

S P E E C H

OF THE

RIGHT HONORABLE

JOHN FOSTER,

S P E A K E R

OF THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS OF IRELAND,

DELIVERED IN COMMITTEE,

ON WEDNESDAY THE 19TH OF MARCH, 1800.

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S P E E C H,

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WHEN the scheme of Union was first communicated to me in private, and great commercial advantages were talked of, I said we wanted nothing from Great Britain, nor had she any thing beneficial in her power to give us; when the scheme was afterwards offered to the publick, I repeated the same opinion in publick, and I did not look forward to the detail of the terms, as some people did, with the least expectation that they could hold out any thing advantageous; at last they appeared, and every article they contained told me, that I was right; but I own, I little expected, that any could be devised, so incompetent, so contradictory to the identification they proposed to establish, and so injurious to the interest of Ireland in every point of view.

I have already spoke largely on them, and shall therefore be the more brief now.

To begin with the article of *contribution*, I will not enter into arguments, that it is calculated on unfair, or unjust
B ground;

ground ; though I could with ease maintain, that it is much more against us, than it ought to be, even on the grounds it rests ; and still more largely so, if we compare the wealth of the two kingdoms, the comparative proportion of which can alone shew the comparative ability to pay taxes. I say I will not enter into it, because the offer of it is such an imposition, such a palpable delusion, that I am astonished it could ever have been held out seriously as a favourable arrangement ; for it is attended with provisions to destroy it, before any benefit can arise from it : and be its advantages great or little, they must cease in three years or four at the most. Gentlemen will be surpris'd at this, but I will prove it clearly.

The words in the 7th Article are, that *if at any future time the separate debts of each kingdom shall have been liquidated, or the value of their respective debts, estimated according to the amount of the interest and annuities attending the same, of the sinking fund applicable to the reduction thereof, and the period within which the whole capital of such debts shall appear to be redeemable by such sinking fund, shall be to each other in the same proportion with the respective contributions of each kingdom respectively, that is, of 7 one-half to 1 ; then it shall be competent for the said united parliament to declare that all future expence thenceforth to be incurred, together with the interest and charges of all joint debts contracted previous to such declaration, shall be defrayed indiscriminately by equal taxes.*

The Noble Lord who introduced it, expressed his lamentations that the circumstances of Great Britain and Ireland did not enable us to pursue the measure of identity in the revenues with equal strictness as in the Scotch Union ; and that the two countries could not be at once incorporated so as not to be under the necessity of having distinct revenues. It were to be wished, he said, that there was not an insurmountable bar to a common system

system and a common treasury; such, however, is the disproportion of the debts of the two kingdoms, that a common system for the present is impossible *.

Hence then arose the necessity of a ratio of contribution; the unequal amount of the two debts, occasioned distinct interests; and while those debts continue, their pressure being unequal, there can be no equal interest; and equal taxes would be unjust. But contrary to this principle, the Article says, we shall undergo equal taxation when those respective debts come to bear the proportion to each other, which is ascertained for our contribution, that is, of 1 to $7\frac{1}{2}$.

The British debt on January last was 361,369,604, after deducting 42,905,316 for the amount redeemed §, and when the Irish debt arises to 48,182,612, it will be in the proportion to it of 1 to $7\frac{1}{2}$; but the Irish debt, as the Noble Lord asserts, and as a pamphlet, said to be the speech of a great Law Lord, states in a minute calculation, will be 50 million in 1803; which is in a nearer proportion to 361,369,604, than 1 to $7\frac{1}{2}$; and therefore in 1803, the delusion which is plausibly held out will vanish; we are to lose the advantage of paying one share only for $7\frac{1}{2}$, and we are to commence a system of paying one for one, while the debts are to continue as 1 to $7\frac{1}{2}$.

Perhaps it may be said, that the proportion of the principal due by each kingdom is not the only criterion, but that the value of the respective debts is to be estimated according to the amount of the interest and annuities attending them. We will take it so, and the result will be nearly the same.

The

* Lord Castlereagh's Speech, p. 17, 18.

§ No. 4. Return by James Fisher.

