purse to acquire these, and from the landlord's point of view they impeded his ability to sell (Weekly Irish Times 29 March 1902). It is not obvious why the Government's Land Stock should have fallen below par.

The Conservatives were becoming more and more convinced that something would have to be done to relieve the landlords from the impositions of Gladstone's Land Act (1881), and that a comprehensive Land Purchase Act was the way forward. The greatest problem was that not even the United Kingdom, the richest country on earth, could afford to pay for all the land at once. Nor were the Liberals willing to confiscate the land as they had done with Church property in 1869.

Mr D. H. Madden, the Attorney General got the Local Registration of Title (Ireland) Act (1891) passed to enable a Registry of Land Titles to be established in which the purchase must be registered and which conferred indefeasible title. It was estimated in 1922 that there were about 550,000 titles to be registered and of these

304,000 were already registered. The Land Registry Office buildings were completed in 1914. Their registered titles covered $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of the land of Ireland. The building in the Four Courts complex was destroyed in 1922 in the street battles between Free State and Republican forces (Irish Law Times 8 July 1922).

The Probation of First Offenders Act (1887) was another in the long series of acts dealing with young offenders. Belfast got another Act to deal with drainage. In 1887 an Act was obtained to spend £300,000 on a main trunk sewer, to collect the sewage from all the sewers and discharge it far out at sea (Irish Presbyterian August 1922).

A Royal Commission on Irish Drainage was set up in 1887 to examine the working of the Drainage Acts (New Irish Jurist 2 May 1902). The arterial drainage of Ireland was under the Drainage and Improvement of Lands (Ireland) Act (1863), which remained largely unaltered, and a sum of £961,235 had been expended on arterial drainage. The number of Drainage Districts formed in Ireland was 60; the area of flooded land dealt with was 128,638 acres; this cost a total of £961,235 or £7 10 shillings per statute acre, towards which £50,725 was recovered from Grand Juries. The total annual instalments repayable were £31,944. The increased value of the lands was estimated by the Commissioners at £37,622; this was a purely fanciful figure as the land would not be improved except by proper land drainage. The costliest was the Lough Erne drainage at £181,557 for 15,327 statute acres; the Inn in Westmeath £92,496 for 11,675 acres; the Raman, Kildare cost £77,607 for 884 acres. The cess varied from £6s 11d for the Lerr to £1 9s 4d an acre for the Garristown and Delvin. The largest of all, that of the Suck in Galway was peculiar in that half the expenses were placed on the proprietors and half on the occupiers. The matter had been considered by the Royal Commission on Public Works of 1887 chaired by Sir James Allport of the Midland Railway and condemned. By 1902 there was only one district still operating, though vast areas still needed drainage (New Irish Jurist 10, 25 April, 2 May 1902). Sluices on the river Shannon were erected by the Government in 1889 at a cost of £860,000 (Irish Investor's Guardian 28 March 1903). (Arterial drainage was eventually taken up by the two Governments in Ireland, and continued until after the Second World War. Even then the drainage of the Shannon basin had become a long-term joke.)

[1888]In 1888, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Goschen, estimated that the ratio of the taxable capacities of England, Scotland, and Ireland to be 80:11:9. The 'Goschen ratio' excited endless discussions among nationalist over the respective incomes and expenditures. The United Kingdom was treated as a whole for tax and expenditure purposes, but that did not prevent endless ingenious arguments to 'prove' that Ireland was over-taxed. Up until 1911 when National Insurance was brought in Ireland may indeed have been paying more in tax than she received in benefits, but after 1911, and especially after 1921 Ireland (Northern Ireland) was the nett beneficiary. The computation was made difficult by the fact that in Ireland some things like policing and primary education were a charge on the central exchequer, but in England on the counties. The Local Government Act (1888) established modern county councils in England in charge of county and local government in place of the boards of magistrates. The details of the Act are given under Ritchie (DNB Ritchie). A similar Act was passed for Scotland the following year, but the Act for Ireland was not passed for ten years. (Balfour's Bill in 1892 was withdrawn after its Second Reading.) Goschen transferred the revenues from publican's licences and those on guns, dogs, game and carriages to the new county councils (Briggs and Jordan, Economic History 592).

As Ireland had no county councils an equivalent sum was transferred to Ireland for expenditure on education. The Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act (1890) was intended to benefit technical education in England, but was given to the National Board and the Intermediate Board. Technical education as distinct from apprenticeships started in Britain with the founding of the Science and Art Department, South Kensington. The Department gave grants to schools which took its examinations and by 1868 there were 76 such schools in Ireland. However as the value of the grants fell so too did the number of Irish schools teaching science diminish. The grants of the Intermediate Board after 1868 were larger. A proposal to establish an Irish Department of Science and Art was turned down, and was not taken up again until 1899. Then the 'whiskey money' was transferred to it (Dowling, Irish Education, 136).

