

DOCUMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

1. E.G. Jenkinson to Lord Spencer, 18 April 1884; 'Secret'; AP, Add MS 77033.

I am very glad Your Excellency is coming over to England.

I am much disappointed about Col: Butler.¹ He has wasted all his time in Canada. He wrote last from Ottawa under date 30th March, and up to that time had not succeeded in finding any one for our work. He was then going to start for New York, and intended to sail on the 12th April in the "Alaska" – so that we may expect him back next week! New York is by far the most important place, and yet he gives only a few days to it. But it will be fairer to judge of him when we hear what he has to say.² Meanwhile I am not entirely dependent on him, for since his departure I have sent out an agent to New York who will, I hope, be of great use. Mr Hoare³ too is doing fairly well.

I have heard from Chicago that at the late Convention of the V.C. (United Brotherhood)⁴ the delegates received private instructions from the Executive (F.C.) to pick out & recommend to the F.C. men able to be sent off for active work at a moments notice – a determined effort is to be made before June to leave a mark which will redound to the credit of the present administration. The exact secret instructions issued to the Chief officers of the V.C. organization are "To diligently enquire without informing the parties or any one else the names & addresses of the men best fitted for private work of a confidential & dangerous character". So that there can be no doubt, the V.C. are going in for Dynamite work. If we have only one set of men to contend with the work would be much easier. But the number of sections each working independently of the other makes the work very difficult.

¹ William Francis Butler (1838–1910), assistant adjutant-general, Western district (1880–1884), ADC to Queen Victoria (1882–1892), KCB (1886), later commanded the Cape and Western districts.

² Butler travelled to North America on 24 January to develop an intelligence network for Jenkinson: Sir William Harcourt to Spencer, 19 January 1884; Jenkinson to Spencer, 22 April 1884; AP, Add MSS 76932, 77033.

³ William Robert Hoare, British Vice-Consul and Consul-General for New York (1883–1886, 1886–1891).

⁴ See **Document 8**.

I suppose Your Excellency read Parnell's recent speech at Drogheda?⁵ I thought it very good. But then you know I am a Home Ruler at heart!

Did you read "A plea for an Anglo-Roman Alliance" in the last *Fortnightly Review*?⁶ There is a great deal in it I think and the opinions expressed in the concluding para: tally exactly with my own. The suppression of outrage and the vigorous administration of the present exceptional laws are necessary now, but only as a means to an end. We cannot always go on fighting Dynamiters & Secret Societies, and keeping people down by force. No country can ever be really prosperous under such a system of Govt. It is forced upon us now by circumstances. But hand in hand with it should go on the work of "removing the causes of Irish disaffection, and of that demoralization which produces periodical disturbances of law and order". It is only the hope that this is being and will be done that reconciles me to the work on which I am at present engaged and which is, as Your Excellency knows, so distasteful to me.

I suppose Your Excellency has seen the 2nd number of the *Dynamite Monthly*?⁷

A kind of preliminary answer to the despatch of the 13th March came from Washington the other day, and was rather more favourable than I expected.⁸ But it must await the formal reply of the U. States Gov^t. I fear they won't do much, judging from the tone of the American Press.

2. E.G. Jenkinson to Lord Spencer, 14 September 1884;⁹ AP, Add MS 77034.

It is rather a long time since I wrote to Your Excellency, but I have not had very much to say about my own particular work

⁵ On being presented with the freedom of the city, Parnell lauded the recent election of a nationalist city council, stating that local self-government would be 'the cradle and precursor of national self-government': *The Times*, 16 April 1884, p. 7.

⁶ W. Maziere Brady, 'A plea for an Anglo-Roman alliance', *Fortnightly Review*, 41 (April 1884), pp. 453–462.

⁷ An American journal published during 1884–1885 by Patrick Rellihan, a former employee of Patrick Ford: see James Paul Rodchenko, *Patrick Ford and His Search for America: a case study of Irish-American journalism, 1870–1913* (New York, 1976), p. 43.

⁸ Possibly referring to diplomatic correspondence with the US Government concerning the movements of Fenians in Iowa and Minnesota and a rumoured invasion of Manitoba: TNA, FO 5/1929, fos 20–34, 158–179.

⁹ It seems likely that the letter was sent on 16 September 1884, as Jenkinson's letter to Spencer of 15 September states that a longer letter had been begun but not finished, and his letter of 17 September refers to 'the long letter of yesterday': AP, Add MS 77034.

and I have also been waiting for your return to Dublin from the South.¹⁰

At the present moment the only place from which danger is to be expected is Paris. The dynamiters there have of late been very active. They have received some money from America, and there can be no doubt that they are planning some outrage, and any day we may expect to hear of some explosion. I know the men in Paris who are engaged in this work, and they are all, as far as possible, under observation. But, I believe it to be next to impossible, under the present system of working to find out beforehand what their plans are. Two or three men at the most are in the secret and even they do not, till the last moment, make up their minds as to what is to be done. Dynamite is smuggled over to England, and then just before the outrage is to come off workers, who are probably unknown to each other, and who are not in the secrets of the leaders, are sent over. Unless the men are detected in the act, or recognized by some persons on the spot they escape and there is no possibility of obtaining any proof against them. They get off to France or America, and we cannot make a case for extradition. In fact the conditions are all in their favour and all against us. If men are determined to bring Dynamite into England, and to blow up buildings, merely for the sake of creating a scare as in the case of the last explosions, no precautions that we can take can stop them. We cannot possibly guard every point of attack, and we cannot be by any means sure of finding out their places before hand. Still we can do, and I believe have done, a great deal to prevent these outrages. I am quite sure that we should have had a great many more serious explosions and much more injury to property would have been done, and more lives lost, but for the great and continual precautions which have been taken to protect public buildings in England and Ireland, for the successes we have had against the different groups of Dynamiters since the beginning of 1883, and for the fear, and distrust of each other, arising out of our successes, and our system of working. They work no doubt much more quietly than they did before, and their arrangements are better but they are very distrustful of each other. No man feels sure that his most intimate friend is not a traitor, and they find it exceedingly difficult to get workers. On both sides men are hanging back. In America they are ready to supply the money, if workers can be found on this side, but the men over here though very ready to sympathize and assist are very loathe to act. I do not believe that the desire or even the intention is to destroy property on a large

¹⁰ During 5–11 September, Spencer toured counties Cork and Kerry, visiting Mallow, Killarney, Millstreet, Listowel, Castleisland, Ardfert, and Tralee: *The Times*, 6, 8, and 9 September 1884.

scale or to take life. The object is to create a scare: To keep the agitation going, and to let Englishmen feel that there is a strong and desperate party of Force behind the constitutional agitators. In England, and also I am told among very many of the most influential Fenians in America, there is a strong feeling against the Dynamite policy, so that the Dynamiters must act to a great extent under restraint. A very serious outrage causing much destruction to property and much loss of life might change the feeling against them to one of active hostility and they might have to retire from the field altogether.

I believe too that the Parliamentary Party are just now against this Dynamite work, and are, as far as they dare, using their influence against it. They feel that they are playing a winning game, and that any serious outrage would probably give them a check, and injure their cause. One of them, T.P. O'Connor in his recent paper "The Irish Question, Present and Prospective" published in the *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, when speaking of the necessity of union among themselves and of the danger of getting the English people against them does actually protest against the use of dynamite. He says "There is one thing, and one thing only that can unite all Englishmen against Ireland, and that is the destruction of life in some of these outrages by which London is occasionally shaken. These outrages bring terror to the Irish minority whose lives & property are at the mercy of the English majority around them: and to the Irish representatives appear one of the gravest obstacles to the early success of the national cause." Then he instances the check they received from the Phoenix Park murders, and says "Those who passed through that bitter trial may well have sinking of heart in their hours of most sanguine hope, lest once again a successful crime should change the eve of overwhelming victory to an hour of disastrous defeat."¹¹ But they dare not break with the Extremist party altogether, *Fini*, because they are dependent on the National League, and what is the same thing (the Fenian organization in America) for funds, & because they know that it is an advantage to have a party of force behind them. It supports them and gives them greater weight both in Parliament and in the Country, and they do not know that the day may not come when they may not want again to use it. They do not object to Dynamite and outrage on principle, but on grounds of expediency. If they thought that Dynamite would give them what they want they would not hesitate to encourage outrages and to induce organizers of outrages through the country as they did in 1881–82.

¹¹ T.P. O'Connor, 'The Irish question, present and prospective', *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, 9, no. 2 (July 1884).

What they all feel, both the men who do not want to go beyond constitutional agitation, and the Fenians who look forward some day to an appeal to arms, is that the movement cannot go on without money, and that without supplies which come to them from America both the National League organization and the Fenian organization would be broken up. The Parliamentary Party want money for payment of members and for election expenses, the Fenians want it for payment of organizers and officers and for the purchase of arms, while many, who have not a spark of patriotism about them, look to these organizations as a means of livelihoods and sooner than lose the money on which they have so long lived would abandon the principles they have so long professed and would join the Dynamite party.

I believe that at the present moment certainly in England, and very probably also in Ireland, the majority is against Dynamite outrages and assassinations. But very many of them feel that it is now "Dynamite or nothing". They are being urged to join the Clan-na-gael or Party of Force in America, and they feel that if they refuse to do so the Fenian organization will cease to exist, and their occupations and income will be gone. A short time ago the question was discussed at a meeting of prominent Fenians at Boulogne. They had been talking about the man who they believe gave the information which led to the arrest of J. Daly¹² and when John O'Connor¹³ the President told them what Daly's intentions were, how he meant to throw one of the bombs on to the Treasury Bench in the House of Commons,¹⁴ one of them, the delegate from Leeds, said boldly "Well if he did inform I think he was quite right, and I shall defend him". The majority was against the proposed union with Clan-na-gael, and even John O'Connor, who is their agent, seemed to be of the same mind for he said "I believe in my heart it is a mistake, but if we refuse to join how are we to carry on, how are we to live d—n them if they will try it let them."

In America they are obliged to listen to the Extreme Party and to send money and emissaries over for the commission of outrages, for there the chief contributors to the Emergency and other Funds¹⁵ are

¹² John Daly (1845–1916), representative for Connaught and Ulster on the Supreme Council of the IRB (1875), imprisoned for planning explosions at the House of Commons (1884–1896), Mayor of Limerick city (1899–1901).

¹³ John O'Connor (1850–1928), Nat. MP for Co. Tipperary (1885–1892), Secretary of the Supreme Council of the IRB, assisted Parnell in fashioning the New Departure.

¹⁴ See 'Case of John Daly: Fenian convicted of treason', 23 January 1885; CAB 37/14/5; Owen Magee, *The IRB: the Irish Republican Brotherhood from the Land League to Sinn Féin* (Dublin, 2005), pp. 119–121.

¹⁵ The *Irish World*, founded by Patrick Ford in New York (1870), established the Skirmishing Fund (1876) to undermine British rule in Ireland and the Emergency Fund (1880) to support the Land League.

men who believe in Dynamite, and who complain if “active work” is not carried on. At present the subscriptions are falling off because sufficient work has not been done, so in order to keep the game going and to bring fresh subscriptions the leaders will soon have to organize fresh outrages.

In New York there are three different Parties who have money at their disposal for Dynamite work. First Rossa and his council of 18 men.¹⁶ Second The Clan-na-gael. Third The Fords,¹⁷ with who is associated F. Byrne¹⁸ one of the Invincibles.

The first are not at present very dangerous for they have very little money, and cannot do much unless supplied with funds by the Fords or Clan-na-gael. Still they are very bitter against us and have the worst intentions. They have Agents in Paris and Rossa corresponds with Eugene Davis¹⁹ and Patrick Casey,²⁰ both of whom are leading Dynamiters in Paris. At the moment Rossa and his council are very angry with Patrick Ford and are putting great pressure upon him to hand over to them some of the Emergency Fund for “active work”. They accuse him of appropriating some of the money for the purpose of paying off a mortgage on the *Irish World*, and are preparing a pamphlet in which they mean to expose his dishonesty. Ford is very close with the money which he has received, and is no doubt using some, though very little, of it, in conjunction with F. Byrne, on the payment of Agents over on this side, and is naturally very distrustful, especially with men of the Rossa stamp. But very strong pressure is being put upon him by many of the most violent and influential men of the Extreme Party, and also by the subscribers who complain that he has not shown work for their money, and before very long he will be obliged either to carry out some explosions on a very large scale, or will have to hand over money to those who will work.

¹⁶ Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa (1831–1915), founder of the Phoenix Society (1858), business manager of *Irish People* (1863), imprisoned for treason felony (1865–1871), head centre (i.e. leader) of the Fenian Brotherhood (1877) and administrator of the Skirmishing Fund (1876–1880).

¹⁷ Patrick Ford (1837–1913), editor of *Irish World* (1870–1913) and fundraiser for the Fenians and the Land League; Austin Ford (1840–1933), assistant editor of *Irish World*, editor of *New York Freeman's Journal* (1888).

¹⁸ Frank Byrne (d. 1894), Secretary of the Land League of Great Britain (1879–1882), fled to the US after being implicated in the Phoenix Park murders.

¹⁹ Eugene Davis (1857–1897), contributor to *The Irishman* and *Shamrock*, settled in Paris and became acting editor for *United Ireland* (1881) and a member of the editorial staff of *The Nation* (1887): see Magee, *The IRB*, p. 92.

²⁰ Patrick Casey, journalist and Fenian exile in Paris, believed to have been involved with the British secret service: see Christy Campbell, *The Maharajah's Box: an imperial story of conspiracy, love and a guru's prophesy* (London, 2001).

Ford has to my knowledge already sent three agents over here, but these men have been discovered, and brought over by me, and two of them are now working for me.

Both Ford and the Clan-na-gael say that they mean to go to work in earnest after the Presidential Election (on Nov. 4) but that they do not intend to do anything big till then.

The proceedings at the Boston Convention (Aug 13/84) were entirely controlled by the V.C. or Clan-na-gael men.²¹ Their programme was carried out in its entirety. Everything was done in the interest of the V.C. or United Brotherhood of Fenians. The National League as now constituted is only a cloak for Fenianism. Patrick Egan,²² the newly elected President is a Fenian, and a Clan-na-gael man, and all the officers just elected are V.C. men. It was arranged beforehand that A. Sullivan²³ should retire from the Presidency, and Patk. Egan should be elected. There was much dissatisfaction with Sullivan. It was believed he used the organization for Political purposes, and they hoped that Egan, who has not been long in America, and is not much mixed up in politics would look more to the interests of the League, and would preserve the independence of the organization. At the convention all the influential & prominent Fenians were present, and among them were Frank Byrne, Tynan no. 1,²⁴ Capt. J. McCafferty²⁵ & Desmond²⁶ of San Francisco. At secret meetings the Dynamite Policy was freely discussed. The Executive's action in the past was approved, and it was determined to go on with the active work. But no definite plan of action was decided on. Money was to be freely given to Dynamite work, as need for it might arise. But the feeling generally was that it would be wisest to watch the course of events, and to let the F.C. (or the Executive) organize outrages at the most fitting time according to their own judgement. The Parliamentary Party have been so successful of late, and have made such good & unexpected progress that it was determined to give them a fair trial & a good

²¹ See **Document 8**.

²² Patrick Egan (1841–1919), managing director of North City Milling Company and member of the Supreme Council of the IRB, Treasurer of the Land League (1879–1881) and suspected of financing the Invincibles, co-founder and President of the Irish National League of America (1884–1886), US ambassador to Chile (1888).

²³ Alexander Sullivan (1847–1913), Chairman of Clan-na-Gael (1881–1885), President of the Irish National League of America (1883–1884), active in Chicago politics and founded the 'Triangle' to support the dynamite campaign in Great Britain.

²⁴ Patrick J.P. Tynan was (wrongly) identified at the trial of the Dublin Invincibles as 'No. 1' in the conspiracy: see his *The Irish National Invincibles and Their Times* (London, 1894).

²⁵ John McCafferty (b. 1838), organizer of the Fenian raid on Chester Castle and subsequently imprisoned (1867–1871), fled to the US following the Phoenix Park murders.

²⁶ Thomas Desmond (1838–1910), Sheriff of San Francisco (1880), an organizer of the Catalpa expedition to rescue Fenian prisoners from Fremantle, Western Australia (1876).

chance. A large sum of money was to be given to the Parliamentary Party, and they are to have the full support of the League, and should constitutional agitation fail, then more active measures will be taken, and more violent councils will prevail. No doubt Sexton & Redmond were both aware of all that was going on, and I have it on good authority that Redmond is on terms of intimacy with the leading V.C. men in America and is a sworn Fenian. Patrick Egan as President of the League will be in favour of helping his old friends and colleagues of the Parnell Party over on this side and will supply them with funds as far as he is able. But he is heart and soul in the Dynamite movement and we may be sure that the man who supplied nearly £5000 out of the Land League Fund for the organization of the Dublin Invincibles for the purpose of murdering Govt. officials in 1881–82, and who is the colleague of F. Byrne, P.J. Sheridan,²⁷ Capt. McCafferty and Tynan, will not hesitate to give money again for outrages & murder out of the National League & V.C. Funds which are now placed practically at his disposal. He is also too much in F. Byrne's power to break with him, or to refuse to give him money, and F. Byrne wants money and would do anything for money.

The above is, I believe, a fair picture of the present situation, as far as regards the Party of Force on this side and in America. I could of course go a great deal more into detail, but I doubt whether I should convey a clearer idea of affairs to Your Excellency's mind and I should probably write more than you would care to read.

Shortly the situation is this. There is a Parliamentary Party, seemingly at the present moment holding winning cards, supported by and in sympathy with all nationalists and Fenians of every shade of opinion, but for the moment against outrages and the use of Dynamite. And behind the Parliamentary Party a large and increasing body of men in favour of Dynamite and active work, which has considerable funds at its disposal, which is impatient of restraint, and whose members keep putting great pressure on the leaders to carry out outrages and explosions on a large scale.

There are some few Dynamite agents over here and in Paris, these are violent men who are in constant communication with New York, and who have some money at their disposal, and from these men we may any day expect a scare on a large scale, but nothing of real importance will be undertaken either by Patk. Ford or the Clana-gael immediately. They will watch the course of events and act accordingly.

²⁷ Patrick Joseph Sheridan (c.1844–1918), IRB county centre (i.e. leader) for Sligo and Land League organizer, implicated in the Phoenix Park murders and fled to the US to become an advocate of the dynamite campaign.

The work of watching the movements of these parties and of obtaining information about them occupies me incessantly and is the cause of great anxiety to me. I feel that so much depends on me, and yet that I am able to accomplish so little. It is almost a single handed fight between me and a set of ruffians who now work on such a secret system that it is next to impossible to find out who their agents are and what their plans are. I feel always as if I were a man beating against the air, and as if my work could not have any lasting or beneficial result. For what I am doing does not go to the root of the matter. I may succeed in preventing many outrages, and in deterring many of the plans of these men, and all sorts of difficulties have been placed in their way. But our successes only exasperate them and make them more bitter against England. We do not do anything to remove the bitter feeling which there is against us, on the contrary all that we do, unfortunately, intensifies that feeling. No one can deny that the hatred of England and the desire to be rid of us is much stronger than it was and goes on increasing in strength, and that the leaders in Parliament have now much more influence in Parliament & more power in the country than they perhaps ever had before. And is there to be no end to all this? Are we to go on without a well defined policy, trying to do that which is impossible, trying to reconcile the people of Ireland to our rule under our present system, and to govern on Constitutional lines, and on Liberal principles when in point of fact our administration is not really Constitutional, and when we cannot, or rather do not, carry out those principles to the logical conclusions?

I wish I could persuade you to take up seriously and with all the weight of your position the great and pressing question of the future Government of Ireland. In England the greatest ignorance about Ireland prevails. The facts of the case are not known, and consequently there is no such thing as intelligent comprehension of the Irish question, and no sound opinion as to what should be done. The faith in our administration has, I think, been shaken. There is a feeling that something is wrong, and that some remedy is required. And I believe there is a growing opinion in favour of Home Rule which before very long will have to be recognized. At the same time, if any bad outrage were to take place in England attended by great destruction of property & loss of life a very strong feeling would be aroused against the Irish, which would be followed by deplorable results, and which would postpone for a very long time the settlement of our Irish difficulties.

We are in my opinion passing through a very critical time. I need not give my reasons now for this, because Your Excellency knows better than I do what has lately taken place during the past four years, what the present situation is and what we have to look forward to in

the immediate future. But I mention it because I feel very strongly that it behoves all English statesmen and above all Your Excellency to ponder deeply over the present condition of things, and to consider earnestly whether it be not possible to take a new departure, and to initiate a policy which in the end may rid us of this troublesome Irish question, may raise Ireland out of her present demoralized and backward condition, and may bind the hearts of her people with bonds of affection and loyalty to England. Surely the matter is serious enough and of large enough dimensions? We cannot honestly say that Ireland is now well governed, that the people are contented, and that the country prospers under our Rule. We are not in touch with the people, the Castle is held up to ridicule and hatred, agriculture deteriorates, the population decreases, capital is not drawn into the country, recruits have almost ceased to enter our army,²⁸ and if ever bad times were to come for England, and we were hard pressed in a large European War, Ireland would be a weakness to us, instead as she should be a strength, and a thorn in our side.

The knowledge of all this imposes an enormous responsibility upon Your Excellency, there is no man in the world whose opinion about Ireland could carry with it a hundredth part of the weight of Your Excellency's opinion. No statesman has such knowledge of Ireland as Your Excellency. You have a great reputation for ability, honesty, independence of judgement, fearlessness, and freedom from narrow and dogmatic views, and I believe that it is in your power at the present time to lead England on the Irish question, to lay the foundation of a healthy and sound opinion in England, and so to pave the way for incalculable benefit for Ireland.

Will Your Excellency accept the obligations which this great responsibility imposes on you? Will you, putting aside all party considerations, proclaim to the world what your convictions are about the Government and the future of Ireland, and say exactly what the present state of affairs is, what the dangers before us are and what in your opinion should be done?

I am not an enthusiast, or a dreamer as Your Excellency knows. I am, I flatter myself, a practical man. I see that our present system is bad, and I believe that we require a system which could bring with it a continuity of policy, and a consequent settlement of all our difficulties and I urge you to take up the matter earnestly and seriously, not only for the sake of England and Ireland, but also for the sake of your own reputation as a statesman and as a Viceroy of Ireland.

²⁸ In 1880, 15% of British Army recruits came from Ireland; by 1882 the figure had fallen to 10%: Sir John Ross to Courtney Boyle, 29 November 1882: AP, Add MS 76914.

I have worked so much under you and have so much reason to admire your many great qualities that your reputation is dear to me, and I am jealous of it. When the History of the present time comes to be written what will be said of a Viceroy who mistook the times, who missed his opportunities, who was content with a policy of watching events from day to day, and did not attempt to solve the greatest and most difficult problem of the time?

For some time I believed, or rather hoped, that it might be possible to steer a middle course. To go on as we are, ruling firmly and justly, endeavouring to reconcile the people to our rule, and so gradually to improve the country, and to live down the present agitation and the present bad feeling against us. But now I believe this to be impossible. The feeling against us is too strong and too deep. It is kept alive by men and money from America and Australia, and above all it is hopeless and impossible because under our present system of Party Government, as applied to Ireland, we cannot have any continuity of policy. We cannot go on governing Ireland on one settled system and on the same line of policy through a course of years.

Therefore it seems to me that a middle course is out of the question. We must either make up our minds to establish a more despotic form of Government, and firmly to suppress all agitation, all outrages, all speeches and writing which could poison the minds of the people & demoralize them, or we must prepare ourselves for Home Rule. In present times and in the present state of public feeling I doubt very much whether the former system could be established and personally I should be against it because it would only perpetuate the feeling against us, and could not last for long. It would not settle the Irish question. English Liberals would not tolerate such a system long. I have for long leaned towards a form of Home Rule, and the more I know about Ireland, and the more I think the matter over, the more am I convinced that Home Rule is the true solution of the difficulty. Our policy at the present time is I say neither wise nor honest. It is not true to say that the land question has been finally settled, and that no more concessions will be made to the Parliamentary Party when we know that we have not arrived at the final settlement of the land question, and that further concessions are sure to be made on many points in Parliament. And if we do mean what we say, if no further concessions are to be made, it is not honest to the people to allow agitators and Members of Parliament to poison their minds, to keep them in an unsettled state, and to hold out hope to them which, as far as our intentions go, are never to be realized. Let us crush all such hopes with a strong hand, or let us give the people what they want. For my own part I would boldly avow the principle of Home Rule. I would not grant it at once, but

I should tell the Irish that they should have it, when events are ripe for it, and when they are fit for it. I would change the system of administration at the Castle. I would appoint a Viceroy (if possible one of the Queen's sons) who would not belong to a Party, and who would not therefore retire on the change of Gov^t in England. I would form an executive council on which Irishmen of all opinions would be represented, I would decentralize the finances, I would leave as much as possible the management of domestic affairs to the Viceroy and his council, and I would gradually give the people political education and fit them for self-government, by developing municipal, & local Government in the counties. At the same time I would insist strongly on the maintenance of the Union with England. Ireland must remain part of the English Empire. The local Parliament would deal with domestic and internal affairs, and where common action might be required in the common interest the Imperial Parliament would have control.

I should not fear the result of such a policy in the least. Notwithstanding the many, and, to some people's minds, the insuperable, objections in the way, I believe it would succeed. I believe it to be the true & only remedy for Fenianism and Dynamite outrages. In time the Irish will be quite able to manage their own affairs. And it is my firm opinion that if we do not admit this now we shall be forced to admit it some day, and that a not very distant one. As sure as I am writing this letter Home Rule in some form or other will come. Public opinion is all moving towards decentralization and towards local Gov^t everywhere. And surely it would be far wiser, even if we look at the matter from a purely English, a selfish point of view, to let the Irish have Home Rule as a gift from the wisdom, generosity and foresight of our statesmen, than to have it wrung from us by force, and under pressure in times of trouble and difficulty?

And now I have finished this long letter. There is much more I should like to say, there are many more details into which I should like to enter if it were only to show that I understand the many difficulties in the way and have thought over the question in all its bearings. But I should weary Your Excellency if I were to write more.

Whatever conclusions Your Excellency may come to; Whether you agree with me or not, I beg you, now that you have the opportunity, to write a long state paper reviewing the past, describing the present situation and fearlessly stating your opinions, and proposing a line of policy for the future. In doing so I am sure you will be rendering real & lasting service to England and Ireland, and will increase your own reputation as a statesman and as an administrator.

If in the course of this letter I have been too outspoken, or have said anything which is unpleasant I hope Your Excellency will forgive me.

3. Lord Spencer to E.G. Jenkinson, 18 September 1884; Vice Regal Lodge, Dublin; AP, Add MS 77034.

Your letter was not too long & every word of it interested me very much.²⁹

I shall not now answer it at length or finally. I have not time to do so thoroughly & it is a letter I should like to ponder even before answering; I will only write generally.

It is known that great revolutions and changes are followed by a period of crime. It has been specially so in Ireland, after Catholic Emancipation such an outburst took place, after the disestablishment of the Church the same thing occurred, & lately we have witnessed the same thing.

When a people have been dependent and submissive to the rule of others they cannot bear with prudence and moderation the severing of old conditions. They have their leaders and have none but agitators to guide them.

Just now it is the landlords who have lost their power; there has risen no class or body of moderate men to take their place, probably many landlords will gradually regain their influence but just now we are passing through the most dangerous period for a nation, a transition state. We must be patient, it is possible that extreme measures of Home Rule may become necessary, but just now it will be impossible to attempt it. The North would never agree to it, we should at once have civil war between Ulster and the South and West, nowhere then should we find the elements for Government. We shall need a development of Local Institutions before we could, if it were desirable, carry Home Rule.

We must not act prematurely. The duty of Government to keep up law and order is essential and must be done.

It may be my fate only to have this duty though I have taken part in the Land Legislation, which I trust is already telling in a healing sense.

I quite agree with you that simple repression is not sufficient. We must win the people over to our side, we could not go on with force alone.

We have begun with the Land Act, we go on with the Franchise, we must carry a large & wide measure of Local Govt.

We must however wait for this: next session will be occupied with Parliamentary Reform after that a comprehensive reform of Local Govt. which should educate Irishmen to govern will be necessary, I

²⁹ See **Document 2**.

would make it very wide. If that be carried and failed then we may require to go further.

To announce such a scheme before we have made it & see what we can propose would not be possible, nor do I think that a transition government which I understand you suggest would be practicable. I think it very probable that we shall eventually come to something very like Home Rule called for by the best Nationalists.

I do not know that you differ in your views really from what I write now.

My letter has run on to more length than I intended. You overrate my ability & power to settle this question, I may & must try to be of use in dealing with a large plan for self govt. & among my reasons for holding on to my post is that I may yet do this. Your friendliness towards me makes you exaggerate what I could do.

What you tell me in your last letter as to [the] trial of the Daly matter³⁰ is interesting.

4. E.G. Jenkinson to Lord Spencer, 24 September 1884; Secretary of State, Home Department; AP, Add MS 77034.

I am delighted to see from Your Excellency's letter³¹ in reply to my long one of the [1]4th September³² that your views are so much in accord with mine on the future Government of Ireland, but I am sorry that you are of opinion that nothing can be done at the present time, and that we must be content with a waiting policy.

I said particularly that Home Rule could not possibly be granted now. Under present circumstances it would be impracticable. The land question must first be finally settled and the present animosity between landlords & tenants and between the two parties must have time to subside. But I would boldly acknowledge the principle of Home Rule, and by my words and by my acts would show that Ireland should have self Government in time when her people are politically fitted for it. I think this should have been our policy at the end of 1883 when we had suppressed outrage, and were strong, and I said so at the time. We are not so strong now and I am afraid we are getting weaker and the weaker we become, and the more our administration is discredited, the more difficult it will be, morally speaking, to make concessions and to do that which we know to be right.

³⁰ Referring to the trial (in absentia) in Manchester of the informer who gave evidence against John Daly: see **Document 2** and Jenkinson to Spencer, 17 September 1884: AP, Add MS 77034.

³¹ See **Document 3**.

³² See **Document 2**.

Your Excellency says rightly that our aim should be to win the people over to our side, but is it possible to do this under our present system? Our administration, as I said before, is not in sympathy with them, we do little to benefit their material condition, we allow their leaders to vilify & abuse us, to discredit our administration in every possible way, and to hold up our Viceroy to ridicule and hatred, and we say publicly that the land question is finally settled, that no more concessions will be made, and that England will never grant Home Rule.

If we were to acknowledge the principle of Home Rule, and to show by our acts that we are working up to it we should have the majority of the people with us instead of against us, we should create disunion among the Nationalist leaders, and all practical and sensible ones among them would come over to our side and would help us to work out a practical solution of the Home Rule question.