The annual charges of the British debt are stated in one of the returns on your table to have been on the 5th of January 1800 above 20 millions †. We are told by the Noble Lord, and it appears by the same minute calculation I have mentioned, that the annual charge of the Irish debt will be 2,775,735 in 1804; which is within the proportion of 1 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ of the British charge. So that even on this estimate we are to commence the burden of equal taxation with Great Britain in four years. But if we deduct the annual charges attendant on the debt redeemed by the sinking funds, the British charge is 17 millions; and the proportion will therefore be attained in less than three years. That is, the proportion will be attained, whenever the charges of the Irish debt shall amount to 2,269,086; but that speech tells us they will be 2,430,735 in 1803: yet the noble Lord states in direct terms, that before common taxes can take place, the taxes of Great Britain must be reduced by 10 millions a year*. How is this to be reconciled; or am I wrong in calling it a delusion?

Should the Noble Lord urge that the value is to be estimated by another test—the period at which the respective capitals shall appear redeemable by the sinking fund, I will even meet him there. To go into conjectures on the operation of the sinking fund is useless; it depends entirely on the value of stock at the moment of purchase, and there cannot be any reasonable ground for estimating future events and their influence on stock, but I may state that the sinking fund of Ireland ought to operate more rapidly than that of Britain; for when the British sinking fund of one million was created in 1786, the debt was 238 millions; and when the Irish fund of 100,000*l.* was appropriated in 1797, the Irish debt

† No. 1,—20, 186, 507*£.* by James Fisher.

* Lord Castlereagh's Speech, p. 23.

debt was 7,082,256.† The British fund therefore was $\frac{1}{11}$ part of the debt it was to reduce; the Irish was $\frac{1}{10}$, and as to all debts incurred in each kingdom since the establishment of those funds, the provision in each is equal, being 1 per cent. on the capital created, and the operation therefore must be supposed equal. I don't mention the annual grant of 200,000 l. to the British sinking fund; it is casual, and would make very little difference as to the argument. Take the matter therefore in any of the three views, of capital, annual charge or sinking fund, you see the delusion clearly.

The Propositions offer us a proportion of contribution; which, however more unfavourable to us than it ought to be, is certainly better than equal taxes; but it is so contrived that we are to lose it in three years. The cause which requires a contributive proportion is, the different pressure of the debts; and yet when the debts are brought to press exactly in that contributive proportion it is to cease, as if no debt existed, and consequently there was no pressure. I was much at a loss to account for the anxiety manifested this session to state our debt at a higher nominal amount than heretofore, and to raise it from 19 to 25 million without encreasing either the actual amount or the actual charge. We may now form a guess at the reason; it tended to accelerate the period of taking from us all benefit of proportional contribution, and of making us subject to common taxation with Britain; and the mode of borrowing the whole of the supply this year (for the new taxes only pay the interest) tends materially to quicken our speed toward this period.

In short, the whole is a gross deception, unintentional I will suppose in the noble Lord, (for I don't mean to charge him with deception) but the effect is equally prejudicial, and

† Sir George Shee's return. C.

and the reasoning is curious; the favourable proportion is given to us, as I have said, on account of the comparative greatness of the British debt—we owe only 25 million, they owe 361—but when we shall owe 50, and they not above 340, we are to lose the benefit. We cannot bear equal taxation now, but when we double our debt in three years, we shall be richer and more adequate to support it. Our increase of poverty and their increase of wealth, are to bring us to an equality of condition, so as to bear an equality of taxes contrary to all reason.—We are to encrease our incumbrances in order to enjoy the full burden of equal taxation with Britain, and the period fixed on for our undertaking this burden is to be the moment of encreased separate debt and encreased separate taxes in Ireland, when both our debts and taxes shall be doubled.

To talk therefore of the justice or injustice of the contributive proportion, would be an idle waste of time—and the Minister seems to think it would be as idle to attend to it, for unfairly as I believe it is calculated, unable as he has said we are, to go on without being bankrupt, which he tells us we must be; he has called on us this very session, to borrow $4\frac{1}{2}$ million for the supplies of the year, when Britain borrows only $2\frac{1}{2}$ million, and we have voted taxes to nearly 300,000l.—while she imposes only 350,000l.—we borrow more than $\frac{1}{5}$ of what she does, and we create a new revenue of almost $\frac{6}{7}$ of her whole additional taxes. If the kingdom is unequal to this exertion, if it so far exceeds the proportion which he admits we ought to contribute, why does he press us to it? why does he allow our zeal to grant so largely beyond our means, beyond our proportion of imperial expence?