Belfast was made a city in 1888 and its mayor was made a Lord Mayor in 1892. A free public library, museum and art gallery was commenced in Belfast and opened in 1890. The reason given for the late opening of a public library was the presence of excellent subscription libraries in Belfast. Two libraries were opened in Dublin in 1885. The Hawkers Act 1888 regulated hawking goods for sale. A case under this Act came up in 1902 when it was adjudged that a man demonstrating sewing machines which were very popular in rural Ireland was a hawker under the Act (New Irish Jurist 16 May 1902). The power of cleansing and disinfecting of houses was given under the Public Health Acts. The Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act (1889) gave additional powers. An

obligation to notify the sanitary authority was imposed, and to prevent the spread of the disease, powers were given to provide hospitals, mortuaries, and burial grounds, and to control these latter (Irish County Councils Gazette 2 Feb. 1900). Under the Lunatic Asylums (Ireland) Act (1889) the justices of the peace before whom an alleged dangerous lunatic was brought might allow the Medical Officer of the Dispensary District £2 for his services (New Irish Jurist 10 June 1904).

There was always a particular problem with railways in Ireland and that was the lack of heavy minerals, the transport of which formed the backbone of English, Scottish, and Welsh railways. Irish railways were, from the start, constructed to the standards of English railways. In America, at the beginning very light track was laid, and the number of wheels on the engine increased. Rail freight charges therefore were always higher than in England which was a perpetual grievance to those who were exporting cattle, the great export of Ireland. The Irish Government was always anxious to develop light railways, nearly all with a three foot gauge. Ireland had 570 miles of narrow gauge railways, more than in all the rest of the United Kingdom. The first narrow gauge railway, the Ballymena, Cushendall, and Red Bay Railway in County Antrim in the north-eastern corner of Ireland was built in 1872. The Allport committee severely criticised the Tramways and Public Expenses (Ireland) Act (1883). It was clear that future funding would have to come from the Exchequer, and the Light Railways Acts of 1889 and 1896 provided for this, though the railways would be managed by existing companies (Prideaux, The Irish Narrow Gauge Railway, 5-6).

Because of the small size of the country and its relative poverty of many parts of it the Irish Government was always being involved in local matters traditionally known as 'the parish pump'. The ubiquitous Board of Works could be anywhere. The idea of a British 'colonial' administration composed of foreigners sitting in Dublin and dictating to the local Irish what they were to do was a carefully constructed nationalist myth. The Irish Government was largely composed of Irishmen. (A spokesman for British Railways once explained why some new trains could not function in a slight snowstorm by saying 'It was the wrong kind of snow'. Nationalist propagandists regarded anyone working for the Irish Government as 'the wrong kind of Irishman'.) Every Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary coming to Ireland was instantly besieged with requests for a little Government assistance for this project or that. [TOP]

[1890] A perennial topic in Ireland was forestry. No laws protecting Irish woodlands had been enforced for at least a millennium and Ireland (apart from Iceland) became the least forested country in Europe. (Predictably, the nationalists attributed this to the actions of the British Government.) In 1890, the Irish Government attempted an experiment in forestry. It procured 960 acres near Carna in Connemara with a view to planting it with trees. The property was placed under the Irish Land Commission who spent £2,000 in draining, fencing, and planting. On the formation of the Congested Districts Board, the forest called the forest of Knockboy was transferred to it. They entered into the scheme with enthusiasm, for it was maintained that if the experiment was successful at Carna, on a mountain slope covered with a shallow boggy soil, and exposed to the Atlantic winds, it would prove that Ireland could be re-afforested anywhere. Planting was carried out on a large scale in 1893 and 1894. In 1895 it was reported that the trees were not thriving and planting was suspended, and in 1898 the experiment was abandoned. The total amount spent had amounted to £10,500; total receipts were £24 4s; it was a costly failure (New Irish Jurist 6 Feb 1903). Later, all the Governments in the British Isles established successful Forestry Departments.

The Housing of the Working Classes Act (1890) was a far-reaching Act consolidating previous legislation. It had three main divisions dealing respectively with unhealthy areas, unhealthy dwelling houses and the erection of healthy dwellings and lodging houses. The Local Authority could declare an area unsanitary, and put a scheme for improvements before the Local Government Board, get permission to clear dwellings and sites, lay sewers, pave streets etc. and to do this it could borrow money under the Public Health Acts. Unsuited dwellings could be demolished and new houses constructed on the same site or elsewhere (Weekly Irish Times 13 February 1909). The Act remained in force even after the establishment of county and urban councils in 1898. It was not until after the First World War that Local Authorities began taking 'council housing' seriously (Cork Weekly News 3 Jan 1920). By then it was realised that houses for the working classes at rents affordable by a majority would always require a public subsidy.

In 1890 Balfour secured permission for denominational training colleges to borrow from the Board of Works to erect buildings. He allowed grants to each college in proportion to the numbers they trained, and also to recompense the total cost of the buildings. The Government paid the full cost of the Baggot St. College for Catholic women in Dublin.