I know we all learn from History that great revolutions and changes, as Your Excellency remarks, are often followed by a period of crime. But the remark hardly applies to the Ireland of 1881 & 82. Immediately preceding 1881 there had not been a great change of any kind. The feeling which had been in existence for centuries had been growing more intense, secret organization of the people had been going on, and crime broke out all over the country not as the result of a revolution but for the purpose of obtaining a great and radical change. The people did not break out into crime because suddenly they felt relief from an unbearable yolk, but because they were urged to commit outrages by their leaders, and because secret societies were organized for that purpose.

At the present moment the people are under control. Our strong measures have for the time frightened them and their leaders who have great influence and control over them discourage the commission of outrages. But the feelings which prompted them to commit outrages still exist, indeed I believe them to be stronger than ever, and it is quite possible, even probable, that unless we take wise & timely precautions against it we may have again to face a state of affairs such as existed in 1881–82.

I think there is a tendency to overrate the good effects of the Land Act. That it was a good measure & a just one I firmly believe, and that it has done good, & will do more good I do not doubt, but as it stands it will not satisfy the people, nor can I believe that under it the landlords (I am not speaking of individuals) will ever, as Your Excellency hopes, regain their influence. It hardly touches the poverty stricken tracts in the West, where the people are most demoralized and degraded, and where the worst outrages take place.

The measures which Your Excellency foreshadows, and hopes some day to have in hand are excellent, and are all I believe in the right direction, but when can we hope for their introduction, or

if the Conservatives come in to power will they be introduced at all? Meanwhile none of the Nationalists know what our intentions are, and to what end we are working. What they believe is that Your Excellency is a hard and cruel Viceroy, who will do all in his power to have the Prevention of Crime Act renewed and who has no sympathy with, or love for the people he governs. I know that it is not so, but they are taught to believe it. And I say that we are not only acting wrongly but also foolishly if we do not do something to remove this impression, and to change the feelings of the people towards us.

I believe that every day we wait it will be more difficult to act. But if we will act now it is not too late.

As a question of Party Policy too would it not be wise & prudent to bring over the Nationalists to our side? Look to the picture, too true I fear, which Mr. Trevelyan drew in his speech the other day of the future.³³ With the Irish Members on our side how strong we should be, and how much good we should be able to do in Ireland! We might then hope for some continuity in our Policy, a thing which is now impossible, and must continue to be so, unless some new Policy be adopted.

At any time we may be involved in great difficulties abroad. The horizon at the present moment is anything but clear, and in the event of such difficulties who will pay any attention to Ireland? What will become of all our good intentions? And at such a time what a trouble and danger Ireland may be to us!

It is these thoughts which lead me to urge Your Excellency to take some steps which may help to form in England a sound & intelligent opinion on the Irish question, may satisfy the Irish people, and may be the means of averting the great danger and difficulties which await us, I believe, in the future, if we now remain content with a timid and a waiting Policy.

My scheme for a “transition” Gov^t, as Your Excellency terms it may be faulty in detail, but it is I am sure right in principle. It would help to take Irish affairs beyond the range of Party strife, it would render Castle Rule popular, and it would draw to our side the greater part of the able and earnest Irishmen who now bitterly oppose us, and who do all in their power to make the Government of the Country impossible.

Think what an enormous benefit both to England and Ireland would be the solution of the troublesome Irish question, and to what gratitude the statesman who should solve it would be entitled!

³³ He addressed constituents in the Exchange Hall, Hawick, on 19 September, and spoke in support of the franchise bill on the following day: *The Times*, 20 September 1884, p. 10; 22 September 1884, p. 7.

5. Lord Spencer to E.G. Jenkinson, 28 September 1884; AP, Add MS 77034.

I told Dunsterville to tell you my plans, but it is well to repeat what they are.

[*Spencer planned to discuss the Crimes Act with the Divisional Magistrates on 8 October and hoped that Jenkinson would be able to attend. He was to visit Balmoral between 13 and 18 October before going on to London or Althorp and returning to Dublin on 23 October.*]

Touching your letter about the future of Ireland,³⁴ I should like to say this, that I am not sure whether you are referring to my speech at Gowan when you speak of the impolicy of saying that no more Land Reform is possible.³⁵ If you are you probably read the comments on it & not the words I spoke.

I carefully guarded myself against absolutely closing all legislation, but I felt & feel strongly that the Tenants should not be deluded as to the likelihood that large changes are to be offered in the occupation clauses of the Land Acts: some small changes may be necessary in these clauses, but great harm is done by the farmers being led to expect large further reductions of rent etc. They will not settle down to their occupations.

I spoke favourably of the importance of increasing proprietors.

If you differ from these views, or differ very substantially. [*sic*]

You allude to the miserable holdings in the West, which no land law legislation will touch.

The only chance for them is to increase facilities for communication, & encourage voluntary emigration or if it were practicable (which it isn't) migration.

Directly people see that their only chance is to move from these miserable holdings, they will use the power of sale given under the Land Act. This indeed is the only clause of the Act relating to land which really may help such districts.

They would not live comfortably if their holdings were given to them.

As to a transition government that will give no satisfaction, & I see no practical method of carrying out the idea.

³⁴ See **Document 4**.

³⁵ Delivered at Lord Clifden's residence in Co. Kilkenny on 2 September, it provoked a defiant response from T.P. O'Connor at the annual convention of the Irish National League of Great Britain: *The Times*, 3 September 1884, p. 6; 8 September 1884, p. 6. For the text of the speech, see AP, Add MS 77326.

I have never made any secret of my desire to develop Local Government. I have more than once spoken in this sense, and Mr. Gladstone, whose utterances are far more important, has repeatedly been attacked for saying too much in this direction.

To adopt the cant phrase 'Home Rule' on account of these views would be ridiculous.

What I said as to going further in case those changes which we hope to carry out are [in]sufficient, should certainly not be propounded prematurely.

There is no such false step in politics as to announce a general policy or move before you are sure of the details. You are accused of bribery and treachery if what you propose falls far short of what you have led men to expect.

As to the period of crime in 1880–81, it may be true that no great change immediately preceded it, but the Land Act of 1870 & the Church Act of 69 had not been very long passed, & one reason for the appearance of crime after a great change in the laws as there has been made in Ireland, [is] that men believe in "the Chapel Bell", "the Clerkenwell Explosion" argument.³⁶ They agree that concession is wrung from England by outrages.

Another lesson may be derived from recent Irish events, that the Land Act of 1870 was not thorough enough.

I think that I told you before that Lord Carlingford, then C. Fortescue,³⁷ who was Chief Sec. & chiefly formed the Act of 1870, & I, who was Ld Lt & had a good deal to say to the original Bill, each of us proposed a change in the Law; so that the tenants all over Ireland shd have the right to sell their tenant right, that rents shd be subject to a decision of a Land Court, we did not agree on these at the time & there is no doubt that Parliament would not have adopted them, but had those two changes been in the Bill of 1870 as they were in the Bill of 1881 the latter Bill would not I believe have been necessary.

I am more sanguine as to the effect of the Land Laws than you are, in many places present Landlords will never regain their influence, but those who do their duty, remain in their houses & take part in local public life will gain the influence which men of character & superior education must always exercise among the poorer & less educated class.

As to getting on terms with the National Leaders I shall not despair of that, & should indeed desire it.

³⁶ After an explosion killed twelve people during an attempt to free Fenian prisoners from Clerkenwell jail in December 1867, Gladstone stated at Oldham that the enormity of the crime should not prevent the English people asking themselves 'whether the condition of Ireland is such as it ought to be': *The Times*, 19 December 1867, p. 7.

³⁷ Chichester Parkinson-Fortescue (1823–1898), first Baron Carlingford (1874), Chief Secretary for Ireland (1865–1866, 1868–1871), Lord Privy Seal (1881–1885), Lord President of the Council (1883–1885).

But it will not be possible to act with men who have openly abetted organized crime, or do fight with unfair weapons.

You say in your first long letter that 5,000£ was given to “the Invincibles” from Land League funds. On what does that assertion rest?

As far as I recollect in the evidence of the Phoenix Park murders, it was shown that small sums like 10£ etc. were enough for these men. It was not clear where Tynan no.1 or others got their money from.

What part do you yourself think it can be proved that Parnell took in payments of this sort?

The evidence against Egan was very weak.

Certainly since he went to the U.S. he has openly spoken for & supported the party of violence, is that not so? But that is not conclusive as to his having taken the same part in Ireland.

It is serious that we have not advanced a peg towards tracing upward the Invincible organization, Tynan no.1 is the highest man mentioned, & perhaps Capt. McCafferty, but we do not know what people or organization they represented.

When you can we must have a good talk over this.

Have you thought again if my hope that without doing away with precautions I could do with less ostentatious protection, say fall back on 2 cavalry orderlies when I ride about, having escorts for night, or journey home for hunting.

6. E.G. Jenkinson to Lord Spencer, 2 October 1884; Secretary of State, Home Department; ‘Private’; AP, Add MS 77034.

I am much obliged to Your Excellency for your last long letter.³⁸ I hope to be over in Dublin early next week so I will not trouble you with another long letter. I shall only say that I am disappointed that Your Excellency holding as you do such liberal and enlightened views about Ireland should come to the conclusion that nothing can be done at present. However if Your Excellency can persuade the other members of the Cabinet to agree with your views a great step will have been gained. In his last letter to me Sir W. Harcourt writes

“I have always been a pessimist in Irish affairs. I believe the policy of conciliation has failed and will fail against the inveterate hatred of race. A separation is impossible. There remains therefore only one resource, and that is the strong arm and the time is fast coming when it must be used.”³⁹

³⁸ See **Document 5**.

³⁹ Harcourt voiced similar concerns to Spencer: Harcourt to Spencer, 21 September 1884: AP, Add MS 76933.

When I hear a statesman of his ability and position speak like that I almost despair of the future of Ireland. But I feel that he is in one sense speaking the truth. I do not believe that the policy of conciliation would fail, but if we do nothing now, if we let the time pass by, a policy of conciliation will be impossible, and then the “strong arm” policy will be forced upon us. The time for conciliation and making concessions and doing justice is when we are strong, not when we are weak and in difficulties. The present state of affairs is, I think, most unsatisfactory and we are only preparing in my opinion troubles and difficulties in the future both for England & Ireland. I do not ask that any violent change should be made. I would work gradually up to Home Rule, and having laid down the lines of my policy would work patiently & resolutely on those lines. But perhaps under our system in which Party with the majority is the first consideration, and in which great questions are not treated on their merits, but according to the political necessities of the hour, such a policy would be almost impossible. However Your Excellency can I am sure much more than any man living help to form, as I said in my first letter, a right and sound opinion about Irish affairs, and can do much to make the Irish believe that we look forward to a different and better system of Government in the future, and that we have other resources than that of the “strong arm”. And I wish I could persuade Your Excellency to take some steps in that direction.

7. George Fottrell,⁴⁰ ‘Memorandum in relation to Irish business in the Session of 1885’, 10 January 1885; AP, Add MS 77338.

The political creed of the English Liberal party and that held by the Irish party led by Mr. Parnell are both based on the same principle. This principle is that the true aim of enlightened Politicians should be to vest in the governed an effective control over the several Departments of Government.

In the absence of disturbing causes it may therefore be hoped that the tendency of political forces will be to attract towards each other the Irish popular party and the English Liberal party, and to bring about not alone a *modus vivendi* between them but even to establish an alliance honourable and useful to both.

Whether such an alliance is to be rendered likely, or whether it is to be indefinitely postponed will greatly depend upon the course of events in Parliament during the Session of 1885.

⁴⁰ Though unsigned, notes on the document state that the memorandum was ‘forwarded to H.J.G [ladstone] by Mr. C. Russell M.P.’, the author being identified as ‘an Irish official not connected with the Castle’: see **Journal** (23 January 1885).

This Parliament elected in 1880 has now nearly run its race. The judgements of men are affected as their vision is by perspective and in arriving at a conclusion as to their proper action in any great emergency peoples are influenced far more by those events which have just transpired than by those whose details have by time become blurred and indistinct.

It is probably no exaggeration to say that upon the next general election in Ireland the transactions of the Session of 1885 will exercise a more powerful influence than the events which have taken place in Parliament during the past 4 years.

The Irish party in Parliament is composed of men whose political opinions are anything but homogeneous. The same description would be true in reference to the English Liberal party comprising as it does men of views so moderate as to be almost conservative and men whose radicalism is of a very pronounced type, but there is a marked distinction between the English Liberal party and the Irish popular party which must be borne in mind by anyone who hopes to form a correct estimate of the effect of [*sic*] measures of any particular tendency are likely to have upon the next general election in Ireland.

The entire [*sic*] of the English Liberal party from the most moderate whig element to the most uncompromising of the radical adherents comprise[d] within its fold is animated by a thorough reliance upon the efficacy of constitutional methods for the redress of grievances, constitutional not only in the sense in which the word is used as opposed to methods of physical violence outside of Parliament but also as opposed to that form of pressure with which Parliament itself has during recent years become familiar. From the disbelief in the efficacy of any method other than constitutional as above described it follows that every measure of radical tendency in England is regarded as an absolute gain by advanced radical English members and at the best as a negation of loss by those members whose opinions tend towards whiggery as distinguished from radicalism.

But in judging of the Irish popular party any such view as to the effect produced by measures having a tendency to give to the people of Ireland an increased control over the departments of government would be erroneous. A measure extending such control would strengthen not the extreme but the moderate element in the Irish party for the extreme men hope for future great results in the direction of freedom by making present government in Ireland impossible while the moderate men seek to impress upon the people that in politics as in most other human affairs it is wise to seek for the whole in the future by securing part in the present.

In illustration of my meaning I can recall a conversation which took place in my presence about 18 months ago between a very advanced Irish Politician then a member of Parliament and a Gentleman also

an Irish member with popular sympathies but of views which would be styled moderate. They were both typical men of influence. The moderate man propounded to the other this query – “If you had now the nomination of the Irish Chief Secretary whom would you select?” To which query the reply of the nationalist was “Clifford Lloyd”⁴¹ and he explained his answer by saying that with his nominee as Chief Secretary Government would soon become impossible in Ireland and that the result must be the concession of absolute freedom in Ireland within a comparatively short time.

In relation to the next general election in Ireland it may be predicted with confidence that if the constituencies can be persuaded that Parliamentary action has produced little or no results in the direction of extending the control of the Irish people over their own affairs the chances of extreme in preference to moderate nationalists being returned in Ireland will be materially increased but that if the constituencies are satisfied substantial progress has been made towards the attainment of practical control over their local affairs moderate candidates will secure a large share of popular support. By this statement I do not mean that the majority of the members returned for Ireland will not be pledged “to sit at and vote with the Irish party led by Mr. Parnell” but anyone who recalls the opinion and modes of action of the different men who at present comprise the Irish party will see that the result of the party as a political force would be materially modified according as the majority of the new members would conform to one or other of the types which at present exist in the party.

But outside of those constituencies which will return members pledged to follow Mr. Parnell there are constituencies in Ireland numerous enough to be important in which the question as to whether the future member is to be a liberal or a tory will to a great extent depend upon whether between this time and the date of the general election such measures shall have been brought forward as will enable the Irish party in Parliament to cooperate in the main with the Government or whether the ministerial programme will be such as will drive Mr. Parnell’s followers into adopting in Parliament a course of bitter and angry hostility towards the Liberal party.

If the cooperation of Mr. Parnell’s party could be secured only on the terms of the Liberal Ministry abandoning any measure which they consider necessary for the peace of the country or proposing any measure which they believe likely to be prejudicial to the true interests of Ireland or of the Empire no honourable man could suggest the advisability of paying such a price even for a beneficial result.

⁴¹ Charles Dalton Clifford Lloyd (1844–1891), SRM for Western Division (1881–1883), Inspector-General of Reforms, Egypt (1883–1885), RM for Londonderry (1885), Governor of Mauritius (1885–1886); see his *Ireland Under the Land League* (Edinburgh and London, 1891).

The position of affairs is shortly this.

A Crimes Act the passage of which was fiercely contested by the Irish Parliamentary party will shortly expire, it was passed at a crisis where men were horrified at the deeds of blood which had shortly before been enacted. A renewal of the Act if such renewal be now sought for will take place under very different circumstances. The country so far as non-official people can judge is almost crimeless save as regards the ordinary offences which occur in every community. I have implicit confidence that the Irish Executive will not ask for a renewal of the Crimes Act or of any portion of it which they honestly believe they can dispense with consistently with their duty as guardians of the peace of the Country but if the Ministry seek to renew any portion of the Act the Irish people will regard the measure as one of repression and if it be unbalanced by any striking measure of Emancipation there is little doubt the opposition of the Irish party to the measure will be so angry so protracted and so determined as to lead to scenes in the House unfortunate for the Government discreditable to the House and which will effectively result in fixing the attention of the Irish people on the measure of repression as the main feature of the programme put forward for Ireland by the Liberal party in the last year of the expiring Parliament. Such a result would I submit be most unfortunate for moderate politicians in Ireland. It would launch the Country into a general election in a fever of indignation against the Liberal party; it would in some doubtful Northern seats secure the return of Conservatives instead of Liberals while in National Constituencies it would render impossible the return of any save very advanced men.

Now is there any reason why a repressive measure should be the main feature of the Liberal programme for Ireland in the Session of 1885. The Redistribution Bill will probably not occupy much time in passing through the House of Commons. Cannot time be found for some striking Bill of Emancipation for Ireland. I respectfully submit that even in point of time the introduction of such a Bill to counterbalance the repressive measure would probably effect a saving.

If a measure of Emancipation is to be introduced the next question is what is the measure which would best combine the elements of attractiveness to the Irish people; opportuneness for the purposes of good government in Ireland and accordance with the true principles of the Liberal party.

Without hesitation I say that the measure which in the greatest degree would combine the desiderata is one establishing elective County Boards in Ireland. No one who has not lived in Ireland can realise how completely the people of Ireland are shut out from any influence direct or indirect upon the management of the affairs of their Districts.

So long as the peasantry were mere serfs in most of the relations of life this exclusion from power in the control of local affairs was not felt as it is now for now the people thanks to the change in the land laws are no longer serfs. They are in many respects freemen and to freemen the denial of influence in the management of the public affairs of their district is a galling insult while to serfs it would have seemed a natural result of their condition. The sturdiness of the people of Ireland is of recent but it is also of very rapid growth and a prudent statesman who understands Ireland will seek without a moment's unnecessary delay to divert the rising flood of popular activity into numerous small channels in which being distributed it may run with safety and advantage instead of swelling into one great torrent which might only too soon menace the safety of much which wise men would wish to preserve or at least to change but slowly.

It may be said with truth that at present every man in Ireland is a politician. The Irish peasant discusses National or Imperial politics because he has no local politics to discuss. Give him a voice in determining the conduct of local affairs in his district and his interest will then be divided between them and the larger politics, and this division will make him less keen in throwing blame upon the central authority, less apt to believe that every misfortune which occurs in any part of Ireland is traceable to "the Government", in a word it will sober him by responsibility and experience of the difficulties of managing even small public affairs.

There is scarcely any reform which Ireland needs that will not be rendered less difficult by the establishment of a representative system of County Government as a preliminary. I am personally aware that the best and most clear headed men among the Irish Parliamentary party attach the greatest importance to the rapid establishment of such system, the writings and speeches of the leading Liberal statesmen shew that the desirability of such system is a prime article in the creed of the Liberal party and earnestly wishing as I do the success of liberal principles in Ireland I venture to express an anxious hope that the session of 1885 will see a County Government Bill for Ireland carried by a Liberal Ministry.

8. E.G. Jenkinson, 'Memorandum on the organization of the United Brotherhood, or Clan-na-Gael in the United States', 22 January 1885; 'Secret'; Printed for the use of the Cabinet, January 26, 1885; CAB 37/14/4.

Fenianism at the present time is represented by two powerful secret organizations, one in Great Britain and Ireland, called the I.R.B., or

Irish Republican Brotherhood, the other in North America, called the V.C., or United Brotherhood.

I do not purpose in this paper to give any detailed description of the organization of the I.R.B. But it is necessary to take some notice of it, because the two organizations have a common object, and are, as I shall hereafter show, closely connected.

The I.R.B. exists "for the purpose of overthrowing English power in Ireland, and of establishing an independent Irish Republic, and is governed by a Council entitled, "The Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Government of the Irish Republic."

For the purposes of organization and administration, the United Kingdom is divided into seven electoral divisions, namely, Leinster, Munster, Ulster, Connaught, North of England, South of England, and Scotland.

The S.C., or Supreme Council, is composed of eleven members, seven of whom are elected by the seven electoral divisions, as above, and four are honorary members elected by the seven. The Executive of the S.C. consists of the President, Secretary, and Treasurer; the decision of any two of whom shall be binding on all.

A Report which was drawn up about a year ago, and sent to America, shows that the number of members was 47,500, thus distributed –

Ireland –					
Ulster	..	..	..	10,000	
Munster	..	..	..	12,000	
Leinster	..	..	..	9,000	
Connaught	..	..	..	5,000	
				<hr/>	36,000
Great Britain –					
North of England	..	..	..	6,000	
South of England	..	..	..	2,500	
Scotland	..	..	..	3,000	
				<hr/>	11,500
				<hr/>	
Total	..	..	..		47,500 ⁴²

In the event of an armed rising, which might take place if England were engaged in a war with any European Power, these numbers would no doubt be largely increased.

⁴² This figure has been strongly disputed, see Magee, *The IRB*, p. 133.

The V.C., or United Brotherhood, known also very generally as the Clan-na-Gaels, is the corresponding organization to the I.R.B. in the United States. But though not numerically so strong as the latter, it is a much more powerful organization. It is an Oath-bound Secret Society, modelled originally upon the plan of the Masonic Fraternity, the members of which all pledge themselves by the most solemn oath to take up arms to establish an Irish Republic when called upon to do so by the chiefs of the organization.

The Society originated in 1869, on the disruption of the F.B. and other smaller Fenian organizations, and was first known as "the Knights of the Inner Circle." The first branch or club established was the "Napper Tandy," in New York, and this club still exists, and is known as D. No.1. The leading men then were P.K. Walsh, now of Cleveland, Ohio; Dr. Carroll,⁴³ now of Philadelphia, and for several years President of the Executive Body; Dr. Wallace, of New York; John D. Carroll, of Brooklyn; Michael Steady, of New York; Thomas F. Burke,⁴⁴ of New York; Alexander Morrison and William Clingen, of Chicago. But it was not till 1873 that much progress was made. In that year the first Convention was held in Providence, R.I., and since then there have been biennial Conventions.

The organization is not supposed to interfere in any way with politics, but in practice it does. The leaders are nearly all professional politicians; and during the recent Presidential election some of the most influential of them supported Mr. Blaine,⁴⁵ and used, it is said, not only the organization, but its finances for political purposes.

According to the Constitution of the V.C., printed in 1881, "Its object is the complete political independence of Ireland under a Republican form of government, with full civil and religious liberty guaranteed to all her inhabitants; and the only policy which it believes will attain this end is by force of arms."

The Executive Body, or, as it is always called, the F.C. of the V.C., used to consist of five members, but at the last Convention, held at Boston in August 1884, the number, for purposes of greater secrecy was reduced to three. One of these is the Treasurer, and there is besides a Secretary to the F.C., but he has neither voice nor vote.

There are altogether sixteen Districts distinguished by letters of the alphabet. Letters A to O represent the fifteen districts in the United

⁴³ William Carroll (1835–1926), Chairman of Clan-na-Gael (1875–1880); he established a Revolutionary Council within the IRB and opposed the 'New Departure'.

⁴⁴ Thomas Francis Bourke (b. 1840), leader of a column in Co. Tipperary during the Fenian rising and subsequently imprisoned (1867–1873), elected to Council of Fenians (1876).

⁴⁵ James Gillespie Blaine (1830–1893), Republican Senator for Maine (1876–1881), US Secretary of State (1881, 1889–1892), defeated at the presidential election of 1884 by Grover Cleveland.

States, and P represents Canada. The districts in the United States are thus divided: –

- A. New York City and City of Yonkers.
- B. New Jersey.
- C. Long Island and Staten Island.
- D. New York State (except as above) and Vermont.
- E. Connecticut and Rhode Island.
- F. Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire.
- G. Pennsylvania.
- H. Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida.
- I. Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.
- J. Ohio and Indiana.
- K. Illinois and Michigan.
- L. Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.
- M. Missouri, Kansas, Arizona, and New Mexico.
- N. Colorado, Nebraska, Dacotah, Wyoming, and Montana.
- O. California, Oregon, Utah, and Nevada.

Over each of these districts is an E.N., or District Member. The members of the F.C. and the E.N.'s are selected by the Convention biennially. The Secretary is also chosen at the same time, and he is the Secretary not only of the F.C., but also of the E.N.'s.

The districts are divided into Camps or D.'s; each having its own officers, Treasurer, and Trustees. The principal officers are the Senior Guardian (S.G.) and the Junior Guardian (J.G.). To these two officers are made known the names of the Treasurer and Secretary of the F.C., and the name of their E.N.; but the names of the other members of the F.C. are kept secret. The members of the organization in each D. know only their own officers. They do not know who the members of the F.C. or who the E.N.'s are. The management and inner working of the Society are a secret to 95 per cent of its members.

The initiation fees must not be less than 1 dollar, and the weekly dues not less than 10 cents. The Treasurer of each D. keeps in his possession a sum not exceeding 25 per cent. for contingent expenses, and the remainder is deposited in the bank in the name of the Trustees.

Numerical and Financial Term Reports are forwarded from each D. to the Secretary of the F.C. in October, February, and June, and the S.G. has to forward with his Report 10 per cent. of all the money received during the term for the purpose of organizing and other expenses. This is called the Percentage Fund.

On receipt of these Reports the Secretary of the F.C. has to compile and to furnish to each D. within thirty days after the expiration of each term detailed statements of membership, receipts, and expenditure of the Society, and a balance account of all funds remaining in the hands of the F.C. These statements are printed, and from them most valuable information as to the strength and financial condition of the V.C. can be obtained. But it is exceedingly difficult to get copies, for only one copy is sent to each D., and the S.G. is directly and personally responsible for the safety of all documents pertaining to his office.

From these statements it appears that the number of members in the fifteen districts of the United States was, at the end of 1884, about 20,000, and the balance of the Percentage Fund in the hands of the Treasurer of the F.C. amounted to 5,000 dollars. There are other funds besides this Percentage Fund, to which I shall allude later on.

Under the constitution of the V.C., provision is also made for the establishment of a Secret Military Department, and of a Revolutionary Directory, known by the letters R.D.

The Military Department is a special organization under the direct and supreme control of the F.C., who appoint the necessary officers, and make rules for their guidance. At the present moment there is no such department. It is only in time of war, that is, of a rising against England, that it would be organized.

The Revolutionary Directory consists of seven members. Three of these are named by the F.C. of the V.C. in America, and three by the S.C. of the I.R.B. in the United Kingdom. And these six men elect a seventh, who may reside either in Europe or America. These six men hold office for three years, one retiring annually, and a new man being elected in his place. The names of the R.D. are known only to members of the F.C. in America and of the S.C. in the United Kingdom.

The R.D. so constituted "has charge of all preparations for a struggle with England; it has power to declare war; to negotiate with foreign Powers hostile to England, and to assume all the powers, functions, and authority of a Provisional Government in Ireland when war has been declared." It may "make requisitions on the V.C. for any funds it may require for revolutionary purposes," and "it is recognized as the supreme authority in all Irish revolutionary matters, directing the policy of the whole movement, and must be obeyed so long as in the judgment of the F.C. and the S.C. its action is directed solely to the complete independence of Ireland."

The plans and operations of the R.D. must be first approved of by the F.C. and the S.C., and the purposes for which money, material, or men are required must be stated. But beyond that there is no control over the action of the R.D. Their operations are conducted with the utmost secrecy. When the general policy has been approved, the R.D.

select men for the particular work in hand, and manage all details. Money is supplied as they want it, and no questions are asked.

It is to this Revolutionary Directory that the planning and execution of all “active work” against the enemy is entrusted. According to the original principles of the organization such work meant a rising in arms, and the “removal” of informers and traitors; but during the last two years more violent opinions have prevailed, and the Extreme Party has obtained the upper hand. Any means are now considered justifiable. An armed insurrection is known to be hopeless unless England is engaged in a great foreign war. Dynamite outrages and even assassinations are justified on the ground that the Irish race is at war with England, and are therefore looked upon as acts of war. If life is lost no crime has been committed, as every war is unavoidably attended with loss of life.

[*Jenkinson lists the names of the members of the Executive Body, the Revolutionary Directory and other leading figures in the United Brotherhood, including James Reynolds,⁴⁶ J.J. Breslin,⁴⁷ William Mackey Lomasney,⁴⁸ P.H. Cronin,⁴⁹ Thomas Brennan⁵⁰ and T.V. Powderly.⁵¹*]

It is impossible to speak of the I.R.B. in the United Kingdom and of the V.C. in the United States without mentioning the National League. The two organizations – the secret and the open constitutional movement – are so closely connected, and so intimately blended and associated are they in their membership, that it is very difficult indeed to draw the line between the two.

Under the banner of the National League in America are ranged all the Irish Societies without distinction, so as to give the idea that all Irishmen are united in the National cause, and that the League is the dominant Society. The National League in America and in Great Britain and Ireland, the Parliamentary party under the leadership of

⁴⁶ James Reynolds, trustee of the Skirmishing Fund and chief planner of Catalpa expedition, Chairman of the Executive Committee of Clan-na-Gael (1880).

⁴⁷ John J. Breslin (c.1836–1888), accomplice in the escape of James Stephens from Richmond Prison, Dublin (1865) and in the Catalpa expedition, prominent member of Clan-na-Gael and business manager of the *Irish Nation*.

⁴⁸ William Francis Mackey Lomasney (1841–1884), participant in Fenian rising, subsequently conducted arms raids in Co. Cork and was imprisoned (1868–1871), killed attempting to destroy London Bridge in December 1884.

⁴⁹ Patrick Henry Cronin (d. 1889), an opponent of Alexander Sullivan’s ‘Triangle’; he was abducted and murdered in 1889; Terry Golway, *Irish Rebel: John Devoy and America’s fight for Ireland’s freedom* (New York, 1998), pp. 167–168.

⁵⁰ Thomas Brennan (1842–1915), Secretary to the Land League (1879–1882) and early promoter of ‘boycotting’, fled to the US following the Phoenix Park murders.

⁵¹ Terence V. Powderly (1849–1924), Mayor of Scranton, Pennsylvania (1878–1884), Grand Master of the Knights of Labour (1879–1893), Treasurer of Clan-na-Gael.