We will next examine the question of *Commerce*—Which the Right Hon. Gentleman near the Noble Lord begins by a comparison

a comparison with the arrangement of 1785, and introduces by a supposed advantage which his first resolution gives and which was omitted in 1785. It is in the article of Treaties, the words are, "*and that in all treaties made by his Majesty, his heirs and successors, with any foreign power, his Majesty's subjects of Ireland shall have the same privileges and be on the same footing as his Majesty's subjects of Great Britain.*" But does he forget that this country not only claimed but had its right acknowledged to a full participation of foreign treaties before 1785?—He knows the Methuen treaty in 1703, it admits into Portugal the woollen cloths and the rest of the woollen manufactures of the Britons—*Lanas et lanificia Britannorum*. But some time, previous to 1782, the Portuguese Court refused to admit Irish Woollens, and this house voted an address to his Majesty on the subject, on 7th Feb. 1782* which passed *Nem. Con.* and his Majesty replied on the 5th March, echoing

* *Founding our claims upon the faith of treaties, and desirous to promote all the reciprocal advantages of commerce between this country and the subjects of your Majesty's ancient and faithful ally the Queen of Portugal, we considered that kingdom, in our commercial regulations, as the most favoured nation, and by Acts of Parliament gave to the wines of Portugal that advantage over the wines of France in the imposition of duties, which is described in the treaty of 1703, expecting from the justice of the court of Portugal, that woollen manufactures sent from this kingdom, would in consequence have the same admission which is given to those imported there from Great Britain.*

We rested this most reasonable expectation, not only on the *construction of the treaty above mentioned, but on the letter and spirit of many ancient treaties made between your Majesty's royal predecessors and the Crown of Portugal, and we hoped for a common participation with his Majesty's subjects of Great Britain, in every branch of commerce with Portugal, which till now has never been denied to us in that kingdom.*

With much surprise therefore we have heard that the entry of our woollen manufactures and printed linens had met with some obstruction at the port of Lisbon.

Nevertheless,

ing back and acknowledging the right.†. He was unable however, to procure the acquiescence of Portugal, till this House by laying a prohibitory duty on their wine brought that court to reason‡. This separate Irish Parliament shewed

Nevertheless, being satisfied that the zealous and repeated requisitions of your Majesty's Ministers strenuously urged, and in a cause so evidently reasonable and just, would be attended with success, we have hitherto refrained from resenting the injury by commercial regulations restrictive of the trade of Portugal, and by such other effectual means as the honour and indispensable rights of this kingdom may demand, nor would we then disturb your Majesty's attention by an Address upon the subject.—But if we are now to understand that it is the determination of her most faithful Majesty to exclude your Majesty's subjects of Ireland from the benefits of the treaty of 1703, or to refuse any relief in respect of the printed linens of this kingdom—it is become our duty to resort to your Majesty's protection and powerful interposition, that our manufactures may not be excluded from the ports of one of your Majesty's allies, which must at all times be grievous, but peculiarly so, when the common calamity of war has prohibited our commercial intercourse with so many other states.

We beg leave therefore to approach the Throne, earnestly recommending our cause to your Majesty's unremitting attention, and unabated efforts—and we entreat your Majesty to interpose your royal influence with the Court of Portugal in the most effectual manner that the obstructions of our trade may be removed, and that we may be restored *to those commercial rights to which we are entitled.* Comm. Journals, v. 20, p. 286.

† His Majesty is not surprised that his faithful Commons, always attentive to the true interest of their country, should have observed with alarm and concern the obstructions given in the ports of Portugal to the importation of Irish woollen and printed linen manufactures into that kingdom; and the full satisfaction which the House of Commons express in his Majesty's solicitude upon this important subject, and in his unremitting endeavours to open the eyes of Portugal, *not only to the true sense of the treaties, subsisting between the two Crowns,* but to a just understanding of her real interests, is graciously accepted by his Majesty. Comm. Journ. v. 20. p. 324.