The Congested Districts Board was established in 1891. It was obvious that because of the determination of the crofters and small-holders to hold on to their tiny pieces of land, the unwillingness of many of them to emigrate, the failure of traditional industries, and above all the dependence of many of them on the potato over forty years after the Great Famine, the Government itself would need again to take measures. This was nothing new. Early in the nineteenth century roads were built and fishing quays along the coast. But all that resulted was that the population again stabilised just above absolute poverty. It would not be correct to say there was no improvement. There was this dependence on the potato, and when it failed, as it did regularly, the Government had to get an Act passed to enable it to supply seed potatoes the following year, while the Poor Law Unions supported the population over the winter (Irish County Council Gazette 9 March 1900; Farmer's Gazette 15 Dec. 1900). This had to be done in 1890 and again in 1891 and 1895.

The Congested Districts Board was formed in 1891 to improve the conditions of some of the poorer classes in the west of Ireland. The legislature indicated certain lines on which it might proceed, for example the enlargement of holdings, the development of fisheries and other industries, instruction in agriculture, and the improvement of the breeds of livestock. An annual sum of £41,250 was granted; in addition the Treasury was to provide additional sums for salaries and travelling expenses of members of the Board, and other administrative costs, telegraphs, stationery, office rents etc. Subsequently the annual grant was raised to £86,000 out of which all expenses had to be paid. Some were under the impression that the grant was £204,938, but this included grants for land purchase which could not be used for any other purpose (New Irish Jurist 23 Dec. 1904).

By its constitution it was able to spend its money without any reference to the Irish Government or the British Treasury. It included men widely differing in religion and politics. When it commenced destitution was common in the areas confided to it, so in the early years it was necessary at times to start relief works, but these later became unnecessary. Land Settlement became its most important work but such powers were not granted in the Congested Districts Board Act (1891) establishing the Board. The first thing it did was to do a survey of the about 80 districts or sub-districts confided to it. They then undertook general schemes for the improvement of agriculture and livestock, but also particular schemes tailored for each district, especially those most likely to suffer from the failure of the potato crop. For example in Erris in County Mayo, and in particular the parish of Pulathomas, a large proportion of the inhabitants had an income of less than £10 a year in addition to the crops they produced; this in effect meant that if the potato failed, the family starved. So a scheme to provide female employment by the production of lace and crochet was started, the women proved apt, and few girls earned less than £50 a year. This money was judiciously invested in improving the cattle and sheep.

Another district was in the Lettermore district in south Connemara, a notoriously distressed district. By a Government relief project in 1890-1 under Col. Peacock R. E. a chain of bridges and causeways linking the impoverished islands was in progress, and this was taken over and completed by the Board. The result was that the islanders were able to market their produce, and average earnings rose from £20 a year to £70, and family expenditure rose from £28 a year to £60 year. In 1891 nearly all were in debt to the shop-keepers but afterwards few were in debt. An Irish-speaking instructress was appointed a few years ago to teach domestic economy to the women, teaching them how to cook, wash clothes, and do general housekeeping. As there were few beds or other articles of furniture a manual instructor was appointed to teach basic carpentry. The people slept on piles of straw or ferns, with little in the line of bed-cloths, as they had done for centuries, never leaving the islands, and knowing nothing of the outside world.

With regard to fishing, in 1892 there was not a single decked boat capable of launching a full train of nets; the fishing was done from the open currachs. Earnings varied from £3 to £20 per family per year. The Board supplied decked boats, and experienced instructors, and only young men were allowed as the fishing was now carried on ordinary commercial lines. The Board marketed the fish and enabled good prices to be paid to the fishermen, while involving the Board in no losses; later the ordinary fish merchants took over the marketing. Repayment of the loans for boats, fishing gear, and later motor engines has been most satisfactory. Incidental to fishing a sum of £107,650 was spent by the Board on piers, boat-slips, lights, and beacons (Irish Industrial Journal 29 June 1920).

It is not clear why exactly the Congested Districts Board was formed, for it very quickly ran out of projects other than restructuring the holdings of lands by the cottiers. Public assistance with regard to fishing and road-making had commenced around 1820 and had continued ever after often largely as work-making schemes. The result was that Ireland had more little roads than almost any other country in the world. In 1923 the Board was dissolved by the Free State Government and its functions transferred to the Land Commission.

In conjunction with the establishment of Congested Districts Board in 1890 the Irish Government and the Royal Dublin Society undertook a survey of the West Coast fisheries, each paying half the cost. The survey was

under the direction of the Rev. William Green, the Inspector of Irish Fisheries. A marine laboratory they established came under the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. As White remarks there were endless Reports of Royal Commissioners, the Board of Works, and the Inspectors of Fisheries on the subject of Irish fisheries (White, *The Royal Dublin Society*, 162-4).