Mr. Parnell, the I.R.B. and the V.C., are all working together with one common object in view, and the policy *publicly* set forth is to aid the Parliamentary Party in its efforts to secure the independence of Ireland by constitutional means. But those who are working openly and on constitutional lines know perfectly well that they have secret organizations and a party of force at their backs. The mainspring of the whole movement is the V.C. This Society does all it can to assist the Constitutional Party, though it is careful not to do anything openly which would compromise any of its leaders. It is the most powerful among all the organizations, and makes its influence felt more than any other Society, because through its members, who are the most influential officers of the National League, it can control and direct the policy of the Nationalists and of the Constitutional Party in the United Kingdom, and because it can supply or withhold funds, without which the Parliamentary Party would be nearly powerless, and the I.R.B. would cease to exist.

In April 1883 a Convention, which was attended by Delegates from all parts of the United States was held in Philadelphia for the purpose of abolishing the Land League,⁵² which had played so prominent a part in the agitation in Ireland of 1880, 1881, and 1882, and of establishing the National League. This League was to be a great public agency, under cloak of which the V.C. could carry out its secret operations. At the Convention most of the Delegates were V.C. men. The programme put forward by the V.C. was adopted, and Alexander Sullivan, the President of the F.C., was elected President of the new National League; and nearly all the members of the Executive and the principle officers were selected from members of the V.C.

At the same time, secret meetings under cover of the Convention were held. The dynamite policy was discussed, and finally adopted by a large majority; and it was decided that funds should be devoted for the purpose of carrying on "active work." The approval of the F.C. was also given to all that the Revolutionary Directory had done, or might do in the future.

At the commencement of May a Secret Circular, dated 12th May (a copy of which is now before me), was issued by the F.C. of the V.C. to all the D.'s in the United States, in which all were urged to join the National League, and assurances were given that "active work" was being carried on.

⁵² The League's fourth and largest annual convention in America. The body was dissolved on 25 April 1883 and superseded by the National League: see Clyde E. Reeves, 'Philadelphia's maternal link with the Land League Fathers', *Pennsylvania Speech Annual*, 22 (September 1965).

In the Circular the F.C. say: "We urge immediate action to secure universal assent to the action of the Philadelphia Convention. Set every Society to which you belong to affiliate with the new public organization . . .⁵³ Any two brothers not officers of the D. can be designated as President and Secretary, and those brothers can conduct any correspondence that may be necessary with the officers of the public organization. Publicly we must not be identified with the organization, and the names of the real D. officials must not be sent. . . . We give you brothers the assurance of the R.D. that the most important measures are being organized and put in progress, and we believe their work will be both significant and effective." At the end of this Circular a call of money was made from the V.C., by request of the R.D.

At the same time money was furnished for the defence of Dr. Gallagher,⁵⁴ a leading member of the V.C., who had been with others arrested in London with explosives in his possession.

In September 1883 another Secret Circular was issued by the V.C., from which the following is an extract: "Nor are we idle. Other movements are being pushed, both in instructing men and securing war material. Even our disappointments are not regarded by us as failures. We believe that while agitation and public organization are necessary, these would not have been effective in securing conversions from our enemy had not the courage, the capacity, and the great scientific skill of the secret organization brought them to the very doors of the oppressor. . . . Though the efforts of your Executive have not been fully realized, or rather were marred by the informers' treason, yet those brothers (with one solitary exception) entrusted with the work did nobly, and were at the very threshold of deeds that would have startled the world, and put the fear of the organization in the hearts of the enemy. These brothers have with heroic faith carried your secrets to the dungeon under a fate and torture worse than death. They did nobly. It was by no fault of theirs they failed. They have settled the legal status of a new mode of warfare. By a solemn decision of the highest authority in England, presided over by the Chief Justice, we have compelled her to recognize a new epoch in the art of war. . . . We cannot see our way for an armed insurrection in Ireland this side of some great foreign war with England. But in the meantime, we shall carry on an incessant and perpetual warfare with the Power of

⁵³ Ellipsis in original (both here and in all quotations given in this document).

⁵⁴ Thomas Gallagher (1851–1925), director of training for the dynamite campaign, arrested on a mission in England in April 1883 and sentenced to life imprisonment, released in 1896 and died in a New York asylum.

England in public and in secret. . . . You will note with pleasure that the informer is foredoomed, and that no man can betray and live.”

The meaning of the language here used is unmistakable, and the Circular, without disguise, acknowledges the services of Dr. Gallagher and his colleagues, who, there can be no question, worked under the direction of the R.D., and were supplied with funds by the F.C.

In August 1884 another large Convention was held in Boston for the purpose of reviewing the work of the past year, and of electing officers of the National League for the coming year. This Convention was attended by Mr. Sexton, M.P., and Mr. W. Redmond, M.P., and the proceedings were a mere repetition of what took place in April 1883 at Philadelphia.⁵⁵ The V.C. men had it all their own way. Alexander Sullivan, who had become unpopular because he had interfered in politics, and had used both the organization of the National League and of the V.C. for electioneering purposes, was forced to resign the Presidency, and Patrick Egan, an active member of the V.C., and formerly Treasurer of the Irish Land League, a close ally of the Irish Parliamentary Party, was elected President of the National League.

At the same time, at a Secret Convention, the policy of the past and of the future was considered. Politics were altogether thrown out. Dynamite business was discussed and settled. And a new F.C., consisting this time of three instead of five members, was elected.

Immediately after this Convention in September 1884 the new F.C. issued its first Circular. After alluding to some amendments in the Constitution of the Society, and to the fact that the “active” policy adopted by the “late F.C. had been deliberately and unanimously adopted by the Convention as the rule of future operations,” the Circular says: “To enter into a detailed review of the operations of the last three years as detailed before your Convention would be to take chances of disclosing the methods of future operations to the enemy, and every one will see the great weakness of disclosing the future by revealing the past. We are aware that the false claims of others are well calculated to make our brothers restive when they know the means of denying such claims exist in their possession, but to deny in each case would be to affirm, which we cannot do and succeed in the work before us. Besides, these false claims afford us the means of diverting the attention of the enemy from our work, and in that the false claims render us most valuable assistance.”

The “false claims” refer of course to the claims set up by Rossa, Ford, and other independent men to the authorship of the dynamite outrages in England.

⁵⁵ See *The Times*, 8 September 1884, p. 6.

The Circular then directs attention to the necessity for extending and strengthening the organization, to the great importance of silence and secrecy, and adds: "As the present and future policy of the organization will, from prudential reasons, prevent a publication or allusion of any kind to the work on hand, the F.C. will publish but few, if any, Circulars alluding to the work in course of progress. For the progress of the work we refer you to the statements of the enemy through the press. In conclusion, we instruct you peremptorily henceforth not to talk outside your halls of the business transacted there, or of anything concerning the organization. Men talk in the streets, on their way home, in saloons, and elsewhere about our business. Some men think that loyalty to the organization compels them to talk about and defend it in the presence of outsiders and of expelled members. This is wrong. The organization needs no defence. What it does need is silence. This *must* be secured. It must be remembered that we are all sworn not only to obey the Constitution, but also to obey orders from the Executive. Those who disobey this order must be expelled. We ask that each and all make the next two years a period of the most active work in gathering the resources and extending the numbers and power of the organization. The light of a great hope is breaking through the cloud of centuries. Work and organize with all the genius of the race."

This Circular, like all others emanating from the F.C., is signed by the President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

In addition to the Percentage Fund, which has already been alluded to, and which is required for the ordinary expenses of the organization, there have been since the spring of 1883 two other funds, one called the "Special" Fund, and the other supplied from the money paid in by the D.'s in response to the call in the Circular of the 12th May, 1883. These two funds have been devoted to the work carried on under the direction of the R.D., and to contributions to the Treasury of the I.R.B. in Great Britain and Ireland.

From information received, and from printed statements before me, it is calculated that, exclusive of other balances in hand, and of the remains of the "Skirmishing Fund"⁵⁶ (the Trustees of which are under the control of the V.C.), amounting to 37,000 dollars, the money received for these two funds up to October 1884 was about 89,000 dollars, and that the balance in hand at the close of 1884 was about 26,000 dollars. The call for this large sum was, it should be remembered, made at the request of the R.D. and was therefore intended to be used entirely for revolutionary purposes.

⁵⁶ Established at the suggestion of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa in 1875, it was used by Clan-na-Gael to finance the 'New Departure' and the dynamite campaign in Great Britain.

The amount sent over to the Executive of the I.R.B. for work in Great Britain and Ireland during 1884 was about 40,000 dollars.

We thus see clearly what an important position is held by the V.C. in the movement against England, and how, having the command of the finances, it is able to support and control the sister organization in the United Kingdom.

I firmly believe that if it were possible to take the opinions of the members of the I.R.B. in Great Britain and Ireland, it would be found that very few of them are in favour of explosions and outrages. They know too well that such work can in the end only injure their cause, and must do great harm to the Irish working population in Great Britain. But the funds of the I.R.B. are low. There is hardly money enough to pay the ordinary working expenses of the organization. If the Society is to be kept alive, if work is to be done, money must come from the richer organization in America; and during the past two years the leaders of the I.R.B. have been compelled to give their approval to the policy adopted by the V.C. in America, because, had they not done so, the supplies, as was threatened, would have been stopped.

Thus we see the great power and importance of the Secret Society in the United States, whose organization and policy I have in this paper attempted to describe. This Society and the I.R.B. in the United Kingdom are separate in their organization, and in the management of their finances; but the latter, being poor, is dependent on the former to carry on any active operations, and in pursuing their revolutionary projects the two act as one body through the Revolutionary Directory, which is a secret Committee, formed of men chosen from both Societies by the F.C. of the V.C. and the S.C. of the I.R.B.

Our efforts, then, in this country, against the operations of the I.R.B., cannot be really effective unless measures are taken to check the influence and to thwart the designs of the V.C. in the United States of America.

I have very strong reasons for believing that the explosions at Scotland Yard in May and at London Bridge in December 1884⁵⁷ were the work of the Revolutionary Directory, and that funds were in both cases supplied by the V.C.

The V.C. disapprove of independent work by Societies, or individuals who are not members of it. Their object is to unite all Irishmen under one Executive, and to get into their own hands the direction of all operations against the common enemy, England. And they therefore give no support to men like Patrick Ford and O'Donovan Rossa, who keep open subscription lists in their own

⁵⁷ The explosions occurred on 30 May and 13 December 1884.

papers, and have secret agents of their own working for them in the United Kingdom.

Since I wrote the above the explosions in the Tower of London and the Houses of Parliament have occurred. These, I am confident, were the work of the Clan-na-Gaels, for at the end of December 1884 I received reliable information that this Society intended very shortly to attempt an explosion in the House of Commons, and I wrote to the Chief Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police warning him, and asking him to take precautionary measures.⁵⁸

9. Sir Robert Hamilton to Lord Spencer, 26 April 1885; Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle; AP, Add MS 77060.

The estimation in the popular mind of the attitude of the Liberal Government to Ireland will depend at the next elections more upon the policy announced now than upon what has actually been done legislatively or administratively in the last few years, whether that be viewed in a favourable or an unfavourable light.

The extreme Parliamentary party seek to make Government in Ireland impossible. Disturbance is the only atmosphere in which they thrive. I therefore not only regard with extreme distrust their bona fides in putting forward any propositions which do not involve absolute and complete separation from England, but I feel sure that they will oppose any changes which they regard as calculated to render the bulk of the people in Ireland more contented. I do not look forward therefore, by any measures we may propose with this object, that we shall be able to conciliate the extreme members of the party, and I am aware that the Parliamentary difficulties to be faced from their opposition and obstruction will be extremely formidable. Formidable however as these may be they ought not for a moment to be allowed to weigh against the real interests of Ireland, or to lead to any line being taken with the view of lessening them which would involve the risk of a state of serious disturbance arising in the Country and its progress towards contentment & prosperity being retarded.

But altho' you can't conciliate the extremists there is a moderate section in the country who have hitherto gone with them, and this section can, and I believe by the introduction of judicious measures will, be formed into a party, who, altho' perhaps going somewhat in

⁵⁸ See Jenkinson to James Monro, 26 December 1884: MEPO 3/3070; Jenkinson to Spencer, 25 and 26 January 1885: AP, Add MS 77035.

advance, will work with and not against those who are striving for the better Government of the Country. These are the people who will be influenced by the policy now to be adopted & announced for Ireland, and their state of feeling will be reflected to some extent in the new Parliamentary representatives who tho' they will be followers of Mr. Parnell will exercise a moderating influence on the councils of the party.

Now the first duty of any Government is to maintain order & enforce obedience to the law, while removing all real grievances to which the people are subject.

To enforce the law we must have as perfect a police organization as possible, and the experience of the last few years shows that it is absolutely necessary that we should be able to maintain the decentralization effected by the creation of Divisional Magistrates. The police bill therefore legalizing the position of these magistrates must without fail be passed.⁵⁹

We must also have power to secure a fair trial by change of venue & we must have power to deal with intimidation. Certain other powers now conferred by the Prevention of Crimes Act would be useful but are not in my view indispensable.

Then as regards grievances, that connected with the land, which in an agricultural country like Ireland touches the great bulk of the people, has been dealt with, and now only requires to be completed by a workable scheme of purchase, but this I do not regard as so pressing as to be absolutely necessary at the present moment. It is only the landlords who are pressing for it.

The real existing grievance is that there is no local government.

Let representative County Boards be at once established in Ireland elected jointly by occupiers and owners, and let it be boldly announced that this is only the commencement and necessary foundation of local government which will be carried further if the powers conferred are properly used. This will be accepted by the moderate people as an earnest of confidence in them. It will afford employment for them and give them some idea of responsibility in matters of government.

Then abolish the Vice Royalty & have a Royal residence in Ireland. The people will understand by this that they are no longer to be governed by the will of one man, but that they are to [be]

⁵⁹ Divisional magistrates were temporarily appointed in December 1881 to supervise policing in the twelve most disturbed counties of Ireland. Their powers were later limited as the scheme was extended to the whole country. This was the third legislative attempt to make the positions permanent ones: see Stephen Ball, 'Policing the Land War: official responses to political protest and agrarian crime in Ireland, 1879-91' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 2000), pp. 161-164, 300-304.

constitutionally governed like other subjects of the Queen in England & Scotland. The recent visit of the Prince of Wales has prepared the Country for this change. They accept their position as subjects of the Crown, while they strongly object to be [*sic*] governed by a minister whom they regard as the head of the Castle. The Extreme party are wise enough to see that such a change will not suit their views and they will oppose it now altho' they have often advocated it before.

Lastly let an experiment be tried of entrusting Primary Education in Ireland to an Irish representative body elected jointly by the managers of schools & the guardians of the poor as representing the educational & financial interests respectively.⁶⁰ This would be an important experiment of local control over a large branch of administration & ample justification exists for selecting this branch in the fact that Imperial aid to Education has reached its utmost limits, & the necessary further support for its maintenance and development must be raised locally, & should be locally controlled.

Some advocate the granting at once of what for the want of a better word may be called Home Rule, but this I think would be disastrous. If it were done, the whole energy of the local Parliament would be directed to securing separation from England & the establishment of the machinery of local government would be neglected. A state of chaos would supervene, and England which would never tolerate the existence of a Hayti on her borders, would be obliged to withdraw the concession, and establish a reign of repression under which the progress of the country towards contentment and prosperity would be indefinitely retarded.

Another suggestion is that an elected body should manage all the Administrative Depts. in the Country, leaving legislation with the Imperial Parliament. This course would lead to the gravest difficulties. Such a body, with some show of reason, would be held to be representative of the whole country for all purposes and entitled to express their opinion on every subject. This would be an intense embarrassment to the Government of the day. They would never confine themselves to their legitimate functions which it would be very difficult to define, and the conflict between them and the Treasury, as Guardians of the Imperial Exchequer would from a political point of view intensify the difficulties of Irish Administration.

This in my view would be a too hazardous experiment to make. The experiment I propose as regards Education gets rid of both classes of difficulties, (1) the body not being elected by the ratepayers generally could not assume to represent with authority the views of the people on other subjects than Education, and (2) by allowing no discretion to

⁶⁰ See Hamilton to Spencer, 19 April 1885: AP, Add MS 77060.

this body as to the amount of the grant from the Imperial Exchequer, the dangerous conflict which I foresee in the other case with the Treasury would be avoided.

10. George Fottrell to Joseph Chamberlain, 3 July 1885; Geo. D. Fottrell & Sons, 46 Fleet St., Dublin; JCP, JC8/4/1/2.

You must excuse me for having so long delayed sending you the promised notes on the educational system and the municipal system in Ireland.⁶¹

It was only such time as I could snatch from my professional duties that I could [*illegible*] to making the necessary enquiries, & hence the delay.

I now send you,

1. Notes on municipal government in Ireland.
2. Notes on primary education in Ireland.
3. Rules of the Board of National Education.
4. Report just issued by the Board for the year 1884.
5. Form of application used by the Board.

I trust that these documents may give you some if not all of the information which you desire.

If you still require further information please let me know & I shall try to provide it for you.

I see that you have resolved not to visit Glasgow at the end of this month.

Have you definitely resolved when you will come to Ireland. I expect to leave Dublin on the 12th August for a month's vacation & I should like to be at home when you come.

United Ireland attacks the Local Government Scheme as quite incomplete.⁶² I am glad of this. Less than your scheme would be of little use and I have learned enough of politics to know that a scheme has no chance of passing into law unless it be considered a middle term. If therefore the national press supported your scheme it would never get through, but with judicious apathy or even condemnation by them it may have a chance.

⁶¹ See JCP, JC8/4/1/5 and JC8/4/1/6.

⁶² See *United Ireland*, 27 June and 4 July 1885; Frank Callanan, *T.M. Healy* (Cork, 1996), pp. 119–120.

11. Sir Robert Hamilton to Lord Carnarvon, 1 August 1885; 'Very secret'; CP/TNA, PRO 30/6/67 (1).

I have just returned from breakfasting at the Shelbourne with Sir Charles Gavan Duffy and while the conversation is fresh in my mind I will endeavour to put it upon paper as exactly as I can. Mr. Fottrell of whom I have spoken to Your Excellency as enjoying the confidence of the best of the national party was present.⁶³

I should premise that the conversation was strictly confidential, and that Sir Charles more than once said that the identification of his own or of any other name with any particular scheme would be most undesirable and that the only chance of success was that the Govt. should enunciate a scheme after having perfected it in all its detail. That portions of such a scheme however defensible as part of a whole, would be carped at and perhaps discredited if they came out separately as the suggestions of any individual. He told me he had never opened his mind on the subject to any one to the extent he had confided his views this morning to me.

First, he put on one side altogether any scheme of mere County Government, while quite admitting the necessity for establishing this upon a sound basis, on the two grounds, (1) that it would go no way whatever in satisfying national aspirations, and (2) that it would bring to the front quite second rate and inferior men.

He said nothing short of an Irish Parliament would set at rest the Irish Question, & he told me a curious fact that Michael Davitt & John O'Leary⁶⁴ both stated solemnly to him that if this were conceded they would bind themselves to accept it, and in no way to use it for going further in the direction of separation from England.

With the view of securing the rights of the minority and of property he thinks the Irish Parliament should be elected on the basis of minority representation. Taking for example a Parliament of 100 members he thinks one third might be taken to represent the property & monied & Protestant population. He further assumes that there would be a contingent of moderate representatives which together would make a pretty close balance of parties, and prevent any wild or extreme measure being brought forward.

Then he would have a second chamber, a Senate composed of say 60 members, whose names should in the first instance be stated in the

⁶³ See **Journal (30 July, 5 August 1885)**.

⁶⁴ John O'Leary (1830–1907), Young Irelander and Fenian, President of the Supreme Council of the IRB (1874–1885), opponent of parliamentary nationalism, returned to Ireland from exile in Paris in 1885 and influenced a generation of literary nationalists; see Marcus Bourke, *John O'Leary: a study in Irish separatism* (Dublin, 1967).

bill, to be re-elected afterwards by Provinces say every 6 years from certain specified classes, and by the rate or tax payers with certain property qualifications.

He would give to the Irish Parliament the fullest powers of taxation and, after a settlement of accounts with England, he would leave the Irish Parliament free to raise its revenues as it thought best. He would not allow any local forces to be raised in Ireland, & such troops as England might station in Ireland should be paid for out of the Irish Exchequer.

He would withdraw altogether the Irish representatives from the House of Commons, but he looks forward to a grand union of all dependencies of the Empire in an Imperial Parliament in London in which Ireland should be represented, and if this were done he then believes that Ireland in common with other outlying parts of the Empire would readily contribute to the expense of foreign wars approved by this Central Parliament. In the absence of such a federal assembly he thinks Ireland should not be called upon to pay any part of the cost of foreign wars.

He strongly advises that Mr. Parnell who represents so largely the opinion of Ireland on these matters should be taken into council by the Government, and that a Committee or Commission of six or seven members should be appointed of whom about half should be men with knowledge of official administration, & the remainder the most distinguished members of the national party. This Committee should draw up a constitution for Ireland which should be submitted to the Government. The Government should then determine how far they are prepared to take action in the matter, and should announce to the leaders of the national party what they are prepared to do, and carry, if they should come into power with a majority after the general election; or to announce it as their policy for the future if they should be in a minority.

He would then retain the office of Lord Lieutenant; but would make it like the office of Governor General of India a time appointment.

I did not feel at liberty to suggest the idea of a council partly nominated and partly elected, but I feel pretty sure that this would not have found acceptance with him.

I pointed out the great objection that would be raised in England to English manufactured goods being subjected to taxes on importation into Ireland, but he said he thought this would be done only to a limited extent, and not directly, but [by] means of bounties given out of the Irish Exchequer to foster individual industries in Ireland. I cannot say that my free trade views favour this idea but I quite think Ireland will never be satisfied that she has got power over her own affairs unless she possesses the power to raise her own revenue as she thinks best.

It is of course conceivable that the great Imperial Parliament of the future might deal with such matters for the Empire as a whole, in which case Ireland would fall in with the rest.

He was very strong about keeping the gentry & men of culture in the Country, and lamented the present position of the Irish gentleman with no possibility before him of taking any part in the Govt. of his Country. The establishment of a Parliament would he felt sure bring the best of these men to the front again, while a measure restricted to County Govt. would probably drive them out of the Country.

I think I have faithfully reported what he said as regards what he considers alone will satisfy the Country & put an end to agitation. He spoke in the highest terms of Your Excellency, and said it augured well for the cause of Ireland that you should have accepted the post of Lord Lieutenant, and for himself he said that having realized a competence for his declining years and while he would not take the most lucrative appointment that might be offered to him, he would gladly serve in an Irish Parliament, even at the certain cost of shortening the few remaining years of life that he may hope to live.

12. E.G. Jenkinson to Sir Richard Cross, 2 September 1885; ‘Private’; CP/TNA, PRO 30/6/62 (21).

I received your note in reply to mine of Friday last on my return from Dublin yesterday. Mr. Monro⁶⁵ will return from leave on the 4th and I propose to go away on Saturday or Monday, but as I said before I shall go on with my work just the same. Being away from town will not make any difference whatever, and really things are so quiet just now, that I could not choose a better time for going away.

Everything about the Irish Police administration has now been settled. Colonel Bruce⁶⁶ is to retire immediately. Mr. Reed has been appointed his successor and all the arrangements proposed by me in the memorandum which you read will be carried out at once. When I was over in Dublin the manner in which my particular branch of the work should be carried on was discussed, and I drew up a memorandum on the subject to which Mr. Reed agreed, and which was approved of by Lord Carnarvon.⁶⁷ Practically there is no real difference. The Irish work of the “Special” Department will come to

⁶⁵ James Monro (1838–1920), Assistant Commissioner and head of CID (1884–1888), Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police (1888–1890).

⁶⁶ Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Bruce (1825–1899), Chief Constable of Lancashire (1868–1877), Deputy and Inspector-General of the RIC (1877–1882, 1882–1885).

⁶⁷ For details of these arrangements, see Jenkinson to Carnarvon, 18 September 1885; CP/TNA, PRO 30/6/62 (23); Hamilton to Secretary of Treasury, 25 September 1885; NAI, Government Letter Books, CSO LB 283.

me as usual, but my minutes will in future be addressed to the Inspector General instead of to the Divisional Magistrates.⁶⁸ The arrangement is I think a very good one, and will work well.

As regards myself nothing was settled. Indeed Lord Carnarvon told me that it was not in his power to settle anything, but said he was writing to you on the subject, and desired me to write also on my return to London. He promised me however that until something is definitely settled here, I should retain my appointment as Assistant Under Secretary, and even if there be some delay in giving me an appointment over here, there will be no difficulty as regards my appointment in Ireland because my pay has been voted up till February next, and there cannot therefore be any trouble in Parliament about it.

I feel however that there are so many difficulties attending the settlement of the matter that I should like very much before any final decision is come to to have the opportunity of talking it over with you. I know that it would be inadvisable to make a permanent appointment in connection with the special kind of work on which I am engaged. I always live in hope that some solution of the Irish question may be found, and that all this Fenianism and Dynamite work may cease. At present the situation is this – Nationalists and Fenians of all sections have fallen into line with Parnell. They are all determined to wait, and watch the result of the General Election and of the next Session. Meanwhile a truce has been declared; all the influence of the Parnellites and leading Nationalists and moderate Fenians will be exercised to prevent outrages both in Ireland and in Great Britain, and I feel confident that no outrages will be attempted by any of the organizations either in Ireland or in America: Some wild individuals might perhaps break away and attempt something, but they would not be acting under the direction of any organization, and anything they might do would be comparatively insignificant. If before the close of the next session the Parnellites succeed in obtaining some form of Home Rule we should probably hear no more of Dynamite or outrages, but should they fail then Fenians of all ranks both in Great Britain and Ireland and in America will be up again and we shall have a repetition of what happened in 1881 and 1882 in Ireland and Dynamite outrages and murders in London and other parts of Great Britain. On this I know they are determined, and they are even now collecting money, organizing, and making preparations in Great Britain and in America. Agents have lately been over discussing the question with the Parliamentary Party, and with the leading Nationalists and Fenians in Ireland and settling plans for the future.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of the departmental reform of the Irish police force in this period, see Ball, 'Policing the Land War', pp. 293–305.

Much as I should like to do so, I could not under these circumstances advise you to make any change in my position or in the arrangements connected with my work. We must keep on collecting information, and watching all National and Fenian organizations during the next year, and beyond that one cannot look at the present moment. If the hopes of the Nationalists are realized, as I hope they will be, you will not have any further need for my services, but if not it will be time enough to decide what to do at the end of the year.

So I can see how difficult it must be to look forward in my case, and to give me any assurances of settled employment – yet if anything could be settled it would be a great comfort and convenience to me for in the present state of uncertainty I cannot take a house or settle down anywhere and such a condition of things entails a great deal of expense, and discomfort to my family. Besides not feeling sure what is in the future, and not having any appointment which carries any pension with it I naturally cannot be free from anxiety. If I could be certain that I should remain in doing my present work in the Home Office for another year from this time, and after that should obtain some other appointment at London I could take a house somewhere and get all my things together. Would it be impossible to make me with the sanction of the Treasury an Assistant Under Secretary in the Home Office in the same way as I was made Ass. U. Secretary in Dublin in 1882? However as I said before I should very much like to speak to you about all this before anything is settled and meanwhile there is no immediate hurry because I still hold my appointment in Dublin, and I cannot do anything about taking a house till my return from the seaside towards the end of October.⁶⁹

13. Sir Robert Hamilton to Lord Carnarvon, 23 September 1885; Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle; 'Secret'; CP/TNA, PRO 30/6/67 (11).

I have had a very interesting conversation with Mr Harrel the Commissioner of the Dublin Police on the feeling of the country respecting Your Excellency. Mr Harrel has means of ascertaining such feeling, & I entirely rely upon his information on the subject.⁷⁰

He tells me the feeling is undoubtedly most friendly, and that what may be called the national party would be prepared to accept from you measures relating to the government of the country which would

⁶⁹ See Jenkinson to Cross, 11 August 1885; TNA, HO 144/721/110757.

⁷⁰ See Harrel to Carnarvon, 19 September 1885; CP/TNA, PRO 30/6/67 (10).

have no chance of acceptance if proposed by another. He says that the friendly disposition you have evinced in all matters in which they are interested has gained their affections, & that they trust you as a real friend of the Country.

Your presence on a recent occasion in the Cathedral of Armagh, and the few kind words you said there, have greatly touched them, and while at first they were disposed to regard your friendly words as more or less put on, they now recognize them as genuine and real.⁷¹

It would be a thousand pities that this attitude of the country should not be taken advantage of to the fullest extent, & bearing in mind how the history of Ireland shows that everything in the nature of amelioration has come too late, & instead of being received with gratitude has borne the appearance of having been wrung by pressure, I would strongly urge the importance of avoiding delay in dealing with the great subject of the government of this country.

We have arrived at a point that no half measures will succeed. You must either govern the country in all details of government or let them govern themselves under sufficient safeguards against confiscation & separation.

I write with the fullest appreciation of the gravity of the situation, and without being prepared with any cut & dried scheme to lay before you, on this most difficult problem, which has arisen probably in this generation, but simply to urge upon you with all the force I can that the consideration of the whole subject should be undertaken at once.

14. Lord Carnarvon, 'Conversation with Fottrell', 24 September 1885; Vice Regal Lodge, Dublin; CP/TNA, PRO 30/6/67 (21).

(1) He anticipates trouble this autumn from lowness of prices. If only prices were high all wd be quiet and well. The Irish labourer will pay if he is able. He fears & has recollection of the legal costs to w^h he was put during the years of agitation.

Landlords are very poor – & some are hard & tenants if they cannot pay will fight.

(2) Land now is difficult to sell, but if once a commencement is made, though at first tenants will get it at very low prices speculators will soon come in & raise the price.

Vernon⁷² told Fottrell that he remembered in 1853 a property selling at 7 years' purchase.

⁷¹ See *The Times*, 17 September 1885, p. 7.

⁷² John Edward Vernon (1816–1887), landowner and agent to the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, Irish Land Commissioner (1881–1887), Governor of the Bank of Ireland (1885).

(3) Some landlords and agents are angry with me: because they consider me too liberal.

(4) He admits that in any future constitutional changes the real difficulty wd. be the absence of a police to collect rent etc. He is not afraid of the people's general temper wh. is loyal & conservative. He believes there has been a gt. change towards conservative views among the more responsible Irish leaders. The prospect of coming change is exercising a sobering effect on them.

15. E.G. Jenkinson, 'Memorandum on the present situation in Ireland'; 26 September 1885; 'Secret'; Printed for the use of the Cabinet, 2 November 1885; CAB 37/16/52.⁷³

The present time, when we are on the eve of a General Election, and when affairs in Ireland demand such earnest attention, seems to be a fitting one in which to consider the condition and probable policy of the National League, and of the different Fenian organizations which are closely connected with it, and to endeavour to draw some conclusions which may be of use in the solution of the very difficult and intricate problem which lies before us.