‡ “Resolved, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that a further additional duty of 30l. a ton be laid upon all wines of the growth of Portugal and Madeira, imported into this kingdom during the time aforesaid, and so in proportion for

shewed its power to vindicate the rights of Ireland to foreign treaties; and it would have been idle in a commercial arrangement between us and Britain only, to have inserted a claim which Britain acknowledged, and, to support which, we had proved ourselves adequate. The Gentleman is certainly wise in inserting it now; because as his object is to take away the Irish Parliament, he takes away our security for that right, and ought to offer us some other.

Need I mention the treaty with France; was there any doubt we had a right to participate in it? Did he even insinuate a suspicion we had not? but he adverts again so pointedly to 1785, and the share I took in the transactions of that year, that I must be excused for going back to it, and following him in his comparison of the Propositions brought forward then and now.

I will begin with the fourth article of that year; it is in the following words: "*Resolved, that it is the opinion of this Committee, that in all cases where the duties on articles of growth, product or manufacture of either country, are different on the importation into the other, it would be expedient, that they should be reduced in the kingdom, where they are highest, to the amount payable in the other; and that all such articles should be exportable from the kingdom into which they shall be imported as free from duty as the similar commodities or home manufacture of the same kingdom.*" The object of that system was to arrange the import of articles of the growth, product or manufacture, of each kingdom into the other, on the duties as they stood in Ireland; so that every protection which those duties

for any greater or lesser quantity. The said further additional duty to cease so soon as the goods of Ireland shall be admitted into Portugal agreeable to treaties; and to be paid down in ready money net, without any discount or allowance." Comm. Journ. v. 22, p. 311.

duties gave to Irish manufacture was to remain ; and those propositions guarded against future commercial hostility, by providing against future prohibitions or encrease of duties on mutual import or export *.

Compare his Proposition now, " That all articles of the
 " growth, produce or manufacture of either kingdom (not
 " herein after enumerated as subject to specific duties)
 " shall from hence be imported into one country from the
 " other, *free of duty*, other than the countervailing duty
 " in schedule 1, except the enumerated articles, *which*
 " *are to pay 10 per Cent. on the true value*, and woollen
 " manufacture, salt, hops and coals, which are to pay
 " the present duties in Ireland for ever." It lowers every
 duty which has operated as a protecting one, if it be
 above 10 per cent. to 10 per cent. and totally removes all
 that are under that rate, and some that are above it; it
 leaves all the many articles of import from Britain duty free,
 except the 18 which it enumerates.

Need I say more to shew the difference of the two plans,
 or to prove that I did then take care to preserve for the
 manufactures

* Resolved, 6. That in order to give permanency to the settlements now intended to be established, it is necessary that no prohibition or new additional duty should be hereafter imposed in either kingdom on the importation of any article of the growth, produce or manufacture of the other, except such additional duties as may be requisite to balance duties on internal consumption.

Resolved, 7. That for the same purpose, it is necessary further that no prohibition, or new additional duties should be hereafter imposed in either kingdom on the export of any article of native growth, product or manufacture to the other, except such as either kingdom may deem expedient, from time to time, on corn, meal, malt, flower, biscuit, and except where there now exists any prohibition which is not reciprocal, or any duty which is not equal in both kingdoms, in every which case the prohibition may be made reciprocal, or the duties raised so as to make them equal. Comm. Journ. V. 22. P. 234.

manufactures of Ireland such protection as the existing duties then gave them, and that his resolution either takes them away or reduces them?

But he says, the bill (which was only once read, and not twice, as he states) differs from the resolutions, and reduces all duties to 10 per cent.