In my printed memorandum of 22nd January 1885,⁷⁴ I described the organization of the V.C., or Clan-na-Gael, in the United States of America, and showed how intimately the I.R.B. of the United Kingdom, the Irish Parliamentary Party, and the National League, both in America and the United Kingdom, were connected with that powerful organization, and how they were all working together with one common object.

Since then events have marched rapidly, and great changes have taken place. The National League in America, of which Patrick Egan, former Treasurer to the Irish Land League, is President, still remains under the influence of the V.C. organization, and is in close alliance with the National League in the United Kingdom and with Mr. Parnell and his party; but there has been an estrangement, amounting almost to a rupture, between the V.C. and the I.R.B., and the consequence of which is that, for the moment, the latter organization is not nearly so powerful or so influential as it used to be. The members are as numerous as ever, but the organization, from want of funds and recognized leaders, has fallen to pieces, and the Supreme Council, which should consist of eleven, has now only five members.

⁷³ For original letter, see Jenkinson to Carnarvon, 26 September 1885; CP/TNA, PRO 30/6/62 (24).

⁷⁴ See **Document 8**.

The estrangement between these two organizations commenced in the summer of 1884. The Executive Council of the V.C., which had begun to take the direction of operations in England into its own hands, complained that the men in Great Britain and Ireland were not active enough, that no sufficient results were shown for funds supplied from America, and that secrecy was not maintained; while the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. objected to the blowing up of railway trains and buildings in London, and to the manner in which operations were being carried on. They contended that they, on the spot, were the best judges of the time and mode of action, and that there was no reason for a departure from the old arrangement under which money was sent to them from America, and their wishes were consulted and their advice taken before any plan of operations was decided on.

They were told, in reply to these protests, that unless they were willing to fall in with the views and policy of the V.C. no more money would be sent to them, and that the intimate relations between the two organizations must cease. Since then no supplies have been received by the I.R.B., and the V.C. has been acting independently. We now know for certain that the explosions in London at the end of 1884, and in the House of Commons and the Tower of London in January 1885, were the work of the V.C., acting independently, and even against the wishes of the I.R.B.

At the Convention which was held at Boston in August 1884 the Extremists had everything their own way. Patrick Egan was elected President of the National League in succession to Alexander Sullivan, of Chicago, and the constitution of the V.C. was revised and amended. In order to ensure secrecy, the mode of election of members of the Executive was altered, the number of the Executive was reduced from seven to three, and the Article under which the R.D., or Revolutionary Directory, was composed of seven members belonging to the I.R.B. and the V.C., was cancelled, and the number was limited to three men, all members of the V.C.

In consequence of these proceedings, John O'Connor, the Acting President of the I.R.B., went, at the request of the other members of the Supreme Council to America in the end of February 1885, to endeavour to bring about a reconciliation with the V.C., but he does not seem to have met with much success.

Negotiations are still going on which may end in the re-establishment of a close intimacy between the two organizations on the terms offered, and on the conditions laid down by the V.C. On the other hand, signs are not wanting that the I.R.B. will become extinct, the more moderate members joining the ranks of the National League, and the Extremists, or those who are in favour of violent measures,

becoming members of a new revolutionary organization, which will be worked on very secret lines, and will be in close connection with a similar organization, or with the V.C. in the United States. Very much, however, depends upon the course of events during the next few months, and on the policy of the English Government towards Ireland after the General Election.

It is clear that nothing was settled during John O'Connor's stay in America, for last week (September 13th to 17th) a most important meeting of the Supreme Council was held in France with the object of receiving Patrick Kiernan Walsh, the paid delegate of the V.C., and one of the oldest and most trusted members of the organization in the United States. At this meeting P.K. Walsh read a long paper, in the nature of an ultimatum from the Executive of the V.C. to the Supreme Council of the I.R.B., in which the latter were asked to account for or to refund the sum of 12,000l., which had been remitted to them, and were plainly told that if they should refuse to join in a policy of action the V.C. would have nothing more to say to them, and would continue to work in the United Kingdom independently of them.

After this paper had been read, various methods of action were discussed. Among these were the blowing up of buildings and English men-of-war, and the assassination of myself and Major Gosselin,⁷⁵ and of leading statesmen who might show hostility to the "Irish cause." Finally, a reply was drawn up in which the Supreme Council declared against dynamite in every way, and, without committing themselves to any particular measures, stated that they were willing to join the V.C. in a policy of action. The Delegate left Havre for New York with this reply on the 18th August,⁷⁶ and within a short time we ought to know the result. Meanwhile, measures will be taken to elect a full Council of eleven members, of which in all probability John O'Leary or Michael Davitt will be made President, and efforts will be made to put new life and vigour into the organization.

This is how matters stand for the present as regards the relations between the two large sister Fenian organizations, and I have entered this much into detail about them because an understanding of them is necessary if we wish to have a correct knowledge of the present situation, and to be able to form some estimate of the future.

The recent successes of the Irish Parliamentary Party under the leadership of Mr. Parnell, the non-renewal of the Prevention of Crimes Act, the change of policy in Ireland following upon a change of

⁷⁵ Nicholas Gosselin (1839–1917), Adjutant of the Cavan Militia (1877–1882), RM for Sligo (1882–1888), deputy to Jenkinson with responsibility for the north of England (1884–1887), head of the 'Secret Department' of the Home Office (1888–1901).

⁷⁶ Should read 'September'.

Government, and the hope that in the next Parliament Mr. Parnell, with his eighty or ninety followers, will succeed in obtaining Home Rule for Ireland, have, for the time being, quieted the Extremists, and led to a cessation of active hostilities against England. All, with the exception of some of the more violent spirits and irreconcilables, are willing to give the Parliamentary Party a chance. Mr. Parnell, they think, is riding the winning horse, and just now the enthusiasm about him is unbounded, and his will is law. In America the National League, under the Presidentship of Patrick Egan, is giving Mr. Parnell all the support it can, and is sending money wherewith to carry on the Parliamentary campaign. The Clan-na-Gaels have decided to stop all active work until next year, and are engaged in organizing and raising money and making preparations for revolutionary work in the future; and in many of the States money is being subscribed for the purpose of paying Irish Members of Parliament, the State of New York (excluding the cities of New York and Brooklyn) alone having guaranteed the salaries of six members; while in Ireland the National League, under the direction of Mr. Parnell, is all-powerful, and Fenians and Nationalists are working together on the same lines, united and confident of success.

Not many weeks ago it looked as if Michael Davitt might succeed in renewing the fight against landlords and rent on the lines of the Land League. He argued that such an agitation would be joined by all classes, and that it would help Mr. Parnell. But Mr. Parnell's counsels of prudence and moderation happily prevailed, and Michael Davitt's "fighting policy" does not for the moment meet with approval. We should, however, remember that he represents the opinions of a very large number of Irishmen. There are many who with him believe that "nothing is to be got by reason, by entreaty, by patient endurance, but everything by intimidation;" that as O'Connell failed, so will Parnell fail; and that, "though diplomacy may avail something in Westminster, it never has achieved, and never will achieve, anything but defeat for the popular cause in Ireland." All these men will be ready to adopt a "fighting policy" the moment they see that Parnell's policy is not going to succeed.

It is not necessary to lengthen this Memorandum by describing in detail the present condition of affairs in Ireland. So far the determination to rule Ireland under the ordinary law has met with success. It is true that the National League has increased in power and influence, and that the practice of "boycotting" has not only extended, but is being abused. There has also been a slight increase in agrarian outrages. But there are not at present any signs of a renewal of agitation and outrages such as we had in 1881 and 1882. Mr. Parnell and his lieutenants are doing all they can to keep down outrages, and

have even condemned the indiscriminate use of "boycotting." At the same time, the feeling against the English Government and against the landlords was never worse than it is now, and I do not hesitate to say that were it not for the faith which the people have in Mr. Parnell, and for the influence which he and his party exercise over them, there would be an outbreak of serious outrages in all the worst and most distressed parts of Ireland.

At present there is, as the Fenians themselves describe it, a truce. All are waiting to see the result of the General Election and of the action of the Parliamentary Party during the next Session. All are prepared to fight to the bitter end, and the Parliamentary Party are determined in the next Parliament to take an active interest, as they put it, in all English questions, and to worry the English Legislature into a concession of Home Rule. They are not attached to one party more than another, neither have they faith in either party. The Irish vote, it is true, is to be given to the Conservatives; but this is not because they love the Conservatives any more than they do the Liberals, but because they hope to weaken the Liberal majority, and so hold the balance between both parties in Parliament.

It is therefore clear that we have arrived at a most critical time in Irish history. It is a most serious consideration that the peace of Ireland depends upon the influence and position of Mr. Parnell, and upon the forbearance of the Extremists, and it is a consideration which should, I think, have great weight with the leaders of both parties in their public utterances. Any words which may lessen Mr. Parnell's influence, or dash hopes which at the present time fill the hearts of the Irish people, might lead to an outbreak of crime and to the renewal of dynamite outrages. And there can be no doubt that in this sense some recent speeches, in which it was declared that it would be impossible to grant an independent Parliament to Ireland, had an injurious effect.⁷⁷ They confirmed the fears and the opinions of the Fenians and Extremists, and encouraged them to break away from Mr. Parnell, and to set the organization for the commission of outrages into motion again.

We may be quite sure of this: unless Mr. Parnell succeeds in obtaining during this next year Home Rule, or a promise of Home Rule, for Ireland, he will either fall from power and lose all control over the Irish people, or he will have to place himself at the head of a revolutionary movement. In America they firmly believe that when the times comes he will not hesitate to adopt the latter course. The leading Fenians in New York and Chicago say that, in the event of failure in Parliament, he has given his word to adopt revolutionary measures, and though this may be an exaggeration, yet it is not without some

⁷⁷ See *Journal* (11 September 1885).

support from some of Mr. Parnell's recent speeches. It was in his speech at the banquet to General Collins⁷⁸ on the 22nd July last that he said: "Speaking for myself, and without consulting my colleagues, as one who has never shrunk from any risk, from any sacrifice in the times of the Land League, as one who may be willing to go much further than any of us went in the times of the Land League, if occasion required, I will say that I consider our movement of this winter should be one distinguished by its judgment, its prudence, and its moderation."⁷⁹

There was a great outcry in the English newspapers against Mr. Parnell's declaration of his policy in his August speeches in Dublin, and all jumped to the conclusion that nothing less than separation from England would satisfy the demands of the Irish.⁸⁰ But I do not understand that Mr. Parnell asked for more than he ever asked for before, and I think that Mr. Parnell's peculiar position at the time, and the necessity for making such speeches, were not properly appreciated by the English press. Mr. Parnell had a double purpose in view; he had to destroy Michael Davitt's influence, and to say something which would satisfy the Extremists and prevent them from committing outrages; and he had also to unite under his banner, and to bring into harmony with his policy, Fenians, and Nationalists of all classes and opinions, in order that he might secure the return of his nominees for Parliament at his proposed County Conventions. In this he has succeeded. He spoke, may be, in rather bold and exaggerated language, but he never demanded absolute separation. What he says is, that nothing but legislative independence will satisfy the demands and aspirations of Ireland, and that does not imply separation. He knows that is impossible. "Separation from Great Britain," as Mr. O'Kelly, M.P.,⁸¹ one of the most extreme men in the Parliamentary Party, said in his speech at Leeds on the 21st September, "could only be achieved by force."⁸²

To hope that the Parliamentary Party may become disunited, or that "Mr Parnell's influence will melt away," and that there will be

⁷⁸ Patrick Andrew Collins (1844–1905), US Representative for Massachusetts, 4th District (1883–1889), President of the American Land League (1881), and leader of the moderate wing of Irish nationalism in the US.

⁷⁹ The dinner was held at the Café Royal, London: F.S.L. Lyons, *Charles Stewart Parnell* (London, 1977), pp. 292–293.

⁸⁰ Speaking at the Parliamentary Party banquet at the Imperial Hotel, Dublin, Parnell declared that national independence would henceforth be the party's sole platform: *The Times*, 25 August 1885, p. 4.

⁸¹ James J. O'Kelly (1845–1916), Nat. MP for Co. Roscommon (1880–1885) and for Roscommon North (1885–1892, 1895–1916), IRB organizer in England and correspondent for the *New York Herald*, played a significant role in developing the 'New Departure' and was imprisoned for his part in the land agitation (1881–1882).

⁸² Kelly addressed the local branch of the Irish National League at the Albert Hall, Leeds, on 20 September 1885; *The Times*, 22 September 1885, p. 6.

“an end of the crusade,” if the demand for legislative independence be firmly met, is to take a most foolish and short-sighted view of the situation. Ireland is passing through a revolution, and we hope that it may be a bloodless one, resulting in the establishment of good government, and in the ultimate welfare and prosperity of the people. We have to deal now with a united party under the leadership of a man who deserves the name of a statesman, and who is looked up to and followed by the Irish people in Ireland and in all parts of the world. Are we likely to come to a peaceful and satisfactory solution of this very difficult question when we are face to face with Separatists and Dynamitards, and when Mr. Parnell no longer retains his influence? Should we not rather endeavour to keep him in his present position, and to attempt to settle the question while his party is still united, and before moderate counsels give way to agitation and active revolution?

There never was a time in which the “Irish question” so urgently pressed for solution.

The only fear is that we may be too late (as, alas! is too frequently the case in our dealings with Ireland) in doing what is wise and just and right. We missed, in my opinion, a great opportunity at the end of 1883, when we were strong, and had repressed all outrage in Ireland. We might have done then what it may be impossible to do now; and if we neglect the present opportunity, we may not be able to do a year hence what we could do now. Two years ago a large measure of local self government, leading gradually up to Home Rule, would have satisfied Ireland. A year hence, perhaps, the Extremists will have got the upper hand, and then nothing but absolute separation will content them.

I have always held that our policy in Ireland during the last three years could only make matters grow worse and worse, and was not an honest one towards the people of Ireland. Our Government of the country was neither one thing nor the other. It had the pretence of being a constitutional Government, but we only kept the country in order by suspending the Constitution; and we were not honest, because, while we set our faces against Home Rule, we gave free licence to the press, and allowed it to vilify and abuse our administration, and to educate the people to believe that Ireland never can be prosperous except it has a Parliament of its own. We also allowed the National League to rise up on the ashes of the Land League, and to cover Ireland with its branches and its organization. Depend upon it that the time has now come when the present state of things can no longer continue, when we must make up our minds to the adoption of one of two courses. We must either have recourse to what is called the “strong arm” policy, or we must boldly acknowledge the principle of Home Rule, and give Ireland, gradually if possible, a separate Parliament for the management of its own internal affairs.

I think it would be a mistake before the General Election to make any declaration of policy. It would not be taken in good faith by the Irish, and would only be construed into a bid for the Irish vote. But would not the return of eighty or ninety Home Rulers to Parliament give us an opportunity for acknowledging frankly and generously that the large majority of the Irish people were in favour of Home Rule, and for trying, in consultation with the leaders, to find some practical solution of the difficulty, and to ascertain whether a separate Parliament could not be granted to Ireland without endangering the supremacy of the Crown, and without disintegration of the Empire?

I will not say more about the first of the two courses which I have mentioned than that I believe the "strong arm" policy to be simply impracticable and impossible. The people of England would not for long consent to see Ireland ruled under a despotic form of Government, and it certainly would not satisfy the people of Ireland, and restore wealth and prosperity to the country.

The advantages of Home Rule, if it can be introduced without violent disturbances and great injustice to any class of the community, and without separation from England, are so obvious that I need not here enumerate them. I prefer rather to note the principal objections which are now raised against Home Rule, and to deal in detail with each separately.

These objections are –

1. That Home Rule means separation from England and the disintegration of the Empire.
2. That it would entail civil war between the north and the rest of Ireland.
3. That if it be introduced before the Land question is settled great injustice will be done to the landlords.
4. That there would be a persecution of the Protestants by the Roman Catholics.
5. That Irish industries would be protected.
6. That there would be an unjust, dishonest, and corrupt Administration.
7. That it would be impossible to make terms or come to an understanding with men like Mr. Parnell and his followers who, to gain their own ends, have not hesitated to associate themselves with Fenians and men who have organized and committed outrages.

As to the first objection, that

Home Rule means Separation from Great Britain,

I do not know why this should be assumed. In my opinion, no sane Irishman desires separation. What the Irish people ask for is the right to regulate their own internal affairs, the right to preserve their revenues for their own advantage, and to make their own

laws. Mr Parnell has never demanded separation, and, I feel sure, does not desire it. There is a world of difference between legislative independence, or Home Rule, and a total separation; and I cannot understand how legislative independence is incompatible with the sovereignty of the Crown and the integrity and safety of the Empire. Arrangements could, I take it, be made under which the direction of the foreign policy of the Empire would be in the hands of the Imperial Parliament, and just a quota from the Irish revenues would be contributed for Imperial purposes. We should also have to keep for some time to come an army in Ireland, and to hold certain strong places on the sea coast. But in all other respects the Irish Legislative [*sic*] would be independent of the Imperial Parliament, and would be left to manage its own affairs. Mr Parnell is not asking for more than Franz Deak asked for Hungary, and if what was granted to Hungary be granted to Ireland, the English will, as in the case of the Hungarians, satisfy the aspirations of the Irish people, and Ireland will become contented and therefore a strength to the Empire, instead of being, as she is now, a constant danger and a standing menace.

2. *Home Rule would entail Civil War between the North and the rest of Ireland.*

I do not believe in this for a moment. Five, perhaps even only three, years ago the Orangemen and Protestants of Ulster would have been ready to fight the south and west of Ireland on the subject of Home Rule. But there has been an immense change since then. The North has been invaded by the Nationalists, and at the coming election a great many of the constituencies in the north will return Home Rulers to Parliament. I could give the names of Orangemen in support of what I allege. Not many weeks ago I sent one of my best and most intelligent agents on a visit to Ulster, and in his Report he says:—

“I went freely about the country, and came to the conclusion that Fenianism is no more, but that the national spirit survives in the National League, stronger than I had any idea of. The Orangemen are joining the Nationalists everywhere, and in one village I found an Orangeman who had been elected as a Nationalist to the Board of Guardians, and was leading the National Conservative party on the Board.

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“I had an introduction from a leading Nationalist and Fenian in Dublin to Mr. Roddy, of the Roddy Hotel, Derry, and the editor of the *Derry Journal*, and was introduced by him to a number of persons, many of them Orangemen. Amongst these was the capitalist and speculator, McCarter, a leading Orangeman, and a proprietor

of the above-named journal. As a sign of the times, I may hear a remark that this journal, owned by an extreme Orangeman, is 'run' on Nationalist principles by Roddy, the Local President of the League, and a late extreme Fenian Centre. More than this even; Roddy told me that at one time they dare[d] not issue a National publication in Derry, that their house and hotel had been wrecked because it was known to be a rendezvous for Nationalists, but that now their principal customers were Orangemen, farmers, and commercial travellers and the local Protestant gentry. Before leaving Derry I was introduced by McCarter to a very clever English engineer, named —, who has lived in the north of Ireland many years. This man thought I was English, and in the course of conversation gave me his views on the situation. He said that the Orangemen would hold out to the last in the outlying towns, where they are to a certain extent independent, but that intelligent Protestant farmers and the shopkeepers in the large centres of population would have eventually to cast in their lot with the Nationalists, and that this was already going on."

I believe this to be a correct view of the situation. The Nationalist movement in recent years has differed from all former agitations in Ireland, in that it has appealed to the material interests of the farmers. The farmers of the north are an astute, canny set of people, and are only too ready to join a party which obtains for them a reduction of their rents and holds out to them hopes of a still further reduction. They are loyal to the Crown, and will remain so; but they care for their land and their profits more than they do for their landlords, and will not hesitate to join hands with those who can give them greater profits and greater security of tenure. If they see that Mr. Parnell is sure of victory and that Home Rule is inevitable, they will most certainly join the winning side.

3. If Home Rule is introduced before the Land Question is settled great Injustice will be done to the Landlords.

This is the most serious and important objection of all. Indeed, it is the only one to which I attach any real importance. The Land question must be settled before Home Rule can be granted to Ireland. Even nationalists to whom I have spoken allow that on establishment of an Irish Parliament the Land question would be the one with which they would first have to deal, and that having regard to the events of the last four years and to the existing feeling against landlords as a class, it would be far better if the Land question were settled by the English Parliament before the introduction of Home Rule.

The Land Act of 1881 sounded the death-knell of the present race of Irish landlords, and their own folly and want of foresight is bringing them to ruin. Two years ago, when I was using the same arguments as I am doing now, I was told that the influence of the landlords was reviving, and that they would soon be again on good relations with their tenants. But this was a dream destined never to come true. The estrangement between landlords and tenants (I speak of the class, not of individuals) is greater than ever, and it is patent to everyone that the landlords of Ireland are, as a class, politically extinct. The tenants have no affection for them. It would take very little trouble to get up a strong agitation against them. They have no power in the country. In the greater part of Ireland they cannot command more than very few votes, and they are of no use to the Irish Administration, or to the political party in England to which they may belong. I confess that, for my own part, I have not much sympathy with the landlords of Ireland. As a class they have neglected their duties as landlords, and they have never shown any sympathy with their tenants, or with the aspirations of the Irish people. They have been both short-sighted and selfish, and during the troublous times of 1881 and 1882 I was myself a witness of their helplessness. They did not combine among themselves to protect their own lives and property. They were of no assistance to the Government. Mr. Forster tried to put some spirit into them, and to induce them to take a firm stand on the side of law and order. But he failed. They either left the country, or remained shut up in their houses in terror of their lives, and neglecting[*sic*] their duties as Justices of the Peace, in the exercise of which they might have rendered such assistance to the Government. They have always been short-sighted, and I am afraid will be so to the last, even in matters in which their own interests are most concerned. When Isaac Butt foresaw the contest between the landlords and the people he tried to save the former, but they would not listen to him. How much better terms would they have obtained had they joined the National movement then than they will now! They might have been the leaders of the people, but now they are hated by the people, and run a great chance of being abandoned by England, in whom they trusted. What Michael Davitt said about them in his speech in Dublin on the 28th July 1885, is very true; he said: "Had they joined the Home Rule movement under Isaac Butt their social salvation was secured. National gratitude would have gone out to them from the Irish heart, and they would have been saved from the defeat which has since overtaken them . . ."⁸³ *Even yet*, if they helped Mr. Parnell to obtain an Irish Parliament, they would be surer of far

⁸³ Ellipsis in original.

more generous terms at his hands than they are likely to obtain from a democracy which will win legislative rights without their assistance, and build up an Irish nation on the ruins of their power."⁸⁴

It would be unsafe now to leave the settlement of the Land question to an Irish Parliament. But why could not a settlement be come to; why could not the best terms possible be made for the landlords before the introduction of Home Rule? The Land Purchase Act⁸⁵ recently passed is a step in this direction. But its success will be but partial, and its operation slow, because the landlords, with their usual want of foresight, will, I am afraid, hold out for higher prices than they can get, and because the tenants will not dare to purchase without obtaining the sanction of the National League to the transaction. If the landlords were wise they would now gladly accept eighteen years' purchase for their lands, instead of holding out for twenty and twenty-two years' purchase. I believe that the only chance of bringing them to their senses is to acknowledge the principle of Home Rule, to let them understand England does intend to give a Parliament in Dublin to the Irish. Seeing, then, that they have nothing further to hope from England, they will, in all probability, join the National side, and make the best terms possible for themselves; and if the principle of Home Rule were acknowledged, as I suggest, we should have the Irish leaders with us instead of against us. They would assist us in carrying into operation the remedial measures which in late years have been passed for Ireland, instead of throwing every obstacle in the way, and it would not, I believe, be difficult to come to some understanding with them on the Irish Land question, and to come to terms which, under existing circumstances, would be just to the landlords. I am sure that the latter have nothing to gain by holding out and waiting.

They are much more likely to obtain good terms now than two years, even one year, hence. But, as I said before, it is absolutely necessary that the Land question should be finally settled, and that terms should be made for the landlords before Home Rule is granted to Ireland. To obtain this result, we should try to get the Irish leaders to work with us instead of against us, and this is only to be done by promising them Home Rule. Home Rule must come; it is inevitable. Why, then, should we continue to fight against it, and to go on crying out, "Never, never?"

⁸⁴ The lecture, entitled "Twenty years of Irish history – 1865 to 1885", was delivered at the Rotunda, Dublin: *The Times*, 29 July 1885, p. 9.

⁸⁵ See **Journal (11 September 1885)**.

4. *There would be a persecution of the Protestants by the Catholics.*

I do not believe this. The feeling between the Protestants and Roman Catholics is not what it was in past years. "The poison of religious ascendancy," as Mr. Gladstone says in his recent Manifesto,⁸⁶ "in its various forms, has been expelled from the country," and there is no reason to suppose that the Roman Catholics will be intolerant, and show any animosity towards the Protestants. If there were any fear of this, how is it that both in the past and in the present Protestants have joined the National ranks, and that the leaders have been and are Protestants?

5. *That the Irish Industries would be protected.*

And what if they are?

Supposing that protective duties are imposed, or that a system of bounties is established, what great harm would be done to English trade and commerce? Why is it absolutely necessary that there should be a common tariff? If the Irish think that Irish industries will be encouraged by the imposition of protective duties, why not let them try the experiment? By our selfishness in years past we destroyed the manufactures and industries of Ireland, under our administration nothing has been done to revive them. We have not even succeeded in establishing security for the introduction of capital. There is no continuity in our Irish policy. For a few years the unruly are kept under subjection and order is maintained, and then follows a violent agitation, in which there is little or no security for life or property. Are we always to remain selfish? Cannot we afford to be liberal and generous? Even if we were to lose something by the abolition of a common tariff, what would the loss be when put in the balance against the political and financial loss arising out of our present relations with Ireland. If we cannot ourselves do anything towards the revival of Irish industries, we should let the Irish try what they can do themselves, and let them succeed if they can.

6. *That there would be an unjust, dishonest, and corrupt Administration.*

I daresay there would be a great deal of corruption and political immorality. But this is more the concern of the Irish than the English. It will not do England any harm. We cannot expect perfection at once.

⁸⁶ Gladstone's 'Address to the electors of Midlothian' was circulated by the National Press Agency on 18 September 1885; Richard Shannon, *Gladstone: heroic minister, 1865–1898* (London, 2000), p. 381.

It is impossible to sail at once from the middle of a revolution into smooth and settled waters. Every nation must pass through the fire, and must learn by experience. Could there have been greater political immorality and corruption than in England in the last century, and yet look at England of to-day?

If England has come pure out of the furnace why should not Ireland? And with the experience of our own country before us, why should we be afraid to give Home Rule to Ireland? I do not believe that there would be an unjust or dishonest Administration in Ireland. I believe that in an Irish Parliament there would very speedily be formed, probably under the leadership of Mr. Parnell, a strong Conservative party, supported by the Roman Catholic Church with all its strength, the landlords, the newly-created peasant proprietors, the farmers and the professional classes, which would keep the Separatists, Socialists and Irreconcilables in check. Mr. Parnell has from the beginning kept on good terms with the Church, Archbishop Croke,⁸⁷ the leading Nationalist amongst the clergy, is his firm ally and supporter, and no one can doubt that the Roman Catholic Church is and must be conservative, and opposed to revolution.

Under such an administration we need not, I think, be afraid that any revolutionary measures will be passed, or that injustice will be done to any particular class.

Having got Home Rule, it will be in the interest of the Irish to prove that they are fit for self-government, and can manage their own affairs well, and with justice to all classes.

7. That it would be impossible to make Terms with Men who, to gain their own ends, have not hesitated to associate themselves with Fenians and Men who organized and committed Outrages.

This is a sentimental objection, and I would ask those who make it whether it is not better to try to settle the Irish difficulty in consultation with Mr. Parnell and his followers, than by keeping aloof from them on sentimental grounds to drive them to accept revolutionary measures, and so to plunge Ireland again into anarchy and disorder? If this question of Home Rule is not settled on a wise and generous basis during the coming year we shall have a renewal of agitation and of outrages in both Ireland and England. We have not now, it must be remembered, to deal only with Ireland, as was the case in former days. We have to reckon with millions of Irishmen in America and

⁸⁷ Thomas William Croke (1824–1902), Archbishop of Cashel (1875–1902), a leading supporter of home rule, the Land League, the Gaelic Athletic Association, and the Gaelic League.

Australia, and all over the world. At present all eyes are turned towards Mr. Parnell, but should he fail, the time of the Extremists will come, and all the machinery of the secret organizations will be again set in motion. The Parliamentary Party are well aware of this, and look forward to it as a very possible contingency. I have remarkable proof of this in a letter before me, in which there is an account of a dinner which was given secretly at the end of August in Dublin to P.S. Cassidy,⁸⁸ a member of O'Donovan Rossa's Council, and a leading Clan-na-Gael man, who came over from New York to see the Irish leaders, and to judge for himself of the state of affairs. He is an Extremist, and in favour of dynamite work. At this dinner Fenians, Nationalists, and Priests were present, and the Parliamentary Party were represented by John O'Connor, M.P., and Mr. McMahan, M.P.⁸⁹

After dinner Mr. John O'Connor "opened the conversation by asking Cassidy to use all his influence on his return to New York with all parties to stop all further explosions." He added, "Do not think for a moment that I am a milk-and-water Irishman in thus addressing you. I am as hot a Fenian now as ever, and if there was only an opportunity, I, for one, would accept nothing from the English without fighting for it; but," he continued, "the wishes of the majority of our people at home and abroad should be respected; there has been a measure of success gained; it now remains to see what can be done in the next Parliament;" and concluding, he said, "I know I am speaking the sentiments of all here when I ask you to organize! organize! organize! husband your resources, and if we cannot succeed legitimately, it must be war to the bitter end by all and every means in our power." Mr. John O'Connor was, as we know, one of the leading Fenians in Cork, and is therefore one of the most extreme men in the Irish Parliamentary Party. But he, like many other leading Fenians, has joined the Nationalists, and hopes that the battle may be won under Mr. Parnell's leadership in the English House of Commons. As regards Mr. Parnell himself and the more moderate of his followers, I think we should be just in our judgement of them. They have been playing for a great stake, and have had a very difficult game to play. It is true that they did not, except in the case of the Phoenix Park murders, denounce outrages, but we have no proof that they were a party to them. Mr. Parnell has been obliged from the first to carry with him Nationalists of all shades of opinion, Fenians, Extremists, and Irreconcilables in Ireland and in America. Had he denounced

⁸⁸ Patrick Sarsfield Cassidy (b. 1850), business editor of the *New York Sunday Mercury*, defected from Clan-na-Gael to head the Fenian Council in November 1886 and subsequently launched a press campaign against O'Donovan Rossa.