The reading it is the best answer:—"And be it declared by the authority aforesaid, That it shall be held and adjudged to be a fundamental and essential condition of the present settlement, that in all cases in which there is a difference between the duties on articles of the growth, produce or manufacture of Great Britain, when imported into Ireland; and the duties on the same articles of the growth, produce or manufacture of Ireland, when imported into Great Britain, the duties on such articles should be reduced in the kingdom where they are highest to an amount not exceeding the duties which were payable in the other on the 17th day of May 1782; so that in every case in which any article was charged with a duty on importation into Ireland of 10 l. 10 s. per centum or upwards on the 17th day of May 1782, the amount of the said duties so reduced *shall not be less than the said duty of 10 l. 10 s. per centum*; and that all articles which are now importable duty free into either kingdom from the other, shall hereafter be imported duty free into each kingdom from the other respectively."

Is there a line in it reducing duties to 10 or $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, except *not less than* $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. means $10\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.? and I call on you to observe that though he states there was a positive reduction enacted in the bill, (the case is not so) the arrangement is left open, and no duty is enacted; limitations only are prescribed, to secure against a lower sum than 10h

per

per cent. and there is no provision to require the reducing it. He knows the history of that clause in the bill; it was inserted in England, on account of callico only, the duty on which I always contended was chargeable, as it stood in 1785, by the old law; though to put an end to doubt, I had inserted it among the duties of 1783, and he knows that I never changed my mind on the subject; but be it what it may on Callico, he cannot forget that the duty inserted in 1783, on Muslins, was a very old one amounting to from 30 to 50 per cent. and that it would have continued under the resolution and bill. How then can the Right Hon. Gentleman say, the bill took away the muslin duties, and if it did not, why should he take them away now?

He says further, that the system of 1785 did not secure to us articles of British Growth duty free, but he forgets the 7th resolution, and that Coals, Tin, Bark, Rocksalt and Hops, were then duty free on export from Britain, and of course were to continue so. Raw wool I acknowledge was not, but of that I shall say more presently.

I will first go through a few of the imports affected by his propositions. *Beer* is to come in duty free, except so far as will countervail the charge on the malt and hops used in our Brewery, but the duties now existing on import of British beer afford a protection beyond what would be countervailing, and of course for so much are an advantage to the Irish Brewers. We all know that the encouragement of the Breweries has long been a favorite object with this House, and to shew that they have thriven under its care, let me tell you, that the average import of Beer for 5 years, ending March 1794, was 106,119, Barrels, for 5 years to March 1799, 54,883, and for the year to March 1799, 25,178 only, not one-half of the 5 years average in which it is included. Here is a manifest good effect, from our regulations

gulations and duties, and is it safe, wise or prudent to tamper with them and without any sufficient commercial or revenue consideration to interrupt their future good effects, by taking off whatever protection their operation on imported beer affords?

But the Right Hon. Gentlemen says, *this article of the Union is beneficial to Ireland*; who else will say so? Will the *Bookseller, the Book-binder, the Printer, the Paper-maker, the Stationer*, acknowledge it to be so when all the articles which give to them profit and to their Irish workmen, livelihood, are to be supplied from Britain, freed from the present duties? bound books are now subject to 12l. 14s. 1d. per cent. Can the Irish binder expect employment, when they are to be imported free of duty?

The duties on *Copper wrought, Cutlery, Hosiery of Silk and Cotton, Silk and Worsted, and in the piece* are to fall from 12l. 14s. 1d. to 10 per cent. So on *Hardware*, and will the many manufacturers of these goods say, *this proposition is beneficial to Ireland*? *Floor Oil-cloth*, which is almost a new fabric, here, is to be free, though now subject to 12l. 14s. 1d. per cent. *Quilts-silk and Cotton mixed manufacturers, Silk and Worsted Ditto, Soap, Upholstery-ware, Wood-ware, and all small articles* are to be also duty free, though now subject to 12l. 14s. 1d. per cent. *Blankets* pay 2s. 4d. each, they are to be free, unless they are included as woollen manufactory, *Carpeting* in like manner which is to be subject to 12l. 14s. 1d. per cent. and will be free unless it is included also. Will the persons concerned in working those fabrics here say, *this article is beneficial*?