⁸⁹ Edward McMahan, manufacturer, Nat. MP for Limerick city (1883–1885).

outrages openly, or had he broken with the Extremists, he would not have been able for a moment to have retained his position as leader of the National movement, and he would not have received the supplies from America with which he was able to carry on the agitation both inside and outside Parliament. I think that this much should in fairness be said in his favour. Now, at any rate, he and his followers have spoken out against outrages and in favour of moderation, and if we, from want of wisdom, foresight, and generosity, or from any sentimental objection, render the prompt settlement of the Irish question impossible, and so drive the Irish to extreme measures, surely the responsibility will be ours.

I am afraid I have dwelt at great length on this subject; but it is one, to my mind, of such importance, and of such vast consequence to both England and Ireland, that I could not well deal with it in smaller compass. As it is, I have not said anything about the immense political difficulties which lie in the way of any Statesman who may earnestly wish to bring the question to a practical issue, and to carry his party and English public opinion with him, though these are difficulties of which I am well aware, and which I do not under-estimate.

But I feel more and more convinced that things cannot remain as they now are. Something must be done to satisfy the natural desire of the Irish people to legislate for themselves on matters of purely Irish concern.

If this something be done promptly agitation will cease; if not, then we will have a renewal of violent agitation, unseemly fighting, and obstruction in Parliament, a Session wasted, perhaps a Government overthrown, and another General Election this time next year; and in that case should we be any nearer a righteous and just settlement of the question than we are now? Would not the feeling against us in Ireland be stronger and more embittered? Would it not be more difficult to protect and do justice to the landlords, and would not the Extremists and the Irreconcilables make bolder and more impossible demands.

The problem immediately before us demanding solution is, how to steer Ireland through a Revolution without a renewal of bloodshed, and with the least possible amount of suffering and injustice to certain classes, and how to give the Irish full power to manage their own internal affairs, to give them, in fact, what they ask for – a separate Parliament, without separating Ireland from England, and without danger and without injury to the Empire and to England. And is this problem so impossible of solution? The first thing that we must try and do is to bring our Government in touch with the people. At the

present moment, our administration in Ireland is isolated. No real reform can be carried out, Ireland cannot be made prosperous and happy as long as the Government is not in touch with the people, and as long as we look coldly on their aspirations, and are not in sympathy with the national sentiment. No honest and unprejudiced man can say that our administration, whatever our intentions may be, is popular, or that under it Ireland is well governed and prosperous. If we wish to place ourselves in touch with the people, we must practically show our sympathy with them by acknowledging that our present system of administration is not suited to the country, by joining hands with their leaders, and by acknowledging the principle of Home Rule. Having conceded that much we should not, I believe, have any real difficulty in coming to a satisfactory solution of the puzzling problem which is now before us, and which, in my opinion, cannot, in the interests of both England and Ireland, be too promptly solved.

16. George Fottrell to Joseph Chamberlain, 29 September 1885; Geo. D. Fottrell & Sons, 46 Fleet St., Dublin; 'Private'; JCP, JC8/4/1/3.

You were so frank in speaking to me when in London that I am sure you will not be annoyed at my speaking frankly to you. I therefore tell you that I was sorry to read your letter to Mr. Ferguson⁹⁰ because I think it went further than any former declaration of yours in pledging you against a separate parliament for Ireland by which I understand a parliament or assembly absolute in its own sphere and subject to no revision within its own sphere by any other legislative body.

Now I have watched very carefully for the past few months the signs of public opinion in Ireland & I feel satisfied that within the last few months a large number of people in Ireland who were either hostile or indifferent to the project of a separate legislature for Ireland have come to be convinced that even for the landlord interest it would be better to have a separate legislature here – a real legislature with absolute powers save on question of tariff & save that it should have no control of the military.

I wish I could have a chat with you to explain fully the change which has come over people's minds here even among the richer people meanwhile I earnestly impress upon you that the change has come & that it would be well not to pledge yourself against a scheme

⁹⁰ See *Journal* (5 October 1885).

to which so large a proportion of Irishmen are turning as affording the only safe way out of a condition of danger doubt & difficulty.

17. Joseph Chamberlain to George Fottrell, 30 September 1885; ‘Private’; JCP, JC8/4/1/4.

I should be at all times glad to have the opportunity of talking over Irish matters with you, & whenever you are in London while I am there I hope you will do me the favour of calling. I do not think that anything would change my opinion on the question of an independent parliament for Ireland. I have gone to the extreme limit in agreeing to a National Council. I have large ideas as to the possible development of such an institution, but this would only come gradually & would have to be justified by the experience of its working in its original form. The feeling in this country is stronger than I supposed possible. We have strained our supporters very much by what they think our excessive concessions to Mr. Parnell’s demands, & it would be much easier now to get up an anti-Irish agitation than to propound & carry even such a scheme as that which was explained in the *Fortnightly Review*.⁹¹

18. E.G. Jenkinson to Lord Carnarvon, 5 October 1885; ‘Confidential’; CP/TNA, PRO 30/6/62 (25).

In my letter to you of 26th Sept⁹² I mentioned that money was being raised in several states in the United States for the payment of salaries to Irish members of Parliament. Since writing that letter I have heard that great efforts are being made to raise money for the Parliamentary Fund, in order to give support to Parnell in the coming elections. They hope to raise \$500,000 in the United States. At Chicago subscriptions are rapidly coming in and nearly \$75,000 are expected. Wealthy Irishmen in New York and New Jersey have promised money freely for Parnell. St Louis, Mo., has guaranteed \$5000, Cincinnati \$5000, Milwaukee \$1800 and further subscriptions are expected when Parnell or his delegates go over for the great National League Convention which will take place at Chicago in January 1886.⁹³

⁹¹ See **Journal (12, 27 June 1885)**.

⁹² See **Document 15**.

⁹³ The convention took place on 18–19 August: *New York Times*, 6 August 1886, p. 8.

Vice President Hendrick's speech at a mass meeting of citizens in Indianapolis, Indiana (his own state) in which he openly expressed Parnell's cause, has stimulated Irish sympathizers, and has brought in further subscriptions to the Parliamentary Fund. The *New York Herald* thinks this speech was "in the worst possible taste".⁹⁴

Everywhere in America there is the greatest enthusiasm about Parnell, but this enthusiasm would not be what it is were it not based on the firm belief that should the Parliamentary Party fail to get what the Irish want from the English Parliament, the time will come for the Extremists and Revolutionists to act, and that Parnell will place himself at the head of the Active Revolutionary Party. The money now coming in is being given for a double purpose. Part of it will go to the Parliamentary Fund, but part of it will be reserved by the V.C., the Fenian organization which practically has the control of the whole movement, for "active work" in the future. Everywhere there are signs of preparation for the future. The Extremists are quiet just now because they think it fair to give Parnell a chance, but they have no belief in his success, and they are consequently organizing and preparing for the future. The preparations are going on not only in the United States but in Great Britain and in Ireland. Lately a great many of the men who were engaged in the murders and outrages of 1881 and 1882 have returned to their houses in Ireland, and in Dublin there are at the present moment eight of the old Invincibles, most of whom have come back during the last few months.

Parnell is filling the offices in the National League both in Ireland and Great Britain with I.R.B. men, in order that he may have, as he says, "men who will be ready to go to prison, or be fit for any kind of work when the time comes". And in the United States the V.C. in order that it may have complete control over every move at the National League Convention in January next is expending money "to place in good standing every camp by its public name as a Branch of the National League". So it is quite clear that in the event of Parnell receiving a check, the whole movement and all the active policy of the future will be directed by the V.C. in the United States acting in conjunction with the sister organization the I.R.B., and the National League on this side, and in America they all firmly believe that Parnell will place himself at the head of the movement. But whether he does or not, we know what we have to expect should

⁹⁴ Thomas Andrews Hendricks (1819–1885), Democratic Senator and Governor of Indiana (1863–1869, 1872–1884), Vice-President of the United States (1884–1885). In his speech on 8 September, Hendricks 'expressed his belief that Mr. Parnell would lead Ireland to triumphant success': *The Times*, 10 September 1885, p. 3.

the moderates lose the game, and should the Extremists get their own way.

19. Lord Carnarvon, ‘Davitt’s views as to constitutional change’; c.29 October 1885;⁹⁵ CP/TNA, PRO 30/6/67 (34).

Sir R. Hamilton took an opportunity of learning through Fottrell whether Davitt’s opinions on these subjects remained unaltered.

Davitt said he had changed his opinion as to a second Chamber & that he was in favour of only one.

He went on to say that there were now “many Tories in the Nationalist Party & that when an Irish Parl. was given he expected to see Parnell at the head of the Tory Party in it”.

20. [Sir Robert Hamilton], 31 October 1885; ‘Very Secret’; Printed for the use of the Cabinet, 8 December 1885; CAB 37/6/57.

In the following Memorandum I endeavour briefly to sketch the present political and economic condition of Ireland, and to show the critical state in which the country is. I point out that, whatever difficulties may surround the obtaining of a true knowledge of the views of the country, these views will be constitutionally expressed at the coming elections on the plain issue raised in Mr. Parnell’s programme. I proceed to discuss the advantages or disadvantages, and the risks, attending the acceptance or the non-acceptance of that programme, and I conclude by offering a practical suggestion as to the best way, in my judgment, of bringing the consideration of the Imperial Parliament to bear on this important subject. I submit my views with great diffidence, and with the humble hope that they may tend towards the elucidation of one of the most complicated problems which have [*sic*] ever engaged the attention of statesmen.

Ireland is passing through a great social revolution. Protestant ascendancy went with the disestablishment of the State Church; landlord ascendancy went with the introduction of the Land Act; but nothing has taken their place. These influences which worked, imperfectly enough, I admit, and often tyrannically, for the guidance

⁹⁵ See **Journal (28 October 1885)**.

of local affairs, have disappeared, and nothing has been substituted for them. While nominally under a free Constitution, Ireland's Representatives have no part in the administration of the Government of their country, and everything more and more falls on that much abused institution, Dublin Castle.

The desire for the recognition of Irish nationality has always been present in the country, but the education of the masses, which has made enormous strides in recent years, has turned what was a passive but deep-rooted discontent on their part with being governed by England into an active determination to assert their right to manage their own affairs. It is now so easy to cross the Atlantic that there are to be found in all parts of the country men who have been in America, and by means of intercourse with these, and by constant correspondence with their friends and relatives who, since the famine of 1846, have established an Ireland beyond the seas, they are familiar with American institutions, and with the part the people take in the government of the United States and Canada. They devour the newspaper literature both of Ireland and of America which now floods the country, of which the real or supposed wrongs of Ireland form so large a part, and their minds are kept at fever heat. Instead of a vent being found for their energies in allowing them to manage their own affairs, and so curbing the excesses which are almost inseparable accompaniments of emancipation from ignorance and serfdom these excesses have been curbed by enactments of a drastic repressive character.

Not only is the political state of Ireland, from the causes referred to above – some of which are due to legislation, others to advancing civilization – in a critical state, but the economic state of the country is also most serious. The great fall in the prices of all agricultural produce comes at a time when the way of living of the people has so improved that they regard as necessaries of life many comforts which only a relapse into something like barbarism would enable them to do without. There will be great difficulty in paying rents. Landlords will insist, in many instances, upon the judicial rents being paid without reference to the circumstances of their individual tenants, and those who can pay will use the position of those who cannot to help them to evade payment.

While such is the state of Ireland politically and economically, an organic change is made by the recent enormous extension of the franchise to the masses, and all exceptional legislation of a repressive character is abandoned. The masses feel their power, and use it unsparingly. They organize and combine to force the minority to join them on pain of being "Boycotted," and they establish Courts of their own, to whose Judgments they render more obedience than to the legally constituted Courts of the land. Mr. Parnell issues a

programme merging all lesser objects in a demand for a separate Irish Parliament, to which the Catholic Hierarchy give their warm support, and by means of Conventions, jointly of priests and people, Members pledged to support this programme are being selected throughout the country with extraordinary unanimity.

The ignorance of England and Scotland of Irish matters, even on the part of Members of Parliament, is very great. This is cause for serious concern at the present moment. I believe the apathy too often displayed by them on the subject has disappeared, but the difficulty of obtaining a true knowledge of the situation and of the real views of the Irish people is very great. On the one hand, the landlords, and all who look at the matter from their point of view, cry out for coercion, and point to the excesses still vividly in the public memory as the justification for it. On the other hand, the extreme press denounce the English as foreign oppressors, and clearly point to, and indeed directly advocate, a policy of separation from England and of expoliation,⁹⁶ as the end and aim of the people being allowed to manage their own affairs. Then, again, the religious differences of opinion are much mixed up with the political differences. Many Protestants hold that the Church of Rome is at the bottom of the discontent, and is fomenting it to secure her own aggrandizement; while others assert that the Land question is the only matter really at issue, and that if this were satisfactorily settled the cry for an Irish Parliament would disappear.

Others contend, while admitting the great force and power of the present moment, that its true foundation is not in a desire for a recognition of nationality, but that it is merely an upheaval on the part of those who have not, against those who have, and they point to the absence of men of means from it in support of this view. They point also to the feeling in the North of Ireland, where, among the propertied classes, the desire to maintain the Union is very strong, and urge that something like a civil war would be the result of conceding a local Parliament to Ireland. These are grave considerations indeed; but, on the other hand, it is urged, first, that the propertied classes generally in Ireland are intimately connected with the land, and that their national feelings are overborne by their individual interests; and, second, that although the question of religion has an extraordinary power in the North, yet that community of interests in other respects would soon secure their co-operation, and that if they felt secure that they would not be subject to Catholic domination, much of their antagonism towards an Irish Parliament would cease.

⁹⁶ An archaic word meaning the act of stripping off or removal (definition from the *Oxford English Dictionary*).

The adhesion of the Catholic Church to the movement is pointed to as strong evidence that they who know the country well, and all whose interests in a normal state of society are Conservative, regard the movement as a genuine one, and not based on a policy of expropriation of which they themselves would eventually, if not immediately be sufferers. And while religious differences are matter of great regret, it is urged that it is more fair and just that the minority should give way to the majority rather than that the majority should give way to the minority, although it is, of course, essential in any well-governed community that there should be the utmost liberty and freedom for all.

But there is no ambiguity in Mr. Parnell's programme. There is no longer any possibility of doubt as to what is asked for. The issue is distinctly before the country, and if at the coming elections, as I believe will be the case, the great majority of the country (say, four-fifths) declare for an Irish Parliament, whatever may be the considerations that can fairly be discounted, it must be recognized that such constitutionally expressed view [*sic*] is the view of the great majority of the country.

Now, in that event, what is to be done? Have the statesmen who are responsible for the government of this country considered what the position of matters is, and what direction the future legislation for Ireland is to take? I do not stop to discuss whether the views of the Representatives of Parliament are to be ignored by Parliament for this I hold to be not only impossible in a free Assembly, but also inconsistent with the fundamental principles of constitutional government. Is it conceivable that if the great majority of the Scotch Members were unanimous in advocating some measure for Scotland, it would not be seriously considered by both parties, with the view of granting it if Imperial interests would allow? The more important the subject, the stronger is the call for such treatment of it; and surely the time has arrived for taking into consultation the Representatives of the Irish people in settling how they are to be governed.

It is urged by many Englishmen who are well-disposed to Ireland that the Irish members are a party of rebels, with whom no loyal man should enter into communication. But is this fair or just? Undoubtedly great violence of expression has been used by many members of the party, which is much to be regretted and condemned, but which is almost the inevitable consequent [*sic*] of strong excitement. Let us take care that we do not foster treason by refusing to listen to any demands, whatever they are, which were preferred in a constitutional way.

When Parliament reassembles, are the Representatives of Great Britain to combine to postpone indefinitely what Ireland asks, and, if so, what are they to do in the meantime; or are they to yield it

accompanied by efficient safeguards (1) that the integrity of the Empire is maintained, and (2) that there shall be no undue interference with the liberties of the minority and the rights of property? The question is not one of “never,” but of “when” and “how.”

In dealing with this question the interests of the Empire as a whole are at stake as much as the interests of Ireland. The integrity of the Empire must be maintained, but whatever solution of the other relationships of Ireland to Great Britain is just and fair to Ireland must be best for the Empire. No solution of the matter which, from any cause whatever, withholds what it is just to concede to Ireland can be permanently advantageous to the Empire.

Now, let us consider what Mr. Parnell's programme involves, and what the effects of adopting it would be.

In the first place, it involves the power being conceded to the Irish Parliament to raise their own revenues as they see fit, and no settlement will be accepted as satisfactory to the Irish people which does not leave this power to Ireland. It can scarcely be urged that the concession of liberty in this respect will any more conflict with the integrity of the Empire than the exercise of it does in the case of our great self-governing Colonies. It no doubt would be inconvenient to have different Tariffs in Ireland and in Great Britain, but there are no Imperial interests involved in the matter. It is conceivable that some individual manufacturing interests in England or Scotland might to some extent suffer by the imposition of import duties in Ireland, or the granting of bounties on Irish manufactures, which is the most likely form protection would take. But, as England will always be the great market for Irish produce, the Irish are not likely to take any step which would destroy this market. In this relation, England can do without Ireland, but Ireland cannot do without England. To England an interruption of the Irish supply would be but a temporary inconvenience. To Ireland it would be fatal, and they are too keen not to see this. There would be little risk, therefore, in conceding this part of Mr. Parnell's programme.

The really serious issues we have to face in dealing with this matter are (1) that the concession of legislative independence is demanded, and might be accepted only as a step to absolute separation; and (2) that the rights of property and of the Protestant minority might not be secured, notwithstanding any safeguards which might be introduced into any new Constitution for Ireland; and (3) that if (1) and (2) were successfully met, still the country, from the absence of any training or experience in matters of government, might be found unequal to the task of governing itself.

As regards (1), I do not think any real danger is to be apprehended. Ireland would have no power granted to her by her Constitution to

raise local forces. Great Britain would keep such troops in Ireland as she saw fit, and would retain the entire control of these, and of the Irish militia. The granting of a separate Parliament would not put the country in a better position to take up arms against England, or to harbour an enemy's troops in Ireland; while there is at least the hope that the feeling in Ireland towards England would so improve by conceding to her the right to manage her own affairs, she would soon come to recognize that her best interests were bound up with those of England, instead of being in any way antagonistic to them.

The second point is the more difficult one. England is largely responsible for the present state of Ireland, under which there is great exasperation of classes, and she cannot shirk her responsibilities in the matter, and let the party who are now the weakest, but who by the bolstering-up of England have hitherto been the strongest, go to the wall. I believe in the innate sense of justice in the Irish people, and I should have no fear that an Irish Government, chosen by the people, would act unfairly to any class, were it not for the great excitement in which the country now is. Some moderating influence is required, and this might be provided for (*a*) by England retaining for the present the control of the Constabulary, and (*b*) by introducing into a carefully-devised Constitution for Ireland, which would find a place in the government of the country for all classes and interests, certain temporary provisions to meet the peculiar circumstances of the moment.

As regard[s] (*a*) there is nothing inconsistent in England retaining the control of the Constabulary, which is, at least, a *semi*-military force, being armed, drilled and capable of concentration on any given point. Under a Constitution to be granted for Ireland, provision might be made that as the local authorities supplied, at their own cost, local police, this general and semi-military force, maintained at Imperial charge, might be gradually disbanded.

As regards (*b*), I am not prepared with a cut and dried Constitution. This could only be devised after the utmost consideration of the subject in all its bearings; but it is manifest that weighty controlling influences could be secured by the creation of a second Chamber, which should sufficiently represent the propertied classes in the country; by requiring a majority of, say, two-thirds, before measures dealing with certain specified matters should become law; by adopting, so far as practicable, the plan of minority representation; and by retaining in the hands of the Crown, as is the case in some of the Colonies, the appointment of some [of] the superior Judges. Such provisions to meet the temporary difficulties of the situation might be devised, as an extension of purchase of landlord's interests, providing fair terms for persons who might be dispossessed of appointments under the Government, &c.

Into these details I do not propose to enter. The whole arrangement would be one of give and take. It should be dealt with in a liberal spirit by the Imperial Exchequer, and it surely ought not to be beyond the power of statesmen to establish such safeguards in granting a Constitution for Ireland, if they are honestly determined to create them, and the leaders of the Irish party are honestly determined to accept them and to carry them out.

The third point, viz., whether, if legislative independence were granted to Ireland, she would be able to govern herself, is also a very serious one. I am aware of the risks attending such a course. If failure should be the result, England, which could not tolerate the existence of a Haiti on her borders, would have to interfere, and the last state would be worse than the first. I attach no importance whatever to the suggestion sometimes made, that the necessary power and capacity for administering the affairs of Ireland does not exist in the country. The experience of our Colonies and of England itself negatives such a suggestion, but experience in matters of government is undoubtedly wanting on the part of those on whom its conduct would devolve, and grave mistakes might be made which would be criticized by no friendly eye by many. I assume, of course, that the safeguards referred to in (2) are introduced into the Constitution; but these could not provide for efficient administration, though they might prevent undue interference with certain rights. Many true well-wishers to Ireland say you should begin at the bottom and not at the top. Establish a good machinery of local government, by means of which you can build up a superstructure culminating in a local Parliament. If you grant a Parliament before you have the foundations of local government, the whole thing will go to pieces, and chaos will be the result. Now there is much to be said for this view; and had the step of creating the machinery for local government been adopted years ago, a less haza[r]dous course than is now required might have been possible; but we have to deal with matters as they are.

No mere creation of County Boards will be acceptable to the people now. If such a scheme were promulgated and worked, the present Board of Guardians element would dominate all the local Councils, and the upper classes would be forced out of the country, before a local Parliament, built up on such a foundation, could be granted. No real well-wisher of Ireland would desire to see the propertied classes forced out of the country; but by granting legislative independence in the way I have suggested, you find a place for the representation of the upper classes in the Government of the country, and you open to them a legitimate way of securing that their interests are attended to by making themselves felt in the councils of the nation, instead of their solely relying, as heretofore, on British bayonets to protect their rights.

Now assuming for the moment that it was possible to concede Mr. Parnell's programme with efficient safeguards, let us see what advantages would follow. At the present moment all classes of Nationalists, from the loyal Home Ruler, who would fight to maintain the connection with England, to the Separatist and Dynamitard, are united in making a great constitutional effort to secure it being carried out. Money from abroad, which used to go to create outrages, is all going to constitutional purposes; and this fact of itself is most significant, as showing that, once what is asked for is got, the supplies will cease, and as there can be no skilfully planned outrages on a large scale without money, that such outrages will cease also. Then again, the great body of the Catholic Hierarchy and of the priests have thrown themselves into the movement. It is only reasonable, therefore, to assume that the concession of Mr. Parnell's programme would satisfy the great majority in Ireland, including the Catholic Church, and would put an end to dynamite and other outrages. The Irish Members would no longer sit in the House of Commons, and the intolerable Parliamentary difficulty would disappear, and the public business of the Empire would go on in the old legitimate way. Another source of growing trouble and difficulty would also be removed. The present feeling of the Irish in America is very hostile to Great Britain, and might prove a serious danger in the event of complications arising with the United States. But the Irish in America have unanimously allied themselves with Mr. Parnell's programme, and it is only reasonable to hope that the concession of this would convert them into friends of Great Britain.

In a certain sense it may be said that the withdrawal of Irish Representatives from the Imperial House of Commons would be a derogation to Ireland, as she would then have no voice in Imperial questions, such as foreign policy, alliances, or wars. But these matters do not have the same interest with the Irish mind, certainly in its present temper, as they have with Englishmen. Moreover, sometimes it is necessary to take a step back as a preliminary to taking a step forward. A time must come before long when Imperial federation of all parts of the Empire will take place, and then Ireland will take her place with others. But until this occurs it is better that she should cease to take part altogether in Imperial questions than that, with the present condition of the Imperial Parliament, an attempt should be made to allow her Representatives only to take part in the discussion of Imperial questions. Without an entire remodelling of the Imperial Parliament as at present constituted, and the establishment of local Councils in England and Scotland to deal with purely local affairs, it would not be practicable to limit the interference of Irish Representatives to purely Imperial questions. Great as the Irish difficulty is, Britain will

not be prepared to pay this price at present for solving it, while the irritation and embarrassment arising from the determination of what were Imperial questions, and what were not, would largely neutralize the advantages which should leave to Ireland the sole and undivided control of all those questions on which her mind is now set.

I am far from thinking that when this is done, if it should be done, the Irish Parliament would not have a very difficult task before them which would tax their utmost energies. The keen religious difference in their country and the complications arising therefrom, the different circumstances of the manufacturing industries in the north, and of the agricultural industries in the richer parts of the middle and south, and the terrible problem of the congested districts would always make the government of Ireland a matter of great difficulty. But surely there is more hope of these being satisfactorily dealt with by those who know the circumstances and represent the various interests at stake themselves directing the government of the country, than by a centralized system of government directed by a Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary, whose tenure of office is seldom sufficiently prolonged to enable them to acquire anything like a thorough knowledge of the complicated problems which surround the government of Ireland.

Now let us consider the effects of the alternative policy of waiting, and endeavouring to prepare the country for self-government by minor measures.

To begin with, nothing short of an Irish parliament will satisfy the aspirations of the National party. Whatever is done, therefore, will not be accepted with satisfaction or gratitude. It will not receive their co-operation or help, and will have to be done for the country by England, instead of being done by themselves. The Parliamentary Party will not help Parliament in devising beneficent measures, and with the best intentions these measures will largely fail in their objects. When passed, instead of trying to get all the advantage possible out of them, the people will exercise their ingenuity to make them abortive. The influence at present used with such effect by the Parliamentary party to keep down outrages will lose its heart and weight, and outrages will recommence. Repressive legislation will have to be re-enacted. The Parliamentary difficulty, already intolerable, will become more intolerable still, and even the extension of the objectionable plan of the "clôture"⁹⁷ will be powerless to prevent it. The people will be kept in a perpetual state of excitement, and will be unable to settle down to attend to their own affairs. The cry for separation, which is not a real sentiment at present, will gain immeasurably in force, and a few years

⁹⁷ A means of closing parliamentary debate with the consent of a majority of those voting, cloture was introduced in 1881 to overcome the obstructionist tactics of the Irish nationalists.

hence will certainly, in my view, not find Ireland in the least degree more prepared for self-government than it is at present.

It is true that the want of money, if the struggle is long protracted, may raise difficulties as regards many of the present Parliamentary party. They may more or less break up, but we should be living in a fool's paradise if we regarded this as a cause for congratulation, or thought that the intense longing on the part of the country for a recognition of its nationality had ceased, because she was too poor to continue to give expression to it in a constitutional way. Far less money than it takes to support the Parliamentary party would go a long way in promoting dynamite outrages both in England and Ireland, and undoubtedly much of it would go in this direction. But it is not upon this ground I would have the action of a great country like England based. Is it wise, is it generous, to exert the strong arm of power to curb a feeling which is laudable in the minds of any people, and which can, by just treatment, be made a source of strength instead of weakness to the Empire of which they form a part?

And now for a practical suggestion. Whatever party may be in power after the elections should, in my view, take up the Irish question as of the first and supremest importance. A Resolution should be proposed to the House of Commons that the fullest measure of legislative independence should be given to Ireland consistently with maintaining the integrity of the Empire and the supremacy of the Throne, and with efficient safeguards for the rights of property and the liberties of the minority; and a joint Committee of both Houses on which, of course, the Irish National party should be largely represented, should be appointed to draw up a Constitution for Ireland with this object, providing for a complete separation of the accounts and indebtedness of the two countries, on some such lines as are indicated in the Appendix to this Memorandum.⁹⁸

This ought to be possible. I believe it would be found to be possible. Difficulties disappear when there is a common object in view, and that object is in itself definite and distinct. The sole danger to guard against is the disintegration of the Empire. The geographical position of the two countries, and their best interests, forbid it, and as in the Northern States of America, so in Great Britain, every man would fight to the last to prevent it, and the issue is undoubted, but after taking ample securities in this respect, let Great Britain give up the

⁹⁸ The paper includes an appendix entitled 'Separation of accounts between Great Britain and Ireland': see **Journal** (28 October 1885). When the paper was reprinted on 29 January 1886, a second appendix entitled 'Land question' was added: see AP, Add MS 77328 and GP, Add MS 44631, fos 122–129.

impossible task of trying to govern an educated people from without, instead of allowing and aiding them to govern themselves.

Should this task prove impossible, and the interests of the Empire forbid the concession such as I have suggested, then, and then only, should we be justified in continuing to rule Ireland in a way which is opposed to the sentiments of the people as expressed by their constitutional Representatives, and forcing them, whether they will or not, to fall into line in all respects with England and Scotland, and in incurring the serious risks which such a policy would involve.

21. E.G. Jenkinson to Lord Rosebery, 4 November 1885; Home Office; NLS, MS 10084, fos 121–125.

In the summer I sent to you with Sir W. Harcourt[’s] permission a printed memorandum of mine on the organization of the Clanna-gael society in the United States,⁹⁹ and I now send you with Lord Carnarvon’s permission a memorandum which I wrote in the end of September partly in continuation of the former memorandum, and partly expressing my views on the present situation in Ireland.¹⁰⁰ The immense importance of the Irish question not only from a local but also from an Imperial point of view must be my excuse for troubling you at this time when you must have so many engagements and so much to occupy your thoughts. Besides I think I should fail in my duty if having such special sources of information at my disposal I did not do all in my power to assist leading men in England in the solution of the Irish problem. Little is I fancy known of the under currents in the movement now going on in Ireland, and of the secret forces which are at work behind the Parliamentary Party. But if the situation is to be understood, and if we are to find a right solution of the problem a knowledge and appreciation of these is indispensable.

It should never be forgotten that we have not now to deal with Ireland only. If that were so we should not have such a very difficult task before us. We have to reckon with the Irish population in America and in our Colonies and we must bear in mind that the main spring of the movement is in the United States of America. I feel quite sure that there is no question of such pressing & vital importance at the present moment as the Irish one, and if I could only impress this upon English statesmen and at the same time help to dispel the ignorance which exists in England about Ireland & the Irish I should feel that I had done

⁹⁹ See **Document 8**.

¹⁰⁰ See **Document 15**.

something towards its solution. It is too late now for any half measures. We must deal with the question liberally, boldly and generously. We must either trust the Irish altogether or not trust them at all.

I need hardly say that this memorandum is secret, and nothing in it should be quoted publicly, but if your Lordship thinks that there is anything in it worthy of consideration you will be quite at liberty to show it to any one privately.

I doubt whether Mr. Gladstone himself is aware of the great power of the secret organizations which exist in America & the United Kingdom, and which at the present time are giving all the support they can to Mr. Parnell, but which will be ready to renew violent agitation directly Mr. Parnell's policy receives a check.

I suppose you have the former memorandum by you. If not I could send another copy should you desire it.

22. E.G. Jenkinson to Lord Carnarvon, 6 November 1885; 'Private'; CP, Add MS 60829, fos 136–139.

I saw Lord Salisbury yesterday, and had a long talk with him about Ireland. He takes a rather gloomy view of the future, and is inclined to think that it will be impossible in the present state of opinion in England about Ireland to do anything in the way of settling the Irish question early in the next session.¹⁰¹ He thinks it must come to a head in the way we most dread. I am afraid it must be so, but it is so terrible and so lamentable I do not like to think of it. Lord Salisbury said that he was afraid Home Rule could not come from the Conservatives.

I sent a copy of my memorandum¹⁰² to Sir R. Cross the same day as I sent a copy to Your Excellency because I thought that as my chief while over here, he ought to have one, and because I thought you would wish him to have it. The copy which Your Excellency received was sent off on the 2nd November and as no telegram or letter came on the 3rd or 4th November 1885 telling me not to send copies to the persons I had mentioned to you I sent off one copy to Lord Rosebury.¹⁰³ After I had dispatched it your telegram of the 4th reached me, and I immediately wrote to Lord Rosebury to keep the memorandum

¹⁰¹ Salisbury spoke in similar vein to Spencer during a shooting party at Sandringham in mid-November: Spencer to Lord Granville, 22 November 1885, repr. *RE*, II, pp. 79–80.

¹⁰² See **Document 15**.

¹⁰³ See **Document 21**.

strictly private.¹⁰⁴ I would not have done this had I not understood that I had received Your Excellency's permission to send copies to Lord Spencer, Lord Northbrook¹⁰⁵ & Lord Rosebery. I suppose I am to understand now that I am not to send copies to the Lord Spencer and Lord Northbrook?

23. Lord Carnarvon to E.G. Jenkinson, 8 November 1885; Vice Regal Lodge, Dublin. Copy; 'Private'; CP, Add MS 60829, fos 140–143.

Your letter of the 6th has taken me entirely by surprise.¹⁰⁶ I had, & could have, no idea that you wd. distribute copies of a very confidential mem. printed at the F.O. to any one except the Prime Minister without further communication. You will remember that I was very doubtful as to the printing of the mem. at all that when I finally agreed to it I said there must only be a very limited number of copies (I think I said six) – that I did not propose to circulate it even among my own colleagues & that it was therefore clearly impossible that I should desire its circulation outside the Cabinet and that I cannot therefore conceive how you could have so far misapprehended anything I said or did not say as to think yourself free to make a communication of this kind. For it must be remembered that though the mem. is drawn up by yourself, it was drawn for my information or use, and is printed at the F.O. and may seem to carry with it a certain amount of official authority.

I trust that your telegram to Ld Rosebury will be in time to assure his absolute & entire silence on the subject; but I have thought the matter of such great importance that I have myself [written] to him to ask him to treat the communication as entirely confidential.¹⁰⁷

It is a matter much to be regretted; but I seriously hope that no mischief will come of it.

24. Sir Robert Hamilton to Lord Spencer, 3 December 1885; Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle; 'Private'; AP, Add MS 77060.

I got your letter and its enclosures which I return. [*These dealt with an administrative matter concerning the Church of England.*]

¹⁰⁴See Carnarvon to Jenkinson, 4 November 1885 (telegram): CP/TNA, PRO 30/6/62 (32).

¹⁰⁵Thomas George Baring (1826–1904), first Earl of Northbrook (1866), Governor-General of India (1872–1876), First Lord of the Admiralty (1880–1885), opponent of home rule.

¹⁰⁶See **Document 22**.

¹⁰⁷See Carnarvon to Rosebery, 8 November 1885; CP/TNA, PRO 30/6/62 (33).

I certainly expected the Liberals to have a much larger majority than they are likely to have, but it is still possible that they may outnumber the Tories & Nationalists together.

I don't think the new Parliament can be a long lived one. I doubt if the issue even now as regards Ireland has been clearly before the minds of the English Voters.

I think the time has gone by for small measures, and that the risk must be run of passing a great one. But the future is very dark.

I am very glad that your brother is in.¹⁰⁸ My prediction that the extension of the franchise would result in the extinction of the Liberal representatives for Ireland is being completely fulfilled. It was the right course never the less.

I was not very sorry that Childers & Lefevre were defeated¹⁰⁹ for I always dreaded one or other of them coming here.

25. Lord Carnarvon, 'Remarkable report by Fottrell to Sir R. Hamilton', 7 December 1885; Vice Regal Lodge, Dublin; CP/TNA, PRO 30/6/67 (30).

Fottrell told Sir R. Hamilton these remarkable things.

1. Dillon & Gray had been during the last few days anxiously considering what measures could be taken to enforce the law for the collection of rents, where the rents were reasonable, & to relax it where they were impossible "fully appreciating the chaos which wd ensue if the rights of property were not maintained". All this was being considered with a view to the speedy obtaining of an Irish Parl.
2. They also were in favour of a second Chamber of which a certain part should be Irish Peers: but they were inclined to provide that in the event of a difference between them & the Lower House the vote of the Upper Chamber cd be suspensive only, say two or even three times the power of a veto.
3. They were in addition considering the possibility of a minority representation.

¹⁰⁸Hon. Charles Robert Spencer (1857–1922) sixth Earl Spencer (1910), Lib. MP for Northamptonshire North (1880–1885) and for Mid-Northamptonshire (1885–1895).

¹⁰⁹Childers lost the seat for Pontefract but was returned as a Liberal Home Ruler for Edinburgh South in July 1886. Shaw-Lefevre lost the seat for Reading but was returned for the constituency of Bradford Central following the death of W.E. Forster in April 1886.

26. [Lord Carnarvon], 7 December 1885; 'Very Confidential'; Printed for the use of the Cabinet, 11 December 1885; CAB 37/16/64.

Whatever may be the decision of Cabinet in reference to the elections, I think it desirable to place before my colleagues, as shortly as I can, the present state of Ireland, and the opinion which I hold in regard to it. Those of them who remember what I said on a former occasion will scarcely be surprised at the purport of this paper.

1. As regards the condition of the country, agrarian crime and outrage have been, and continue, low. There has been only one agrarian murder since I have been in Ireland, if, indeed, this particular crime was not due to other causes. "Boycotting" has been held in check, as I said it would be, and has diminished, though it is still very mischievous and capable of development.

On the other hand, the National League has lost none of its power. It has, on the contrary, acquired a remarkable organization and force. The Roman Catholic Clergy, though with reluctance on the part of the Bishops and higher clergy, have been drawn more and more under the influence of the National League and into the ranks of the Nationalist party. The landlords seem in most districts hopelessly alienated from the tenants, and without influence. Everywhere, except in the Counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Londonderry, and Tyrone in the north, the Nationalist cry has swept all before it. At the last Dublin Municipal Election, not a single Conservative seat was retained,¹⁰⁰ and the history of the recent Electoral Conventions, and the defeat of Mr. Callan in Louth,¹⁰¹ show that, at present, there is an unexampled organization and power at the disposal of Mr. Parnell.

To all this I must add that there is a great development of the Secret Societies in the United States, an abundance of money subscribed, the closest communication existing between them and kindred Societies in Ireland, which, though not active, are only waiting the signal to become so, and are every week growing more formidable.

Meanwhile, the Government in Ireland remains in a state of hopeless isolation, and with the means at its disposal is totally

¹⁰⁰The four Conservatives seeking re-election were defeated by Nationalists: *F7*, 26 November 1885, p. 7.

¹⁰¹ Philip Callan (1837–1922), Home Rule MP for Dundalk (1868–1880) and for County Louth (1880–1885): see Gerard Moran, 'Philip Callan: the rise and fall of an Irish Nationalist MP, 1868–1885', *County Louth Archaeological and Historical Journal*, 22, no. 4 (1992), pp. 395–411.

unable to do more than for a very short time to keep things *in statu quo*.

2. Besides this, there are other most serious dangers immediately ahead. The position of trade and agriculture is very grave. On all sides there is a disposition to refuse rent in whole or in part. Fresh organizations – more difficult to deal with – are constantly being formed, and at any moment we may have to face a widespread agreement on the part of tenants to refuse rent. In many parts of the country this is due to a real absence of money; in other parts, advantage is taken of the agricultural depression. We are, in fact, enjoying a short truce.

3. If no settlement of this state of things is practicable, not only will the condition of Ireland become almost intolerable, but the difficulties outside it will be most grave. First and foremost a renewal of outrages, on a more extended scale than ever, will occur, having their base of operations in the United States. We know, indeed, that preparations are being made. Next, it is reasonable to expect a further disorganization of Parliament and public business, with all the discredit, difficulty, and danger to public institutions which are likely to follow in the play of factions; and last, the great danger from a hostile Ireland in America, and the risk in Canada, and even in Australia, where there is a considerable Irish element. To all this must be added the extraordinary, not to say discreditable, spectacle of a four-fifths representation in a nominally free Assembly, whom Parliament, if they cannot come to terms, will be compelled to silence or ignore.

4. The question then arises, what in these circumstances can be done. So far as the interests of Ireland, England, and the Empire generally are concerned – though I recognize the extreme dangers of any change whatever – I think the best chance of safety lies in the course which I will indicate.

I believe half-measures in this case are impracticable and dangerous, particularly to the landowners – that class whose interests are now threatened in Ireland. There is no real alternative now, I fear, between large concession and repression; and a very considerable number of men, of the greatest experience and capacity, and of undoubted Conservatism and loyalty, whose judgement I have been able to obtain, have not hesitated in confidence to avow themselves of this opinion. I do not think it right to state any names even in so secret a Memorandum as this, but the fact is so; and the reason why both they and I take this view, is that small instalments of change cannot be accompanied by any counter-balancing precautions or checks, and will only lead at no distant day to that which is the

great present danger – the gradual or forcible expropriation of the landlords.

There are three burning questions at present – the land, the education [*sic*], and local self-government. And let me here say that by local self-government is not meant the establishment of County or District Boards, but some elective body, which shall have all the outward form and semblance of a Parliament. This is what is desired, and nothing less, as far as I can see, will be accepted; and when a nation has passionately, however irrationally, set its mind upon this, and when all the really influential classes (excepting, of course, a part of Ulster) are agreed, it will be found, under our Parliamentary system, practically impossible to refuse it.

All these three questions, then, will have to be faced before long, but probably the land is the most important, and must form an essential, if not the first part, of any scheme of settlement.

Difficult as it may be, I do not think that it would be impossible to frame such a scheme as might with comparative safety embrace these three subjects. I believe that there are one or two methods at least which might be attempted with some reasonable hope of success, and I do not see that even a Parliament, if duly balanced and guarded, need be so dangerous as at first sight it may appear. I feel, anyhow, convinced that it is less dangerous than the half-measures which are most in favour with both political parties. I will not, however, embarrass this Memorandum by going into these details. I could do so if necessary.

5. So far I have considered the matter in the general interests of England, and particularly of Ireland; but it remains to consider it in the light of Party possibilities, and if it is clear, as some think, that the Party will not endure such a course as I have indicated, then I admit that it is a paramount duty at this crisis not to split or divide it.

But it is worth considering whether there is any line of action which can solve the difficulty without creating discord in the Party.

I can see only three courses:—

(1.) To propose and do nothing, and wait till we are turned out by a combination of Liberals and Irish, which is a view I only mention to discard.

(2.) The adoption of some considerable, yet comparatively minor, measures in the hopes of tiding over the difficulty till the Irish party are disintegrated – which, by the way, let me say would not really settle the difficulty or, perhaps, much improve the case.

A larger scheme of higher education seemed, at one time, the most likely expedient in this direction. We have formally promised to deal with it; if we meet Parliament, we must allude to it in the Queen's

Speech; it was the question by which we trusted to satisfy and win to the side of order the Roman Catholic Bishops; it was one which separated them, in a religious point of view, from a large part of the Irish Parliamentary party; it was also one on which I thought we might see our way to deal broadly and successfully; and, lastly, if properly dealt with, we might safeguard that which is grievously threatened in the immediate future – the interests of Trinity College.

But events have moved too fast, and I am afraid that the attempt would be too late, mainly through the action of one man. The Archbishop of Dublin, it is clear, has made an alliance with Mr. Parnell; he has publicly declared against such a settlement as I think we ought to make, and he has within the last few weeks, strange to say, apparently won over a majority of the Bishops. It is not easy to suppose that he would go back from a public utterance such as this.

(3.) One last alternative remains, viz., to do something, without committing ourselves as a Government to any course which might divide the Party. I wish my colleagues to consider whether it might not be possible to propose a Joint Committee of both Houses to consider the relations of Ireland and England, or the better government of Ireland, or some such general proposition, subject to the two following conditions, expressed in the most distinct language:—

1. The supremacy and authority of the Crown.

2. The maintenance of the rights of minorities in religion and property.

This would gain time, would educate the party and the country to a knowledge of the case, in which they are extraordinarily ignorant; would be constitutionally a very defensible course; would give a chance of moderate councils prevailing; would secure the combined action of both parties; and would, if we failed to come to a conclusion through the fault of the Irish Party, leave us free to deal with the question in a much more decided manner, – and all without committing the Government to any definite proposals.

But such a course, if adopted, ought, I think, to have the preliminary concurrence of the Party. I do not overlook or underrate the objections which might be made; but in this extremely grave juncture, some risks may reasonably be run.

It would also, I think, be highly desirable, if possible, to ascertain by very private negotiation whether we should have the support of any or all of the leaders of the Opposition.

The first of these modes of proceeding appears to me necessary, the second not absolutely necessary, but very desirable. A very considerable number of people in England would, I believe,

approve of a union of the leaders of parties in order to solve the problem.

27. E.G. Jenkinson to W.E. Gladstone, 11 December 1885; 14 St. James Square, London S.W.; 'Secret & Private'; GP, Add MS 56446, fos 170–179.

I hope you will not think that I am taking too great a liberty in writing to you a few lines about Irish questions. But it seems to me to be of such pressing importance and I have so intimate knowledge of what is going on behind the scenes both in Ireland and in America that I cannot refrain from putting before you what, I believe to be a true picture of the present situation.

Even at the risk of writing obscurely I will state what I have to say in the smallest compass possible.

I do not know whether you are aware of the existence of two powerful Fenian organizations, the one in America called the Clan-na-Gael and the other in the United Kingdom called the United [Irish] Revolutionary Brotherhood. There are also some smaller organizations the principal of which is the old Fenian Brotherhood headed by O'Donovan Rossa in New York, and by James Stephens¹¹² in Europe.

The Clan-na-Gael organization is however far more powerful than any other and has at its command large resources both in money and men. It really is the main spring of the whole movement. The Dynamite explosions in London in 1882 & 1884, as also the blowing up of the House of Commons this year were the work of its agents, and practically it controls and guides the Policy of the National League in America and in the United Kingdom, and to a large extent also the Policy of the Irish Parliamentary Party.¹¹³

At the present time this organization and also all other Irish organizations in America and the United Kingdom have determined

¹¹² James Stephens (1824–1901), Young Irelander and founder of the IRB (1858) and *Irish People* (1863), head centre (i.e. leader) of the Fenian movement until 1867, returned to Dublin from exile in Paris in 1885.

¹¹³ The Fenian bombing campaign began in Salford in January 1881 and continued with attacks on Liverpool Town Hall, the Mansion House, and Local Government Board offices. The first attack thought to have been fomented by Clan-na-Gael occurred at Victoria underground station on 25 February 1884 and was followed by explosions at Scotland Yard and London Bridge: see K.R.M. Short, *The Dynamite War: Irish-American bombers in Victorian Britain* (Dublin, 1979); Bernard Porter, *The Origins of the Vigilant State: the London Metropolitan Police Special Branch before the First World War* (London, 1987), pp. 45–48, and Jenkinson, 'Confidential memorandum', 22 June 1885; CP, Add MS 60829, fos 57–61.

to hold their hand and to give Parnell as they say, a “chance”. All Dynamite work and all violent measures have been stopped and large sums of money are being forwarded to Parnell to aid him in his electioneering campaign, and to provide salaries for some of the new Irish members. But at the same time Fenians generally do not believe much in Parnell’s chances of success. They think what they want can only be wrung from England by force – and they are in consequence organizing and preparing everywhere, in London, in the large cities in England, in Ireland and in America for “active work” in the future. It is uncertain how long in time they will give Parnell. The extremists and the Irreconcilables are already beginning to show signs of impatience. But it is quite certain that should Parnell not meet with success or should he receive a check we shall have before next summer a renewal of violent agitation in Ireland. The outrages & murders of 1882 will be repeated, in Ireland, and in London & perhaps in other parts of England there will be Dynamite explosions, the murder of statesmen and officials, and other outrages. All are determined about this, and all are preparing for it.

We shall be able more clearly to see what is in contemplation after the Convention at Chicago which is fixed for the 20th & 21st January 1886 has taken place.¹⁴⁴ There will first be a Convention of the Irish National League the proceedings of which will be practically under the control of the Leaders of the Clan-na-Gael, and this will be followed by secret conventions of the Clan-na-Gael and other Irish secret organizations. Future prospects will there be discussed and the Policy of the coming year will be settled. The Extremists will urge the recommencement of active revolutionary work, but the probability is that they will be kept in check for some little time longer by the moderates who wish to give every possible chance to constitutional agitation.

We therefore seem to have arrived at a most critical time in Irish History. Ireland is passing through a great revolution, and the problem to be solved is how to guide her safely through that revolution without a renewal of violent agitation & horrible outrages, without additional suffering and injustice to the landlords, and without danger to the integrity of the Empire. *It is impossible to put off any longer the solution of this problem. The Irish question is so large that it not only overshadows, but it includes every other question of importance.*¹⁴⁵ It includes not only the reform in the procedure in the House of Commons, & all domestic legislation, but also matters connected with our Foreign and Colonial Policy. Neither

¹⁴⁴ See note 93 above.

¹⁴⁵ The passages in italics are those highlighted in the margin of the letter, presumably by Gladstone or a private secretary.

is it possible to put off the final settlement of the question by any half measures. It must be dealt with finally and boldly. *We must either meet the wishes and aspirations of the large majority of the Irish in Ireland and all parts of the world and give them a large & liberal measure of Home Rule, or we must make up our minds to adopt what is called the strong arm Policy, and to rule Ireland by force.* I cannot believe that any sensible man would think for a moment of adopting the latter course. The danger of delay is very great. If we are to give Home Rule to Ireland (and I feel firmly convinced that Home Rule is inevitable) *it is far better to give it generously and spontaneously than to allow the Irish to wring it from us by force.* I believe, and was of that opinion at the time, that we had a great opportunity at the end of 1883 when we had discovered the Invincible conspiracy and had put down all outrage in Ireland. We were strong then, and in our strength we might have been generous. Now it seems to me we have another opportunity and if we miss it, or if we fail to take advantage of it we shall find ourselves face to face with open revolution. Instead of having to deal with Parnell and his party we shall have to reckon with Extremists & Irreconcilables. *At the present time the moderate men among the nationalists & Fenians form the majority.* It is possible to make terms with them to keep the extremists and violent men in check. But let them see that Parnell is going to fail, that England is going to refuse Home Rule to Ireland and we shall have the present minority of Extremists converted into a majority and it will then be impossible for us to listen to the Leaders, or to make any concessions. The old miserable remedy of coercion will have to be applied again.

Now that so large a number of nationalists have been returned by such overwhelming majorities in Ireland, and Ulster for the first time is largely represented by Parnellites have we not a splendid opportunity for approaching a settlement of the Irish question? We may have thought before that the small band of men in Parliament did not truly represent the wishes & aspirations of the Irish people, that they were merely professional agitators working for their own selfish ends. But it is impossible any longer to think so. We have before us convincing proof of the strong feeling against our present system of Government and of an intense desire for Home Rule. Would it be right or wise to overlook this proof, and to tell the Irish people that we have no sympathy with them and cannot put any trust in them? Would it not be far wiser and more generous to acknowledge frankly our faults in the past, to admit the defects of our administrations, and before it is too late to grant Home Rule to Ireland in a form which would satisfy the people, and make Ireland a strength to England, and a loyal portion of the Empire?

I firmly believe that if we do not grant Home Rule now we shall later on either have to agree to "Separation", or have to prevent Separation by force of arms. The

longer the settlement of the question is put off the more difficult will it be [to] satisfy the Irish, and to obtain good terms for the landlords. As time goes by the demands of the Irish will rise, and the landlords will be in a worse plight. We could have got much easier terms in 1883 than we can hope to get now. And a year hence the terms which would now be accepted would be refused.

By Home Rule the Irish mean the right to regulate their own internal affairs, the right to preserve their revenues for their own advantage, and to make their own laws. During the last three years I have frequently conversed with nationalists and Fenians of all shades of opinion – and with the exception of the violent extremists, mostly Irish Americans, these men do not want separation. Legislative independence does not mean total separation. To my mind the refusal of Home Rule now would much more probably lead to the disintegration of the Empire than would the granting of Home Rule. Arrangements which I need not specify here would have to be worked out in detail, and a settlement of the land question in the interests of the landlords would have to be made. *This latter is a very essential point, indeed in my opinion it is the only real difficulty standing in the way of Home Rule.* It would be impossible to give the Irish a Parliament of their own until either the landlords had been bought out or some sure guarantees have been taken for their protection. I do not fear in the least any persecution of the Protestants by the Roman Catholics, nor do I believe for a moment that on the introduction of Home Rule there would be a Civil War between Ulster and the rest of Ireland. There are many Protestants in the National Ranks, and in the recent Elections many Protestants & Presbyterians voted for Parnellites. Let the land question be settled and there would be no difficulty about Home Rule. If we trust the Irish at all, we should trust them altogether. They are a clever people well able to manage their own affairs – and if we are afraid of trusting them altogether it would be better not to trust them at all. A half measure of Self Government would not satisfy them, and would only be a platform from which they would continue their attacks upon us. The hostile feeling against England would if possible increase, and the Irish would not be satisfied with anything short of Separation.

The men to be feared are the Extremists who think that nothing but fear will induce England to make any concessions to Ireland, and who wish for the establishment of an Irish Republic. For the present these men are kept in check by Parnell, and I believe that in an Irish Parliament they would be a minority. *I believe that in that Parliament there would very speedily be formed, probably under the leadership of Parnell, a strong Nationalist Conservative Party supported by the whole strength of the Roman Catholic Church, the landlords, the newly created peasant proprietors, the*

farmers, and the professional classes, which would be much more than a match for the Separatists & Irreconcilables. There would of course be considerable trouble, and opposition at first but in time things would settle down and all would go well.

I feel so sure that Home Rule is the only solution of the Irish question, and am so convinced that it must come some day that I long to see the subject taken up seriously by English statesmen. It would be most lamentable if with a correct knowledge of the present situation we were with our eyes open to allow blood to be spilt, and the country to be again given up to the mercies of Moonlighters and Secret Societies. *We never were so hated and our Government never was so powerless.* The National League rules Ireland, and our Government is isolated and completely out of touch and out of sympathy with the people. We cannot carry the people with us in anything, and even a measure passed entirely in their interest and for their benefit fails to do any good because its operation is met with obstruction on all sides. Under such conditions no administration can be carried on. It is absolutely necessary that we should get into touch with the people, and that can only be done through their Leaders. *Why should we be ashamed to consult and make terms with men who undoubtedly represent the national feeling,* and who recently have been behaving in a moderate manner, and have been doing their best to keep down outrages? Surely sentimental objections should not stand in the way of such a course, and the taunts of opponents about secret alliances should not prevent us from doing what is just and wise and right? A great step would be gained if the English would acknowledge the principle of Home Rule. Would it not be possible at the commencement of the next Session to pass a Resolution to the effect that Home Rule would be granted to Ireland provided the integrity of the Empire and the supremacy of the Crown could be maintained and sufficient protection could be afforded to the landlords and the minority?

If such a resolution was framed a Committee composed of able men from both Parties, & of Parnellites could be appointed to consider the question in a practical way, and to work out all the details – and with the Report of such a Committee before it Parliament would be able to come to some decisions. The matter would be brought to a head. If Home Rule could safely be granted to Ireland, then there would be legislation in that direction, if not then it would be necessary to put a stop to all agitation in favour of Home Rule, and to devise some other form of Government for Ireland. The advantage of such a course would be it seems to me that we should prove to the people of Ireland our anxiety if possible to meet their wishes as expressed at this last Election, we should keep the Extremists quiet for some months more (and every month so gained tells in our favour) and we should

prevent a renewal of agitation, unseemly fighting and obstruction in Parliament, and perhaps a wasted Session. If the question is allowed to drift on for months shall we not be further off a righteous and just settlement of the question; will not the feeling against us in Ireland be stronger and more bitter, would it not be more difficult to protect and do justice to the landlords, and would not the Extremists make bolder and more impossible demands?

The subject is a very large one, and though I have written at greater length than I intended, I feel I have treated it very imperfectly.

I enclose a printed paper which will explain to you if you have time to read it *the details of the organization of the two large Fenian Societies, and will show their connection with the National League and the Parliamentary Party*.¹¹⁶ There have been some slight changes since the paper was written but in all essential details it is correct.

Trusting that you will do me the favour of reading this letter, and hoping also that you will excuse me for addressing you at a time when you must be so much engaged and for expressing my views so plainly & frankly.

28. W.E. Gladstone to E.G. Jenkinson, 12 December 1885; Hawarden Castle, Chester; 'Secret'; GP, Add MS 44493, fos 212–213.

For long I have been mourning over the slowness with which the pupil of the political eye in many enlarges itself to take in the light. It certainly has not been so with you. I agree, very emphatically, in what appear to be the leading propositions of your letter.¹¹⁷ But they are not abstractions. They call, in your view, for immediate action. I too am enraged when I hear people talking of waiting games. Time is indeed most precious.

But I am of opinion that it is the Government who ought to act: first because they are the Govt. & none but the Govt. of the day can act with effect or hope. Secondly because they are a Tory Government.

For my part, if they will not trifle with the subject but bring in a measure adequate & safe, I shall use them, as I have used them about Afghanistan and about Bulgaria. If they flinch, then it is a different affair.

Having explained myself thus freely I must ask you to explain in what capacity you address me – and what use I may make of your

¹¹⁶ See **Document 8**.

¹¹⁷ See **Document 27**.

letter. Particularly as to those of my late colleagues who stand foremost in responsibility as to Ireland.

By the wish of the Irish to retain their own revenues for their own use, I hope I am not to understand that they expect England & Scotland to pay their share of the National Debt, and to find an army and navy to defend them gratis.

29. E.G. Jenkinson to W.E. Gladstone, 14 December 1885; 14 St. James Square, London S.W.; 'Private & Secret'; GP, Add MS 56446, fos 180–181.

I thank you very much for your kind answer to my letter.¹¹⁸ I am very much gratified that you should have thought what I said to be worthy of your attention and consideration.

You ask me in what capacity I addressed you, and what use you may make of my letter. Of course I need hardly say that I have in my possession information and papers which I could not give to any one outside the present Government without the express permission of Lord Carnarvon and Sir R. Cross, but I thought I might with perfect propriety write to you as I did in a private capacity merely expressing my own personal opinions, the more so as those opinions are not new, or based on information recently received, but have been held by me for some time past. Not knowing what might be the outcome of the Election, and thinking that you might have at any moment to come to some important decision on the Irish question I thought it my duty, as one who knows so much about Ireland, and has worked so much under Lord Spencer, to place before you my view of the situation and the conclusions I have come to.

Lord Spencer, Lord Northbrook, Lord Rosebury and Mr Trevelyan all know my views on the subject, and have all read the printed memorandum which I sent you¹¹⁹ – and I can see no reason why they should not see my letter¹²⁰ if you think it worth their reading. It should however be clearly understood that it is a confidential letter not to be made public, and that it contains only an expression of my own personal views.

In so short a letter I could not go into arguments and details. I tried to make it as short as possible, and therefore, as I said, I dealt with the subject very imperfectly. Indeed I could not write comprehensively &

¹¹⁸ See **Document 28**.

¹¹⁹ See **Document 8**.

¹²⁰ See **Document 27**.

exhaustively without making use of papers which as an official in the Home Office I have to keep secret. The question of the Irish share of the National Debt, and of the cost of the Army and Navy are matters of detail (though exceedingly important detail) which would be settled after the principle of Home Rule had been acknowledged. *But I do not understand that the Irish expect to be let off their proper share of Imperial Expenditure.*¹²¹ The quota which they would have to pay annually could, I should say, be fixed without very much difficulty.

I hope that if I have written too freely or frankly about this matter you will forgive me. My excuse must be the immense importance I attach to the Irish question. *It is just now, the question of questions. The settlement of it does not admit of delay. If we do not face it boldly, & settle it on broad and liberal lines now we shall have heavy trouble in the future.*

30. Lord Northbrook to Lord Spencer, 18 December 1885; 4, Hamilton Place, Piccadilly; 'Private'; AP, Add MS 76918.

After reading E. Jenkinson's letter¹²² I wrote to him to say that the foundation of the proposal to concede Home Rule was the idea that by doing so the "Extremists" would be checked and a moderate party formed which would be against Separation.

The facts being (I said) that the Irish National League & the Parnellite Party have hitherto acted as the instruments of the Clan na Gael whose avowed object is the establishment of an Irish Republic by force, what reasonable probability is there that the connection will cease when Home Rule is given? Is it not more likely that the power which will be so gained will be used in furtherance of Separation and for the organization of the means of resistance to England if it should come to blows?

He came to see me yesterday afternoon & we had a long talk upon this and the question generally.

He said that all the information he has received for the last three years leads him to believe that the majority of the Nationalists, Fenians &c. in the United Kingdom are against Separation, but that they are forced to rely on the Clan-na-Gaels because their funds are derived from them. He believes that the whole of the R. Catholics headed by Archbishops Croke & Walsh would be against Separation.

I asked him whether it was likely that the Irish, hating us as they do, would not use Home Rule against England in any time of difficulty.

¹²¹The passages in italics are those highlighted in the margin of the letter, presumably by Gladstone or a private secretary.

¹²²See **Document 27**.

His answer was by no means positive. In fact he recognizes that after all Home Rule cannot be said to be any more than perhaps the least bad of two alternatives, & that all that is to be said is that there is a reasonable probability of a party being formed against Separation & which would keep down outrage. I am disposed to agree with him that there is such a reasonable probability. But I am very doubtful how long it would last.

I asked his opinion upon the question as to which you expressed some doubts, viz. which is the strongest feeling in Ireland – the desire for Home Rule or the desire to get possession of the land. He said that among the older men the latter certainly, & also in Ulster. The younger men are more for Home Rule. He could not suggest any guarantee for the property of the Landlords except buying them out, and could not demur to my objection that the English people would never agree to such a scheme coupled with Home Rule.

I cannot help thinking that this difficulty is not insuperable, but I have as yet seen no solution of it.