Hats are now subject to 2s. 4d. each, if made of wool, and to 11s. 8d. if made of beaver—the 2s. 4d. is prohibitory upon the cheap sort, and even operates on a 14s. hat as

13 $\frac{1}{2}$ per

13½ per cent. a duty very inefficient to extend the manufacture, as the import shews, for the average of five years to 1794, was 6355, of five years to 1799, was 9577, and the import of the last year was 12,859—what then must be the effect of reducing the duty?

Sadlery ought peculiarly to be encouraged in a country which has more hides than can be manufactured—the average of the first five years import was 1,761l., of the last 3,147l., and the value imported in the year 1799, was 5,347l.—it is evident therefore, that the duty is not too high to prevent import; and when the Right Hon. Gentleman attributes the encrease to the military accoutrements, he is right, but he forgets it is probable that the import would have been much larger and the manufacture of course have decreased, had his charge theory of duties taken place. Will the Hatters then, or will the Sadlers tell the gentleman that *this article of his is beneficial to Ireland?*

Glass has been already explained, 30,000 dozen of green bottles have found their way into Ireland last year, notwithstanding the present duties, the evidence before the committee shews the difficulties the manufacture has to struggle with, and that the duties, which you now are called on to reduce, have alone kept it within your land. In the *window glass* on an accidental stoppage of one or two houses for necessary repairs, the British glass rose, and it fell when they commenced work again.

I won't weary the Committee with going through the whole mournful catalogue, but of all the manufactures, to be affected by this pernicious measure, the Cotton is the one of most consequence, and fatally is the one most injured; for the reduction of the duty is tantamount to its annihilation, as it has thriven only under the protection of that duty. Its annual
value

value is supposed to be three-fourths of a million. Thirteen mills for spinning warp and many factories have been built, and all this establishment which gives much wealth and employment, and promises more, is to be destroyed. Will the owners of those mills, will the 100,000 souls turned out of work by this article, say *it is beneficial to Ireland*? But supposing the Cotton manufacture ought to be destroyed, can it not be done without the additional mischief of Legislative Union? why make one evil wait for the other?

The Right Hon. Gentleman himself acknowledges the injury of his proposition by altering it, so as to give a respite from the death sentence for a few years; this may serve the persons now in trade, by giving them leave gradually to withdraw their capitals, but all others will be deterred from entering into a manufacture which is doomed to linger gradually.

If you wish to see the effect of Duties, you have it in this article of Cotton—plain cottons, such as fustians, &c. are subject only to 12l. 14s. 1d. per cent. from Britain, and their import is great still—but muslin, callico, and printed goods, being subject to from 30 to 50 per cent. very little of them is imported, and 700,000l. worth is made in the year, within the kingdom.

Cotton Stockings are in general use, and notwithstanding the present duty of 12l. 14s. 1d. the average of the last five years import exceeds that of the preceding period, Sec. 328,242 pair in the latter, 222,778 in the former.

As to *Old Drapery*. Our import of it has increased exceedingly, &c. from an average of 690,737 yards in the first five years, to one of 1,027,404 on the last five,
ending

ending 1799—and even in the year 1799, the import was 1,269,857, exceeding the average a-fifth. It is evident therefore that our supply of this manufacture from Britain, has risen most rapidly, and as there is to be no change of duty on it, the British raw wool is offered to us duty free, to check its increase. I shewed you formerly, how ineffectual the offer must be, for extending the manufacture here; but the Right Hon. Gentleman tells you, that notwithstanding its great bulk, the freight of it will not be expensive, because smugglers carry it. He cannot mean, from England hither; there is no such practice, and if he means from either country to France, I should doubt the fact; let me however remind him, that while one pack of British wool serves to work up two of French, it is worth the Frenchman's while to pay excessive freight for it.

Sir, it has been of late a fashionable study of gentlemen on the opposite side, to ransack all the speeches that ever have been attributed to me in print, and to hunt them for inconsistencies with my present opinions. They are welcome, they will find none; although if they did, they ought to make an allowance for change of time, alteration of circumstance in 15 years, or even the effect of my having had so many years additional experience; but I desire no such allowance. I never have seen a speech printed for me in 1785, which I would disclaim, and I avow all that the Right Hon. Gentleman has now read; If he says I was satisfied with fewer advantages in 1785, than are now proposed, (the reverse of which is the fact), let him remember, that we gave up no Constitution in 1785, we retained our Parliament, and now we are to export it; this is a difference between the two systems which would at once destroy all charge of inconsistency.