He greatly regrets that Mr. Gladstone's opinions should have been made known – and is alarmed at the prospect of some grant of Home Rule being conceded without proper safeguards & the very careful consideration which ought to be given to it. In fact he thinks the announcement will put Parnell in the position of being able to hold off while the two parties are bidding one against the other. He does not know that any communications have taken place between Mr. G. & Parnell or his people.

I see that you have published that you have not agreed to a plan of Home Rule. Your position on the matter is the most important of that of any Englishman almost if not altogether, and I think you will do well to abstain from committing yourself until matters clear themselves in the legitimate way on the meeting of Parl.

I wish I could say that further consideration has cleared my views. The alternatives are so detestable that it is very difficult to choose between them.

I met Lismore¹²³ at dinner last night, he is getting very old – his violence against Mr. G. is excessive, he says outrages are increasing. He said that the D. of Abercorn¹²⁴ just before he died estimated the Loyalists in Ireland at $2\frac{1}{4}$ millions or rather 2,400,000.

¹²³George Ponsonby O'Callaghan (1815–1898), second Viscount Lismore (1857), landowner and Lord Lieutenant of Co. Tipperary (1857–1885).

¹²⁴James Hamilton (1811–1885), second Marquess of Abercorn (1818) and first Duke (1868), Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1866–1868, 1874–1876).

PS. If today's *Times* is correct that Mr. G. has written to the Queen who has communicated with Ld. Salisbury the explanation of the *Standard* paragraph of Thursday is simple.¹²⁵

But I cannot understand how Mr. G. could have thought it right to take a step of such supreme importance without consulting Hartington, Chamberlain, yourself and others.

He is leader of the party and he cannot disassociate himself from that position.

I fear that what he has done will break up the party and seriously interfere with any satisfactory solution of the Irish question.

I do not see why because Mr. G. has been indiscreet others should follow his example & give vent to opinions somewhat hastily formed (I don't mean yours) without the advantage of discussion with others & when no further advantage can be gained from their publication.

Evelyn Baring¹²⁶ tells me that Mr. Errington¹²⁷ told him that the Pope was about to appoint Moran¹²⁸ archbishop, and had sent for him for the purpose when Manning¹²⁹ wrote to the Pope that Dilke & Chamberlain, who were the coming men, were in favour of Walsh, and therefore he was appointed!!!

I also hear that Lds. Ashbourne & Carnarvon brought forward a large measure at the Cabinet but it was rejected.

The last of my gossip is that Sir R. Hamilton is in favour of Home Rule.

31. E.G. Jenkinson to Lord Spencer, 20 December 1885; Woodcote, Walton-on-Thames; AP, Add MS 77036.

I have not written to you for some time, the reason being that up till quite lately there has been no real change in the situation, and also that not now being under you officially I cannot write freely as I

¹²⁵ On 17 December, *The Standard* had printed what purported to be Gladstone's home rule proposals, and Lord Salisbury had an audience with the Queen later that day: see *The Times*, 18 December 1885, p. 9.

¹²⁶ Evelyn Baring (1841–1917), first Earl of Cromer (1901), British agent and Consul-General in Egypt (1883–1907), leader of the Liberal free traders in the House of Lords.

¹²⁷ George Errington (1839–1920), Lib. MP for Co. Longford (1874–1885), responsible for efforts to establish diplomatic relations between the British Government and the Vatican: see Ambrose Macaulay, *The Holy See, British Policy and the Plan of Campaign in Ireland, 1885–93* (Dublin, 2002), pp. 4–11.

¹²⁸ Patrick Francis Moran (1830–1911), Archbishop of Sydney (1884–1911), historian of the Irish church and opponent of Fenianism.

¹²⁹ Henry Edward Manning (1808–1892), Catholic Archbishop of Westminster (1865–1892), sat with Dilke on the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor (1884–1885).

used to, and feel some delicacy about writing at all on matters which are closely connected with my work. A conversation which I had with Northbrook on Friday however induces me to write to you.¹³⁰ He told me that my two letters to Mr. Gladstone¹³¹ were to be sent to you to read, and, although you know my view about Ireland well enough, I should like to add a few words by way of explanation.

Although I am a strong advocate for Home Rule, and believe that we must face the question now without loss of time, yet I am strongly against any precipitate or thoughtless action. What I fear is that the matter may be settled in too great a hurry, that in order to gain a Party triumph, or to clear the way for other legislation Home Rule may be granted without due deliberation, and without sufficient safeguards. It is no doubt the question of questions at the present time. Everything must give way to it, and no half measures will suffice. But never was there a time when there was more need that wise and cool heads should take counsel together and should see their way clearly before them before action is taken.

I know I need not say this to you. I only say it because I wish you to know that I see the enormous difficulties and objections in the way, and while I give my own opinions frankly I yet respect the opinions of others, and am anxious that the subject should be approached calmly and deliberately, and if possible as a question outside of Party altogether.

Cannot the Leaders on both sides sit down together and thresh out all the details thoroughly, and taking the Irish Leaders into counsel see whether it is possible to give a practical & workable measure of Home Rule to Ireland.

I am sure, as I said before, no half measure will be of any use whatever. We must trust the Irish altogether or not at all. That is the question which we have to settle.

In considering the subject the three great difficulties, (indeed to my mind they are the only real difficulties), which force themselves on one's attention are (1) The question of separatism (2) The Land question (3) The question whether supposing it were decided to give an independent Parliament to Ireland the people of Great Britain would consent to such a course.

The question of separation lies at the root of the whole matter, and it is one on which it is next to impossible to produce data or evidence. It is really a matter of opinion, of faith. I firmly believe that the people of Ireland do not want separation, and I found this belief on opinions which I have heard expressed by leading Nationalists, and Fenians,

¹³⁰ See **Document 30**.

¹³¹ See **Documents 27** and **29**.

from letters which I have seen and on the principles of commonsense. The Irish are not fools, and they are led by men of ability. They must see that it will be to their advantage for a great many reasons to remain united to England. This is so obvious that I need not go into the details. We also know that the Roman Catholic Church is in favour of the Union, and is against separation. Such men as Archbishop Croke and Walsh though fervent Nationalists, and longing for an Irish Parliament in Dublin, are perhaps as strongly against the separation of Ireland from Great Britain, and against a measure which would lead to the dismemberment of the Empire. I attach great importance to the share which the Roman Catholic Church will take in the solution of the Irish question and to the great influence which it will exercise.

And I think it would be a wise thing to draw closer to that church, and to put ourselves in communication with such men as the two Archbishops I have named.

Still I feel that it is dangerous to prophesy, I may be quite wrong in my opinion, and men who say that Home Rule must lead to separation may be quite right. Let us then thresh it out: Hear what men most interested in the matter, and most competent to judge have to say, and then come to some definite conclusion.

It is easy to say that the Land question should be settled before Home Rule can be granted, but it is very difficult to say how it should be settled. The only way is to write different proposals and then decide which is the best. The Land Act of 1881 sounded the death knell of the Irish Landlords. They have been going from bad to worse, and really the only question now is how they can be protected from further suffering and loss. If they had been wise and long-sighted they would not be in their present plight. They might have got much better terms four years ago than they could get now and they will get better terms now than they can hope for a year hence. The longer the settlement of the question is postponed the worse will their position and chances be. Perhaps the best way would be to buy them out but that would mean a very large sum of money. However, nothing is to be gained by delay. The settlement of the Land question completely blocks the way to the introduction of Home Rule. In justice to the landlords it must first be taken up. The granting of Home Rule without its settlement would mean the immediate confiscation of the land and the ruin of the landlords.

The third question is one on which I hardly feel myself competent to give an opinion. There is great ignorance about Ireland, and the feeling against the Irish and their methods of agitation is no doubt very strong in London, and in the Home counties, and I believe also in the North and Scotland. Even if Mr. Gladstone were to propose a large measure of Home Rule it is a question whether he would be

able to carry the people of England with him, more particularly if the scheme involved the payment of a large sum of money for the settlement of the Land question. If he were to propose such a measure and fail because the country was not with him, he would break up the Liberal Party, and enable the Conservatives to go to the country with the cry of "No Separation". This all points to the advisability of the settlement of the question by both Parties acting together as was done in the case of the Redistribution Bill. Public opinion in favour of some form of Home Rule has advanced very much during the last three years, and would no doubt come round altogether before very long if the people were educated to it, and were to see that the Leaders of the two Parties were in favour of it.

I am living now as you can see from the address at the top of this letter at Walton-on-Thames not far from St. George's Hill. It is a charming situation, and within easy reach of London. I suppose there is no chance of seeing you in town for some time. With kind regards to Lady Spencer.

32. Sir Robert Hamilton to Lord Spencer, 20 December 1885;¹³² Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle; 'Very Confidential'; AP, Add MS 77060.

Things have changed very much in Ireland in the past six months. (1) Exceptional legislation no longer exists, and except times of convulsion again arise it is practically impossible to revive it. Measures which were possible to a strong Government with its aid are impossible now.

(2) Mr. Parnell has issued a programme of one plank, viz. the legislative independence of Ireland, and to this five sixths of Ireland have given their adhesion, including the whole of the Catholic Hierarchy.

(3) This programme is not only accepted by the moderate Home Ruler, but by the Irish in the United States, in Canada, and Australia, and even by the dynamitard, and money that used to go for the promotion of outrages is now all going to the support of the Parliamentary party.

(4) The influence of the national party in keeping down the more serious class of outrages in Ireland is much more powerful than most well informed people thought it would be.

All this is matter of public notoriety. The situation is most critical. No half measures in my view now will do. Immense risks attend either

¹³²The letter was written in reply to an untraced letter from Spencer (c.16 December): see **Document 33** and **Journal (12 March 1886)**.

alternative, but you much [*sic*] choose between allowing the country to try to govern itself, and ruling it with a rod of iron which will have to be forged.

I am in favour of the former alternative. The bolder the scheme now introduced, the more hope there is of introducing the necessary safeguards.

One of the most important in my view is the retention of the Constabulary in the hands of the Imperial Government. No sane statesman would propose that the Irish Parliament should have the power of raising military forces, and what is the Constabulary in its organization but a military force, armed, drilled, and capable of concentration on any given point? But on the other hand no local Government worthy of the name could be given which would withhold from the local authorities the control of the Police. Both these requirements can be met, however, by introducing into any constitution to be granted for Ireland a provision that as the local authorities supplied at their own cost local police, this general, and at least semi-military, force of Constabulary, maintained at Imperial charge, might be gradually disbanded.

I am astonished that no one seems to have hit upon this solution of this difficulty which appears to me to be a natural and simple one.

In my view there must be no hesitation in dealing liberally with this Force. In fact all the financial arrangements must be conducted on broad and generous lines. Much will depend on this, not only in getting the scheme to be thankfully accepted and cordially worked, but also in getting the necessary safeguards accepted.

In my view it is essential that the Representatives of the Irish people should be taken into consultation in settling how they are to be governed. We have neither the knowledge nor the power to legislate over their heads.

Once they have got legislative independence the less England interferes with Irish legislation the better. There is no fear of separation. Great Britain would keep such troops in Ireland as she sees fit, and would retain the entire control of these and of the Irish militia, and for the life of me I cannot see how the granting of a separate Parliament to Ireland would put her in a better position to take up arms against England, or to harbour an enemy's troops in the country.

The real danger to be apprehended is that, in the present state of exasperation of classes, the rights of property, especially in land, might suffer, but it will only intensify this danger and difficulty if you bring in an appeal to the English Parliament. The propertied classes have too long relied upon English bayonets to protect their rights. In other countries they secure that their interests are attended to by making

themselves felt in the councils of the nation, and I see no reason why a constitution should not be devised for Ireland in which a place would be found for the due representation of all classes & interests.

I look upon this question as far beyond one of mere party politics. It is discreditable and dangerous to the Empire that discontent and disaffection should continue and grow in intensity. The crisis is close upon us, and while the risks are tremendous I yet have hope that light will emerge out of the darkness.

This letter, confidential in the highest degree as an expression of my individual views, is confidential in no other sense. I am not saying what any other person thinks or what any other person intends to do, I only try to put you in possession of certain reasons for coming to certain conclusions.

33. Lord Spencer to W.E. Gladstone, 22 December 1885; Althorp, Northampton; GP, Add MS 44312, fos 216–221.

I return according to Granville's¹³³ directions two letters of Jenkinson to you.¹³⁴

I was very glad to read them though they contained nothing new to me as from previous communications I was aware of his views.

His letter put the case for Home Rule ably & well. One question must remain a mere matter of speculation whether the Clan na Gael & Extremists would, if Home Rule which satisfies Parnell & the Parliamentary party were granted, still have a dominating influence in Ireland.

It is a very serious question, the Roman Catholic Clergy form a very important element in the matter, their present inclinations are against separation, but they are not an independent body, they are unduly influenced by public opinion, & we cannot rely on them to maintain opinions which are unpopular among the bulk or most powerful Politicians of their own faith. Jenkinson you will notice takes a strong view as to the interests of property.

I saw Dr. Robert Macdonnell¹³⁵ a few days ago, he was in England for a Commission and came here for a night. He is a nephew of old

¹³³Granville Leveson-Gower (1815–1891), second Earl Granville (1846), Lib. MP for Morpeth (1837–1840) and for Lichfield (1841–1846), Foreign Secretary (1851–1852, 1870–1874, 1880–1885).

¹³⁴See **Documents 27** and **29**. The letters were also circulated to Hartington, Harcourt, and Northbrook: see above, p. 39.

¹³⁵Robert Macdonnell (1838–1889), President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (1877–1889).

Alexander Macdonnell¹³⁶ who so long was at the head of the Irish National Board.

In 1870 Robert Macdonnell wrote a pamphlet on Home Rule under the name of Protestant Celt.¹³⁷ He sent it to me the other day and I read it.

When he was here I pressed him as to whether he adhered to his views. He said that the only change he had made was as to the necessity of making terms for the landlords, without this, he said, he would not be in favour of going forward with a scheme of Home Rule.

I send the Pamphlet to you. You will not care to read it all but in the Appendix to the Second Edition on p. 80 you will see what he recommended in 1870.¹³⁸

I was writing to Sir R. Hamilton the other day, and referring to what he said in a letter to me which showed a change of opinion,¹³⁹ I said that as we had had so many consultations on this topic I thought it right to tell him that I had changed my opinion in so far that I thought the solution of the difficulty by the old methods which I advocated last May, was now impossible, but that I saw immense difficulties in the alternatives.¹⁴⁰

I said that I did not write to elicit his views as he might find it impossible to communicate them to me. I got the enclosed from him.¹⁴¹ It is important. I consider from the last paragraph of his letter that I am justified in showing it to you in strict confidence.

I cannot agree with his views of leaving the landlords to take their chance. His suggestion as to the Constabulary is only a method of getting rid of them, for of course every local authority would speedily create a force of their own. I thought by the way he began the argument that he was going to find some means of keeping the Constabulary as an imperial force which would be difficult. I wrote to him before the *Standard* and *Pall Mall* announcement.¹⁴² Had I foreseen the likelihood of these rumours I should have hesitated about writing to him. I had

¹³⁶Sir Alexander Macdonnell (1794–1875), Resident Commissioner of National Education (1839–1871).

¹³⁷*Irish Nationality in 1870: by a Protestant Celt. Second edition, with a commentary on the 'Home-Rule Movement'* (Dublin, 1870). For further letters and articles, see *The Times*, 14 April 1873, p. 8, and 21 April 1873, p. 11; *F7*, 22 April 1873, pp. 2, 6.

¹³⁸Gladstone read the article on 23 December: *GD*, XI, p. 457.

¹³⁹See **Document 24**.

¹⁴⁰See **Journal (12 March 1886)**.

¹⁴¹See **Document 32**. Matthew mistakes this as referring to Hamilton's memorandum of 21 [31] October 1885 (**Document 20**): see *GD*, XI, p. 447, n. 6.

¹⁴²See **Journal (4 January 1886)**.

in the same way written to Monck¹⁴³ a letter fishing for his opinion. I am to hear from him in a day or two.

I will read the debate on the Address in 1882, if I recollect rightly it bore an amendment of the Land Act. You probably have read the Articles in the *Freeman* on your supposed scheme.¹⁴⁴ They are moderate & point to a wish for a settlement: but Gray is less to be depended upon even than the R.C. Hierarchy.

I have not altered the views which I held when at Hawarden,¹⁴⁵ but I see great difficulties in getting the proper guarantees for the landlords without which I do not yet see that a scheme could be proposed.

I wish it were possible for you and Salisbury to agree the heads of a scheme which might be the basis of communication with Mr. Parnell. This would avoid the danger of one party negotiating with Parnell, and laying itself open to the accusation of trying to outbid the other party.

However patriotic those might be who negotiated with Parnell without the knowledge of their opponents, the public would never be got to believe that they were not acting from selfish party motives.¹⁴⁶ This of itself after what has been said at the Elections might wreck a scheme. I presume however that now, unless anything unexpected turns up, everyone must wait for the Government.

I do not write this with a view of asking your opinion or of making you write a letter, but it may be well that after our conversations you should know how my thoughts are running.

Macdonnell who as a Doctor in large practice is in the way of learning Political opinion in Dublin, told me that he had noticed no indication that Conservatives or moderate Liberals in Dublin were leaning to some form of Home Rule.

The new feature which he noticed was that moderate R. Catholics for the first time in his experience openly denounced the line of their Archbishops & Bishops in the recent elections.

Formerly if they felt annoyed with their clergy they never showed it to a Protestant.

¹⁴³Charles Stanley Monck (1819–1894), fourth Viscount Monck (1849), Governor-General of British North America and the Dominion of Canada (1861–1868), commissioner of National Education (1871–1894). For Monck's response, see Gladstone to Spencer, 26 December 1885, repr. *RE*, II, p. 90.

¹⁴⁴See *F7*, 18, 19, 21, 22 December 1885, p. 5.

¹⁴⁵Spencer had long talks with Gladstone during his stay at Hawarden between 8 and 10 December 1885; Spencer to Lady Spencer, 8 and 9 December 1885, repr. *RE*, II, pp. 81–82.

¹⁴⁶A reference to rumoured negotiations between Gladstone and Parnell: see above, p. 39, and *The Times*, 18 December 1885, p. 6.

I send you a letter from Jenkinson to me.¹⁴⁷

34. W.E. Gladstone to Lord Spencer, 23 December 1885; Hawarden Castle, Chester; AP, Add MS 76863.

I thank you for your very interesting inclosures, most of all for your letter.¹⁴⁸

The spirit in which you approach the great and difficult question of Irish Government is the only spirit which gives any hope of a tolerable issue. [*Gladstone lists the necessary conditions for progress.*]

I inclose some off hand comments on main points raised by your and by Hamilton's letters.¹⁴⁹

Jenkinson's first letter struck me as an important fact in the case. His opinions in the letter to you do not rest on his position and opportunities of knowledge, and I do not give them so much weight.¹⁵⁰

I heartily wish we could exchange ideas and information orally from day to day.

One step in advance I have taken by two letters to Mr. A. Balfour, which I inclose, and which I hope and think you will approve.¹⁵¹ Please return them.

The relations of the Government to the Nationalists ought to be cleared up between this time and the meeting. This only they can do.

I also enclose a letter from MacColl¹⁵² to Herbert: no I find it is to me.¹⁵³ I have spoken freely to him: but was quite unaware that he was going to see Salisbury.¹⁵⁴ I shall take care that he makes it clear that he had no authority, and carried no message, from me, and that his

¹⁴⁷See **Document 31**.

¹⁴⁸See **Documents 31, 32, and 33**.

¹⁴⁹See Gladstone's memorandum, 23 December 1885 (holograph), repr. *GD*, XI, p. 460.

¹⁵⁰See **Documents 27 and 31**.

¹⁵¹Arthur James Balfour (1848–1930), first Earl of Balfour (1922), Con. MP for Hertford (1874–1885) and for Manchester East (1885–1906), President of the Local Government Board (1885–1886), Secretary of State for Scotland (1886–1887), Chief Secretary for Ireland (1887–1891), Prime Minister (1902–1905). See Gladstone to Balfour, 20 and 23 December 1885, repr. *GD*, XI, pp. 455, 459.

¹⁵²Malcolm MacColl (1831–1907), canon of Ripon (1884); amongst his many publications was *Reasons for Home Rule* (London, 1886).

¹⁵³See George W.E. Russell (ed.), *Malcolm MacColl: memories and correspondence* (London, 1914), pp. 122–124.

¹⁵⁴MacColl met Salisbury on 14 December: Andrew Roberts, *Salisbury: Victorian titan* (London, 1999), p. 364; Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone* (London, 1995), p. 523.

account was his opinion of my opinions and intentions. The account of Salisbury himself is very interesting. A happy Christmas.

35. Lord Spencer to W.E. Gladstone, 25 December 1885; Althorp, Northampton; AP, Add MS 44312, fos 230–231.

I thank you very much for your letter,¹⁵⁵ I entirely agree as to the spirit in which every one should approach this extremely difficult subject, if I have acted in that spirit up to this I shall try & continue to do so.

I am very glad that you had some communication with A. Balfour, & think that it is a good thing that Lord Salisbury should be aware of the tendency of your mind, although Mr. McColl spoke & wrote to Salisbury without your authority, it was a bold thing for that little man to do.

I have written some comments on your three headings Separation, Police, Landlords.¹⁵⁶

I have put some of the difficulties which will be pressed on us if we are to get to a Bill.

I would say something on another matter viz. the judicial establishment in Ireland, but I will not attempt that now: but if you wish it later on I will give you some of the ideas which are pressing through my mind on that very important part of the subject.

I return you the interesting letters which you sent to me.¹⁵⁷ Jenkinson is of course no authority on tactics or mode of procedure, but as his letter to me was a commentary on his to you I thought I had better let you see it.¹⁵⁸

Thanks for your Xmas greetings. We heartily wish the same to you & yours. I will return your notes & anything I say upon them tomorrow.

36. Lord Spencer to W.E. Gladstone, 25 December 1885; GP, Add MS 44312, fos 232–237.

I. Separation

I am inclined to agree that absolute separation is not desired by the large majority of Home Rulers at this moment.

¹⁵⁵ See **Document 34**.

¹⁵⁶ See **Document 36**.

¹⁵⁷ See **Document 34**.

¹⁵⁸ See **Document 31**.

I also agree that no doubts can exist as to the feeling of England and of Scotland on this matter.

No separation would be tolerated; if the Irish tried to get it they would be put down by force.

But a different argument may be used.

If we do not satisfy the Irish, after making a concession on the limitations laid down by Mr. Gladstone, & they still remain hostile to England, we shall have given them a new & better basis for agitation in a Representative Irish Assembly in Dublin, we shall also have given up some of our present means of defending ourselves without having gained anything sufficient to justify the risks we incurred?

We shall have disorganized Irish Gov[ernment]al Departments, disbanded the Police, alienated the classes dependent on property etc.

The only defence for taking these risks is that we look to satisfy the reasonable part of the Irish people.

If the Extremists gained the upper hand, separation would be the object of an Irish Parliament, & hostility to England would be as bitter as ever.

This view may be taken by certain people.

It has to be weighed. Other difficulties occur to me if this view were correct but I am rather disposed to think that we should disarm those who now attack us, & raise up a New party of moderate men in Ireland if we could satisfy them with a good scheme.

II. Police

It must not be overlooked that in Parnell's Central Bd. scheme it was not proposed to withdraw the Police from the hands of the Central & Imperial Govt.

It would be a great risk to give up control of even Dublin Police, but I expect it must be faced for I shd. like to see the responsibility of keeping law & order thrown on the Irish members if a separate Parliament be granted to them for local affairs.

It might be dangerous to leave this armed force for use against the Imperial authority.

Even if the present force were broken up into county & borough forces, they might, under a strong Central National Govt. opposed to England, be used together as Regiments of one force.

Probably that was the view of Sir R. Hamilton, & his proposals would be a method of gradually or even rapidly disbanding this Irish Army.

No doubt liberal terms will have to be given to the force.

There is I fear already great consternation among them at the idea of their being placed under any but Imperial management.

This disturbance has been aggravated by the premature & unauthorized statement of Mr. Gladstone's policy.

III. The landlords

By far the most difficult part of the question belongs to the 'Protection for the Minority'.

As yet I see no effectual way of meeting it except by some expedient system of purchase.

If this could be carried out we should get rid of most of the difficulties which would arise from minority representation & other grievances. Davitt's proposal in the *Pall Mall* might be a basis for settlement.¹⁵⁹

What I should like to arrive at would be some plan which would be a check on the Irish Representatives & prevent their continued agitation against Landlords.

If they knew that to come to terms with the best Irish Landlords would save them for 50 years a large amount of Taxation, they might be disposed to be more reasonable.

I agree with Mr. Gladstone that the wholesale emigration of the resident proprietors is not desirable.

Of all people in the world the Irish small farmers & peasants need example & authority over them.

I hope that if a scheme of Home Rule were once started many of the good Resident Landlords (& I always mention that many such are to be found) would fall in with the new state of things: but at first they must be protected from the violence of those who have been persistently attacking their rights of property.

I have several letters from Ireland on the subject of Home Rule.

The working of the Land Act & the appointment of Commissioners & Assistant Commissioners is quoted as a matter where the present Parnellite leaders would not act with impartiality.

Certainly I can remember the grossest speeches from Healy & others on the subject. One of Healy's in Ulster where he said that Judicial Rents were to benefit the Tenants & therefore 'Tenants' men alone should be appointed to fix the Rents.¹⁶⁰

The partiality & violence of these leaders in their past action will create some of the most difficult arguments to meet.

The anti Home Rulers say how can the Govt. of Ireland be handed over to such violent & partial men?

As to Protestants I should not on the whole be afraid on their behalf, but in country places they might at first be oppressed.

¹⁵⁹ *PMG*, 23 December 1885, pp. 1–3.

¹⁶⁰ Healy delivered the speech at Dungannon on 27 September 1883; see *FJ*, 28 September 1883, pp. 6–7.

The operation of the Labourers Act¹⁶¹ is quoted to show this. It is said that the present Boards of Guardians in the South & West select the lands of Protestants as those on which the houses are to [be] built. The answer to this now is, that the Local Govt. Board inquiries & the appeal to the Privy Council practically protect all such persons & prevent injustice: but when all these authorities are in the hands of the Parnellites these safeguards will be gone.

37. Sir Robert Hamilton to Lord Spencer, 27 December 1885; Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle; 'Very Confidential'; AP, Add MS 77060.

I was glad to get your letter.¹⁶² I think it bad in the public interest that I should be identified in the public mind with any particular line of policy and that my views should be quoted, but subject to this I do not object to you showing my letter to any one in whom you have confidence.

I have no copy of what I said but I could not have conveyed my views fully if I led you to gather that I thought no safeguards were necessary to protect the landlords' interest beyond securing them a voice in the Government of their country.

The present difficulty is of course much intensified by the fall in the value of land, due to other causes than agitation, and I see a serious difficulty in the fact that Irish landlords and their friends won't admit this. Some great scheme of purchase is I think a necessity, and this would have to be provided in any settlement of the Irish question.

As you know I always opposed to the utmost of my power the advance of the whole of the purchase money to the occupiers. I never did, and never could, understand why if a man pays a fair rent he should be bribed to pay less now, and receive eventually his land for nothing.

But I would give this benefit to the Irish State. The objections to the State being a large landowner disappear, when the state means Ireland and not England. I would give the Irish State the benefit of the provisions of the Land Act of last session, under which the purchase of a farm of say £100 a year can give 20 years' purchase to the landlord, and repay only for principal and interest £80 a year for 49 years, at which time payment would cease.

¹⁶¹ See **Journal (11 September 1885)**.

¹⁶² Not traced.

The occupier would be out of it altogether. He gets a fair rent and there is an end of him. He is virtually a peasant proprietor subject to a rent charge. If he pays £100 a year as his fair rent, he should continue to pay it, but the state would only have to appropriate £80 of it to the sinking fund – the remainder would go in aid of the state's revenue, and it could be to the interest of the general taxpayer that the state should purchase in any case in which the landlord was willing to sell for such a number of years' purchase as would leave a balance in favour of the state.

I should not mind in such a case the term being extended so as to reduce the annual payment and increase the immediate margin.

The Imperial Govt. should guarantee money raised for this purpose & the landlords should be paid at par in guaranteed bonds carrying 3 per cent. Beyond this the Imperial Government should have nothing to do with the matter.

One result of such a scheme would be that a substantial value would at once attach, as it might to the landlord's interest, and another result would be that the state being themselves landlords would look after their interests as landlords, and that private landlords would benefit in the general support of such rights which it would be in the interests of the state to afford.

What rent the tenant should fairly pay would be of course, as it has been in the past, the great difficulty, but a scheme of this sort would be to make it to the advantage of the state that he should not pay too little. Such a scheme too so far as it operated would to some extent meet the views of those who advocate what is called the naturalization of land. I would give to the state, and not to individuals, the benefit arising from pledging the credit of England, and [*sic*] would lead to a large eventual reduction in the taxation of the country.¹⁶³

I shall read the paper you have sent me on the participation of England and Ireland respectively in the general revenue and expenditure.¹⁶⁴ I myself tried my hand upon this, & I shall be curious to see whether the results at all agree.¹⁶⁵

I'm glad you agree with me as regards the Constabulary. I think it would be a good thing, as soon as it can be done, that there should be some authoritative announcement to the Constabulary that, come what may, their interests will be looked after, and that they will in no

¹⁶³For Gladstone's comments on this proposal, see Gladstone to Spencer, 14 January 1886, repr. *GD*, XI, pp. 478–479.

¹⁶⁴See 'Maximum of Irish contribution to imperial charges': AP, Add MS 77329.

¹⁶⁵See **Journal (28 October 1885)** and **Document 20**.

circumstances be handed over with their present organization to an Irish Parliament.

We may have bad days before us, and if we could not fall back upon the Constabulary we should be [in] a bad way indeed.

The feeling as far as I could gauge it among the people in Ireland having something to lose, was just after the election, that some sort of Home Rule was inevitable and imminent. But I think they are beginning to fancy England will never stand it. The tone of the London press I think has caused this change. A great deal of English money, something like 100 millions I believe, is advanced on land in Ireland, largely by Insurance Companies, & financial people have great weight with the London press.

The Nationalists are I think very confident, and I think I can detect in their writings the sobering effect that responsibility in prospect creates.

Please send a line to acknowledge receipt.

38. Lord Spencer to W.E. Gladstone, 28 December 1885; Althorp, Northampton; GP, Add MS 44312, fos 240–241.

I do not like to keep the enclosed back from you.¹⁶⁶ Hamilton's explanations were drawn from him by my criticizing what he said about the landlords finding their own level in any new Assembly.¹⁶⁷

I reread his letter before I sent my criticism, & I told him that I thought I did perhaps misunderstand his meaning.

The explanation is interesting. It affords a scheme but a very big one. I believe something big will be wanted, there is a lot¹⁶⁸ attractive in his argument.

As to the Constabulary I told him that I did not think any one would propose to hand over an armed force like that to an Irish Executive, & that probably his method of dealing with that part of the question might answer.

As to his present desire that some statement should be made as to considering claims of the Police, I have told him I do not think it possible that any statement such as he wishes can be made now. Everything is too chaotic for that.

¹⁶⁶See **Document 37**.

¹⁶⁷See **Document 32**.

¹⁶⁸The word 'something' has been deleted.

I may possibly go up to see Hartington tomorrow, I shall be very guarded in what I say of your plans.¹⁶⁹

PS. I don't think Hamilton would write to me, even in the confidential way he has done, if the Tories have settled on a big scheme.

39. W.E. Gladstone to Lord Spencer, 28 December 1885; Hawarden Castle, Chester; 'Secret'; AP, Add MS 76863.

When you get the memorandum I have sent to Granville you will find that it is confined to considering some alternatives & ways of procedure, and does not touch the difficulties inherent in the question of a separate government for Ireland.¹⁷⁰

This not because I think them disposed of but they belong to another branch of the case before us.

I have no doubt they are both great and diversified; the chief one of all being that on which we convinced him pretty largely. In principle I think you and I are agreed; but I look at the question rather as one meeting us *in limine* than as arising in ulterior stages.

I have not the smallest fear, for several reasons, of any attempt to employ the Police as a military force against us: what I feel apprehensive about is the preliminary question shall we have a state of legality in Ireland to start from? If we have this, I should feel pretty sanguine as to the future; but I know not that at the present moment we have any warrant for attaining it. By a state of legality I mean a condition not substantially worse than that in which you left the country. Nor do I know how situated as we now are it is possible to get at all the facts, which until Parliament has met will remain at the command of the Government exclusively.

40. Sir Robert Hamilton to Lord Spencer, 3 January 1886; Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle; 'Very Confidential'; AP, Add MS 77061.

Sunday is the only day I can find time to write – hence your last letter¹⁷¹ has remained unanswered till now.

¹⁶⁹The meeting did not take place: Spencer to Granville, 29 December 1885, repr. *RE*, II, p. 94.

¹⁷⁰See Gladstone to Granville, 26 December 1885, repr. *GD*, XI, pp. 462–463; and see John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, 3 vols (London, 1908), III, pp. 269–273.

¹⁷¹Not traced.

I think the tide of feeling in Ireland is again setting towards the inevitableness of something like Home Rule. The more the question is discussed the clearer it becomes that the only alternative is disenfranchisement.

It is futile to talk, as many do, of a reform of Dublin Castle as a way out of the difficulty. You may replace men and other officials by others, but unless the new men possess the confidence of the national party, you are certainly no better off, and if you could induce, and this I don't for a moment believe you could, Healy & Sexton & such men to take office, they would be immediately disowned & abused like O'Shaughnessy, for this is not what the party wants.

I quite see the great difficulty as regards yourself. Some two months ago, before the elections in a conversation with Fottrell I said, "I have had no communication with Lord Spencer since he left on Irish matters, but I undertake to say that by & bye you will acknowledge that there is no truer friend to Ireland than Lord Spencer." I have no doubt that this has been repeated to the nationalist leaders, but whatever effect, if any, it may have upon their attitude towards you, of course it does not affect your attitude as regards them.

It is simply hopeless to try to do anything without carrying the Irish members with you, and I believe they would be more reasonable at the present moment than later. The quiet of the past few months is distinctly in favour of a settlement now. There is a marked absence both in the utterances of agitation and of the extreme press of the bitterness against England which was so marked during the last few years. I am quite aware that it is a matter of policy with them at present to refrain from such utterances but making all allowances for this, I believe a real improvement is discernable. It would be a thousand pities to lose the advantage this would give to a settlement now. I don't think it would be desirable that you should come back again as Lord Lieutenant, if the liberals come in, tho' I think it is essential that you should take a leading part in dealing with the matter in the Cabinet. I should have a dummy Lord Lieutenant, and a Chief Secretary in the Cabinet at this crisis, when the important matter is legislation not administration. It is most important that the Chief Secretary should be a person who would be acceptable to the Irish Parliamentary party, and I believe the best man would be John Morley. If you wish to avoid hopeless collapse, don't send Childers or Lefevre.¹⁷²

There is a lurking affection for Mr. Gladstone notwithstanding all the abuse that has been heaped upon him, and a belief, and this I thoroughly share, that he is the man and the only man to settle the question.

¹⁷² See **Document 24** and **Journal (3 February 1886)**.

Please excuse me for writing so freely. I am betraying no confidences. I am only putting you as my late chief in possession of my individual views on a matter so vital as to put all mere party considerations absolutely in the shade.

Please send just one line in acknowledgement of this that I may know it has reached you.

41. Andrew Reed, 'Inspector General's confidential report regarding the position and progress of the Irish National League', 14 January 1886; Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle; CSO RP 1888/26523.

As will be seen by the reports received from the Divisional Magistrates the Irish National League has made great advance within the past twelve months. By the attached returns, shewing the number of branches of the League by Divisions and also by Counties for the past three years, it will be seen that the number of branches in Ireland for the three years (ending) 1883, 1884, and 1885 respectively are 242; 592; and 1260. The growth of the League during the past twelve months is remarkable. Several causes have advanced the interests of the League. The following are the principal.

- (1) For the past four years owing to falling prices for stock the farming class has suffered great loss. The severest year upon them has been 1885. The traders in towns whose business in an agricultural country like Ireland depends upon the condition of the farming class have not been prosperous. (Trade in Dublin and in the small towns in Ireland is at present very bad). Discontent has been produced by this want of prosperity, and the tenant farmers have not been able yet to realise substantially the great benefits conferred upon them by the Land Act of 1881. (I am of opinion if the years 83, 84, and 85 had been prosperous for the farmers the state of the National League would now be quite different). The farmers and small traders are led to believe that further agitation will better their condition, and through the National League they hope for success.
- (2) The General Election under the new franchise gave a great impetus to the cause of the National League, many of the branches formed within the past six months were established principally for Election purposes, and many of them will languish and fall away now that the excitement has passed, unless some fresh stimulus is given to them.

- (3) Since the R.C. Bishops committed the subject of Education to the charge of the Parnellite party the Bishops have patronised the National League (only a few of them were ardent supporters of it previously). It looks as if a compact was entered into by the Bishops and the League that if the latter pushed in the Education question the Bishops could support the League for other political purposes. The Bishops now give it every support and allow the priests to take office and part in the League. Were it not for the support of the R.C. Bishops and Clergy the League would have had little or no success in the greater part of Ireland. In many Counties it had no success whatever, till the Clergy took part in the movement. Many of the Bishops who previously gave no countenance to the League now recommend it to the people. The great majority of the Irish Roman Catholics are still led by their Bishops and Clergy. I don't agree with the statement that the Irish people drive the Clergy before them in the political movement at the present time. With the exception of a few Counties where Fenianism and Secret Societies exist, the Irish people are still under the influence of the Clergy. A perusal of the reports of the proceedings of the I.N. League will prove this. Three fourths of the active and successful branches would decay were it not for the moral and educational force imparted to their work by the Clerical leaders in those branches. These Clergymen say and do what laymen would not venture upon. They rely upon the protection against the law which their clerical status gives them. Supported as they are by the people their worldly prosperity depends upon the numbers and condition of the farming class, consequently they are opposed to emigration and endeavour by every means to make this class prosperous. Many of the young Clergy are separatists, as regards the Government of Ireland.

The League is now a powerful organisation and capable of instigating the commission of crime if threatened in its objects. It has, embraced within its fold, all the discontented, disaffected, and disloyal classes (including Fenians, Ribbonmen &c.) in the country. The sanction of its law in general is boycotting – and this mode of intimidation can to a large extent be carried on with impunity so long as the proceedings of the branches are held in private and the Police excluded from the meetings. To put down boycotting effectually either the League should be suppressed or its proceedings should be open to the observation of the Police. In this event the Police can themselves furnish evidence to prove the charge if intimidation be ordered by the League.

Should the Parnellites fail in getting what they want the N.L. Branches will become more dangerous to the peace of society as

the commission of serious crime will be directed by the League in many Counties in Ireland.

The League has now a great protection and support to all its proceedings by the 86 members they have in the House of Commons – some of whom belong to the Fenian organization. Should the Nationalist movement be checked in Parliament it is not probable the Fenian party will remain connected with the League – they are becoming very active just now but they have little or no money. They would help the cause, indirectly, by the commission of serious outrage, when the time for disturbance arises.

Lord Carnarvon

RGCH 14/1/86

42. Andrew Reed, 'Confidential report for the Chief Secretary. Irish National League', 17 January 1886; CSO RP 1886/17972.

Power and influence of the I.N.L. and means by which it exercises that power &c.

Over the greater part of Ireland the Irish National League is now a most powerful organization. Its machinery and operations are reduced to a most perfect system, and under the direction of the Central Authority in Dublin it controls the conduct of the farmers, labourers, and tradesmen in many of the Counties of Ireland. It is a much stronger organization than the Land League was, as its machinery is more perfect and it has now the warm support of the Roman Catholic Bishops and Clergy, which support was only very partially extended to the Land League. It has now the constitutional support of 86 members in the House of Commons. The means by which it exercises that power and influence are two fold

(1) It points the tenant farmers of Ireland to the great benefits to them which, as is alleged, were obtained through the Land League and National League agitation, and which benefits the occupiers of land now enjoy under the Land Act and other Acts of Parliament passed in their favour. It promises further gains to this class and to the agricultural class by the agitation of the National League. It persuades the Fenians and Separatist class that the Parliament in College Green if granted is the final step towards complete separation.

(2) It is paternal in its authority and, as is pretended for the good of the general body, the National League enforces its law by the sanction of fines inflicted on persons transgressing these laws, after a formal inquiry has been held and sentence pronounced; or by expulsion from the body followed by ostracism and boycotting. These Courts are held

with closed doors in the National League branches, from which the Police are excluded. The offender is summoned before these Courts and after hearing if found guilty is fined, admonished, or expelled. The influence of these Courts is confined to the branches in some Counties where the National League is most powerful and has not the same effect in most of the branches. The offences are principally having or caring for an evicted or surrendered farm, evicting a tenant, paying rent contrary to order of the League, aiding a boycotted person by working for him, selling food to or succouring him, aiding the Police, and numerous other offences of a similar character. It should not however be supposed that all these evils exist wherever there is a branch of the League.¹⁷³ The working of each branch very much depends upon the character of the President (frequently a clergyman) and the local public opinion. In many of the branches there is little real harm done, as the operations of the Branch are kept within bounds. (Many of the clergy exert themselves to another direction).

Whether there is any means of counteracting such power and influence

At present there are no means for counteracting the influence exercised by some of the branches which hold Courts. The Police are powerless to bring the offenders to justice for the reason that the proceedings of the League are carried on with closed doors¹⁷⁴ – and that the very persons present who relate to the Police afterwards what occurs will if examined by a magistrate on oath profess entire ignorance of what took place. The Police however have been most successful in prosecuting many offenders for boycotting under the Conspiracy Against Property Act 1875,¹⁷⁵ but the persons which this law can reach are the mere tools of the League. The instigators and influential movers in the matter are outside the reach of the law.

Whether any means now at disposal of Government can be exercised as to prevent the exercise of such unconstitutional power or influence

Under the existing law boycotting and intimidation cannot effectually be stopped. I am however of opinion much more might be done under the ordinary law than has been done. I brought under

¹⁷³This sentence was subsequently deleted.

¹⁷⁴In January 1884, the Irish executive stopped the police attending branch meetings without the consent of committee members: see Ball, 'Policing the Land War', pp. 242–243.

¹⁷⁵See **Journal (28 May, 19 October 1885)**.

notice of Government when I was appointed Inspector General that whenever these N.L. Courts are held – if a magisterial inquiry were instituted upon a charge of intimidation under the Whiteboy Acts¹⁷⁶ – though no prosecution might be the result, still the exposure of the actors in the proceedings of the N.L. Branch by examination by a Court of Magistrates and by their being obliged to perjure themselves in order to save their friends from prosecution would be calculated to check the action of such Courts.

The suppression of the National League if such an act were accompanied by a strong Coercion Act would no doubt stop boycotting. But this is a matter for most serious consideration. The suppression of such a vast organization which has now grown to such a magnitude and which is backed by the Spiritual Leaders of the people is a most serious matter. It must be remembered that the Irish National League has for the past two years done all in its power to prevent the commission of serious outrage. If it be suppressed the consequences likely to flow therefrom for some time are the following. The Irish National League leaders will remove the restraint upon such of its party as are in favour of the commission of outrage – the secret society members of the body will at once instigate the commission of outrage – murders, dynamite outrages, firing into dwellings, and other Whiteboy outrages will follow in the disturbed Counties, attempts on the lives of officials will be tried in Dublin and in the Provinces. The League driven from its secret chambers will hold public meetings (if allowed), these meetings will be conducted by some of the R. Catholic Bishops and Clergy who will probably do all in their power to provoke the Government to prosecute them, and make state martyrs of them. The commission of outrage will be carried on principally in the Counties of Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, Waterford, and Galway East Riding – and as crime is infectious in Ireland it may extend into Counties hitherto tranquil. The Police under the existing law will not in that event be able to cope with a general outbreak of outrage – they will be as helpless as they had been in 1881 and 1882 till the Prevention of Crime Act was passed. To enable the Police to prevent the commission of such extensive outrage, the cardinal provisions of the Prevention of Crime Act of 1882 will have to be re-enacted *pari passu* with the suppression of the League. Without such powers it would be impossible for the Police to protect life and property under the reign of terror which would be attempted upon the suppression of the League. Even if the League is not suppressed the Government

¹⁷⁶ A series of statutes from the 1770s for the suppression of ‘tumultuous risings’ in Ireland. Reed subsequently suggested using them to suppress National League activities: Reed, ‘Confidential report for Chief Secretary’, 18 January 1886: CSO RP 1886/17972.

must be prepared for the serious increase of outrage following the refusal of the demand for an Irish Parliament. If the Executive be armed with strong powers by fresh legislation (and these must be exceptionally strong), such a crisis can be provided for.

I am of opinion the [*sic*] strengthening the Executive by some fresh legislation to provide for boycotting, and a renewal of some of the Provisions of the P. of C. Act of 82 would be a safer course than the suppression of a League which is now supported by the great majority of the Irish people led by their Bishops and Clergy. That the latter have still sway and power over the people cannot be denied; and that they are taking a greater interest now in the National movement than ever they did before is the case. As I have stated in previous reports in my opinion the land question is at the bottom of this agitation and as the tradesmen and labourers in town and country in Ireland are dependent upon the success of the farmers, it may be said this is the real question about which the great majority of the Irish people are really interested. The other N.L. questions are of secondary importance to the majority.

P.S. I have not time to read this over having prepared this paper today upon a few hours' notice.

43. Sir Robert Hamilton to Lord Spencer, 17 January 1886; Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle; 'Private'; AP, Add MS 77061.

I am not afraid that a local Irish Government would be unable to keep the peace against Invincibles and secret organizations generally. What gives such associations the great power they possess is that their machinations are directed against Landlords and their agents, including caretakers of evicted farms and against officials of the English Government. With the land question settled, and a representative Irish Government in power, both the landlords as landlords will have gone, and the English official in Ireland will be a thing of the past. Secret organizations directed against other objects could not, so far as I can see, enlist the same general sympathy (from which they derive their power) as such associations do at present, and I think could be dealt with locally.

We are in a most critical state. I doubt if the forces behind Parnell will allow him to accept, or help to work, anything short of his whole programme. In fact I believe they will require him to oppose anything which may be proposed short of legislative independence for Ireland.

The enclosed extract from Archbishop Walsh's speech at Thurles the other day which you may have read in the *Times* is very significant.¹⁷⁷

With the land question settled the larger the measure of Home Rule that is granted the better. The millennium will by no means have come then. The difficulties of the Irish Government will always be great. The keen religious differences, and the complications arising therefrom, the different circumstances of the manufacturing industries in the north and the agricultural industry in the richer parts of the middle and south, and the terrible problem of the congested districts would always make the Government of Ireland a very complicated problem. But surely there is more hope of these matters being satisfactorily dealt with by those who know the circumstances and represent the various interests at stake themselves directing the Govt. of the Country than if they are dealt with by a centralized system of Government directed by a Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secy whose tenure of office is seldom sufficiently prolonged to enable them to acquire anything like a thorough knowledge of the complicated local issues involved in the Government of Ireland.

The great difficulty in the way of a purchase scheme is the old one of what is a fair rent. I daresay you may remember I always thought the policy of having the Government valuations of the same holding differing considerably in amount, the one determining the rates and the other the rent, or the rent-charge as it really is, was a great mistake. Griffith's valuation,¹⁷⁸ with or without some general qualification, must I think be the basis of any great transfer scheme, based as it is on the agricultural output of each holding, reduced into money at specified prices of produce.

But the question of a fair rent is also raising immediate and most formidable difficulties. Undoubtedly many tenants cannot pay their judicial rent this year, and where the landlords don't make reductions, the full powers of the law must be used to put starving people on the roadside, or evictions must be suspended by legislation with the effect that the tenants will get more demoralized than they are by being allowed to remain in their holdings without paying for them even so much as they can afford to pay. I look upon this in itself as a more difficult matter to deal with than the question of the future government of the country regarding which there are only two courses open. The

¹⁷⁷ Walsh addressed a public meeting during his visit to Archbishop Croke at Thurles on 14 January 1885: *The Times*, 16 January 1886, p. 6.

¹⁷⁸ The Primary Valuation of Land in Ireland was directed by Sir Richard Griffith during 1852–1865. It placed the assessment of poor rates on a uniform basis and, although not representing the true value of land, was widely used as a yardstick for rents prior to the slump of 1878–1879.

country must be allowed to govern itself, and make the power of its non local government felt and respected, or the supremacy of the English Government must be asserted. Desperate risks attend either course. The one might lead to chaos. The other to disenfranchisement, but still one or the other must be taken, but the economic difficulty baffles me. I can see no possible fair solution but a sliding scale, and this would be a gigantic and most difficult change to make.

I feel very much for the position of landlords whatever may have been the failings and shortcomings of their class in former years. The English public mind naturally recoils from the practical extermination of a class of society, more particularly as that class has always been regarded as the loyal class, but it is inevitable if the Country is ever to be at peace, and it must come sooner or later, unless they are prepared to accept the change in the circumstances and make their influence felt as citizens merely and not as landlords.

I fancy however it is the bug bear of separation which is the great obstacle in the English mind to any big scheme at present. Many extreme Liberals appear to think they cannot do wrong in following the example of the United States to the length, if need be, of fighting to prevent a rupture of the Empire. I should like to commend to them the following extract from a leading article in the *New York Evening Post* of 18th Decr.:

“Mr. Chamberlain reminded his audience apropos of this that Americans had shed torrents of blood to prevent the dissolution of the Union, and set it before them as an example to be remembered in dealing with Irish claims. But he ought to have reminded them also that the United States did not conquer the South for the purpose of regulating its local affairs, or holding it by a large military force.”¹⁷⁹

Please send one line of akt.

44. Sir Robert Hamilton to Lord Carnarvon, 17 January 1886; Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle; 'Secret'; CP, Add MS 60822, fos 20–26.

I gathered from my conversation today with the Attorney-General that the question of suppressing the National League is under the consideration of the Government. I have not been asked to express my views on the subject which is one of high state policy, but Your

¹⁷⁹*New York Evening Post*, 18 December 1885.

Excellency has always treated me with such confidence that I am emboldened, even unasked, to lay my views before you.

Although the Irish Government ever since the establishment of the National League have not interfered with its operation, they have been careful never to say in so many words that they regarded it as a legal association. There was always the possibility that it might so conduct its operations that it might have to be broken up. But in my view this is a step the gravity of which it is impossible to overrate.

As I said in my memorandum of the 14th inst¹⁸⁰ the three main evils that arise out of the National League are

- (1) Boycotting
- (2) Combinations against paying rent without an all round reduction
- (3) Informal courts levying fines for breaches of its rules.

These are grave evils indeed, but on the other hand the influence of the League has during the last few months been strongly used against the grosser forms of outrage, and undoubtedly with effect. The first result of the suppression of the League would be that this influence would cease to be operative. Its local organization which is far more perfect than that of the old Land League would be used by the most violent spirits for the concoction of all sorts of horrible outrages. The Bishops and priests who have almost unanimously joined it would say that their religion had been insulted, and the whole body of the nationalist members elected by means of its operations would become your implacable foes.

Secret societies would spring up all over the country out of the ruins of the League. All the Irish in America and the Colonies who have been supporting the League would regard the step as a declaration of war to the death, and assassination and dynamite outrages would certainly follow in England. Even with all the powers of the Prevention of Crime Act which you would require to obtain from Parliament, many lives would be lost before the Country was again subdued into sullen quiet.

Is the present state of Ireland such that it calls for such a measure? And after it is all over, you will only be rather further off from a settlement than you are now.

You have got the whole body of the constitutionally elected members of the Country members of the League. You have also got the whole body of the Catholic priesthood. Are you going to brand them all as belonging to an illegal association? Why not rather take them into council. This would surely be acting in the spirit of constitutional government. With them rests the power of stopping boycotting,

¹⁸⁰Memo. by Mr. Robert Hamilton, dated 14th January 1886 – addressed to Lord Carnarvon (copy): RCHL 1/11. 1232.

intimidation against payment of rent, & illegal courts. Make it a condition with them that every thing in reason that they demand will be granted upon their cooperating to check these evils, but don't declare war upon the Country unless you are prepared to carry it out to the bitter end.

I have written hurriedly to catch the post. I should have been glad had I had more time to arrange my ideas, and to give them more force, but I should not have felt that I was discharging my duty to you if I had remained silent at a crisis like this.

45. E.G. Jenkinson to Lord Carnarvon, 24 January 1886; 'Private'; CP/TNA, PRO 30/6/62 (59).

I saw Mr Smith yesterday before he left for Dublin,¹⁸¹ and explained to him as well as I could in the short time I had with him the present situation in Ireland. I told him about the R.I.C., and the necessity of removing the uncertainty from the men's mind. I also told him how necessary it is to have the machinery in good working order, and to have strong men at the head of it, should it be decided to attack the League, and what lies behind it. And I also stated my opinion that whatever may be our policy towards Ireland, the one question which must be dealt with is the Land Question. I spoke of the difficulties before us should we make up our mind to overthrow the National League but I did not I think say enough on the great danger of tackling the League without being prepared to face the consequences, & to hit out vigorously and hard. Your Excellency knows what would be the result of putting down the League. By itself it would be merely scratching the skin. It would be like poking the fire, a blaze would follow which could not be extinguished without very exceptional powers and by vigorous action. If there is any real intention of suppressing the League, the Government should be armed before hand with exceptional powers. It would be foolish to do it otherwise. The safety valve would be shut down, and instead of one open society, we should have several secret societies in their worst form to deal with. Time is precious, and if anything is to be done it should be done without delay, but how long will it take to get them? Your Excellency knows how much I am against a policy of coercion, but if we are to put our foot down, let us be prepared to face the consequences, and do not let us find ourselves face to face with a

¹⁸¹ See **Journal** (27 January 1886).

worse state of things than there was in 1882, and with no sufficient powers to act vigorously & with effect.

46. Sir Robert Hamilton to Lord Spencer, 11 April 1886; 'Private'; AP, Add MS 77061.

The way in which Mr. Gladstone's proposals have been received by the press, both English & Scotch, and apparently by many genuine Liberals, makes the position a very critical one. It may be that the tide may set in the other direction as the hopelessness of any alternative solutions of the question gets impressed on the public mind, but if this should not occur the question will have to be faced whether he will stand by the scheme as proposed by him, or whether any modifications in it are possible which would prevent the falling away of a large number of his supporters.

Mr. Gladstone has the enormous advantage that the general outlines of his scheme are cordially accepted by the Irish Parliamentary party, and no modifications should be introduced into it which have not their acceptance. This is vital, as without their concurrence and cooperation no scheme can work. But they are sensible men, and it is very important to them that a scheme such as they can accept should be carried, and I believe they will be found ready to approach the consideration of this matter in a reasonable spirit.

It is clear that the Scotch Liberal who looks forward to a measure of Home Rule for Scotland dreads the precedent which the exclusion of Irish members from the House of Commons would set for Scotland. This is not entirely an idle fear. I do not think such exclusion could ever take place against the unanimous wish of the Scotch members to remain in Westminster, but I have heard Conservatives say that if they could only get the Scotch as well as the Irish members out of the House of Commons they would be pretty sure of getting their own way. Could not this be met? The Irish would not, I believe, seriously object to a continuance of their representation at Westminster. If some way could be found out of this difficulty, I believe the most powerful part of the opposition now offered to Mr. Gladstone's scheme would be overcome. I don't change my views in the least as to the real merits of the scheme. I prefer Mr. Gladstone's as it stands but rather than it should fail and this country be left in the throes of revolution, I would accept such a modification of it.

I am quite aware of the extreme difficulty of modifying Mr. Gladstone's scheme in this respect. He himself in his speech

pointed out this in the strongest way, but his fertility of resource is inexhaustible, & I believe he could find some solution.¹⁸² There is no sort of precedent that I can think of that meets the case, but then all the circumstances are unprecedented.

As regards the position of the three parties, Mr. Gladstone's is far the strongest. He says I will do what Ireland wants, reserving only what the interests of the Empire require to be reserved. Lord Hartington and the Tories say, we will do nothing, and are prepared to go to the fullest lengths in coercion.¹⁸³ Mr. Chamberlain and those who follow him say, we will have no coercion but we will force Ireland to do what we think she ought.¹⁸⁴

Mr. Gladstone's lines must eventually be adopted. The Tory position might be successful for a short time, but Mr. Chamberlain's position is simply impossible. Without coercion it must become Mr. Gladstone's. With it, it becomes the scheme of the Tories – i.e. coercion, but coercion after the Irish have got a powerful machinery for upsetting the govt. of the Country in the shape of a representative Council in Dublin, which would greatly aggravate the difficulties of the situation.

All except the most blinded Tories see that Mr. Gladstone's statement has made a wide scheme of self government for Ireland sooner or later inevitable. The whole success of the working of the scheme will depend upon whether it is accepted by the Irish representatives or not. They are with him now, and their cordial cooperation should at all hazards be maintained. Such details in his scheme as he may, with their concurrence, modify to disarm the opposition of timid Liberals, should be modified, & there is no departure from principle in doing this. The only principle underlying the whole scheme is that without sacrificing Imperial interests the Country should be governed in accordance with the views of the people and not against them. In no other way can you escape coercion, & make law and order respected in the Country.

To go on to another point by no means so important. As you know I was always against Mr. Gladstone's plan of taking the revenue paid on dutiable articles in Ireland as the measure of Ireland's income. (1) because it does not accurately represent the amount of taxes paid by the Irish people which it exceeds by about £1,400,000 a year, & (2) because putting it on the income side of the account necessitates an increase *pro tanto* in the amount of contributions Ireland pays to

¹⁸² See **Journal (15 April 1886)**.

¹⁸³ Spencer's note reads, 'Did Hartington go to this length?'

¹⁸⁴ Spencer: 'Did Chamberlain declare against coercion?'

England.¹⁸⁵ But there is also another reason which had occurred to me, & this is one of principle. I forget if I mentioned it to you, but I was reminded of it by a remark in yesterday's *Scotsman*. It is this. Suppose that the Imperial Govt. in time of war increases the duty on tobacco. The increased duty paid in Ireland in respect of tobacco consumed in England will go to the benefit of the Irish revenue, altho' the Irish Exchequer will share no part of the burden of the war which the extra duty was imposed to meet.

I am quite aware that the adoption of my plan in place of Mr. Gladstone's would necessitate that an account should be kept by each country of all dutiable articles passing from the one to the other on which duty had been paid, but this would not be serious, & the general practice would undoubtedly be that the great bulk of the dutiable articles would pass from one country to the other under permit, in which case no accounts could be involved.

Would you kindly let Mr. Morley see this letter?

47. Sir Robert Hamilton to Lord Spencer, 19 July 1886; Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle; AP, Add MS 77061.

I was very glad to get your letter and to find that you had returned benefited by your trip.¹⁸⁶

The present position is very serious, and much will depend upon the way the result of the election in England is presented to the Irish people.¹⁸⁷

If it is put to them in this way, that a year ago there were only about 40 Irish members in favour of Home Rule, and that now there are 86 Irish and 190 English in favour of that policy, the matter will be regarded in the light of a triumph, and full of hope for the future.

If on the other hand it is represented that England has given an emphatic "no" to a Home Rule policy for Ireland, and that as Mr. Gladstone has failed to carry the English people with him no one else can in future succeed in doing so, then resort will be had I fear to other than constitutional means.

When Mr. Morley was over here last week he saw all the DMs & some RMs & is in possession of the latest information on the state of the

¹⁸⁵Spencer: 'Or rather if we consider the present contribution the only fair one it is necessary to add their sum to the receipts to balance account.'

¹⁸⁶Letter not traced. Spencer had visited Aix-les-Bains: see *The Times*, 13 July 1886, p. 7.

¹⁸⁷See **Journal (5 December 1886)**.

Country.¹⁸⁸ You will no doubt see him, so I need not attempt to describe it. Much will depend on the composition of the new Government.

As regards my self, whatever may happen I feel I have only done my duty, and have not over stepped its limits.

No one is more strong than I am on the point of the inexpediency of permanent servants of the state taking sides in party politics, & I feel that I am not fairly open to such a charge.

It is my business, under my political chiefs, to carry on the Govt. of the country. Affairs had reached a crisis which it was my business to point out, & this I did when the Conservatives were last in power. I merely repeated my views when a change of Govt. occurred.

It is impossible for a man in my position, unless he is a fool, to have no views one way or the other on the Govt. of the Country which is his business.

If the Conservatives think it is desirable to replace me by some one holding their views, whatever these may be, well & good – they can get rid of me. But this would be an admission on their part that the man holding the office I hold should have the views of the Govt. of the day, and would logically lead to my post being filled by a new man at each change of Government. This might be done by making it a political post, but to keep it a permanent office & to apply this plan to it would be introducing the American system, which is admittedly so bad a one that Americans are at present engaged in doing their best to alter it.

I say so much about the present question because I think at the present moment it has considerable political importance, altho' so far as I am individually concerned, if the Conservatives dealt fairly liberally with me in the way of pension & this I should think they would do, my retirement would not be personally disagreeable to me.

¹⁸⁸Morley was in Dublin between 12 and 16 July 1886 to co-ordinate the policing of Orange anniversaries: *The Times*, 13 and 16 July 1886, p. 7.