One remark presses so strongly here, that I must urge it particularly to your attention. The gentleman says the system of 1785, if adopted, would not have answered, and would require alteration now, yet it was then the best that the united wisdom of the men employed in both kingdoms could devise, and he supported it warmly. Let him apply this observation to the present one that he proposes; has he any reason to believe it more perfect or more lasting? or can he say it is made with more wisdom? and if not, this system of his will, by the same reasoning, require alteration hereafter, and yet it enacts an eternal bar to any amendment, by destroying one of the contracting parties; there is therefore this manifest advantage in the one of 1785, that it kept the Parliament to revise and cure its errors; and this one demolishes the Parliament, and is irrevocable, be its errors ever so abundant!

But he charges me with supporting a system of protecting duties now, though I opposed them formerly, and I reply, it is an unfounded charge, I support no system of duties now, which I did not then.

One great object in 1785, was to prevent new duties on the intercourse between the kingdoms, and at the same time to preserve all which existed at the time in Ireland, under the faith of which manufactures had been established here, and capitals vested; their continuance agreed perfectly with the spirit of the whole arrangement, which was to leave all the manufactures of Ireland and all the imports into it from Britain *in statu quo, as to duties and their operation.*

There is a consideration, and a very serious one on this part of the subject, which I request the particular attention of the committee to; and which makes the en-

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couragement

couragement of manufactures more necessary in this Kingdom than in any other, and most particularly so at the present time.

We have large drains of money which require a large balance of trade to supply them. The annual one of absentees was computed by Mr. Pitt at a million, by others with more probability at two millions. There is also another absentee lately created, *one, whom we can neither tax nor bring home*; the interest and charges on the publick loans from England amounting already to 725,000 a-year. These two drains make 2,725,000 a-year, and to countervail them, we can only look to the general ballance of trade on our favour, which no account makes 2,000,000, and I believe 800,000 is much nearer the truth; but be it what it may, it undoubtedly is very inadequate, for though it has been assisted by loans from England of 3 millions last year and $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions in the two preceding years, exchange has been uniformly and highly against us, varying from 4 to 6 per cent above par.

Gentlemen more conversant in the abstruse subject of exchange may explain whether any other causes have contributed to produce this high rate; I won't presume to say they have not, perhaps the power, which the British Loans gave to public offices to interfere with the usual effect of mercantile transactions, may have been one; but be the causes many or few, these serious reflections naturally suggest themselves; what would have been the distressful situation of our monied intercourse with Britain, and whether the necessary remittances could have been made to her, if those British Loans had not come in aid? How are they to be made hereafter, if British Loans shall cease? And whether the resorting regularly to such Loans, though it gives a temporary aid to remittance, will not in the end prove ruinous, by
annually

annually increasing the evil, in encreasing the sum to be remitted? To me, the prospect seems very alarming, and the proposed Union, by increasing Absentees, and supplying those who go to England for a time only, with British cloathing, British furniture and British manufacture; makes that prospect still more gloomy.

But, if by discouraging our own manufactures, as the proposed change of duties certainly will do, we are to add a further drain of three quarters of a million for British cotton goods, and perhaps a quarter of a million more for other articles, which we now manufacture, the remittances will become more and more embarrassed, so as to be soon impracticable; and the absentees will see too late, that in neglecting to support the Irish manufactures, they are taxing their own rents, and undermining their own property; the minister also will see too late, that he is demolishing the sources of revenue; and the English manufacturers who now supply a large share of the consumption of this kingdom, will find that consumption fail them, for want of a means in us to pay.

Of all countries therefore, it is most the interest of Ireland, from its peculiar drain through absentees and public debt, to prevent a further encrease of drain, through imported manufacture, and to encourage every fabrick at home which can save import; further, it is particularly so at this instant, when the measure proposed must increase the absentee drains, and the necessity of borrowing in England must add still more to them.

No Union, no paper agreement will cure the evil, or change the balance; remitting less is the only means, and that must be effected by the return of absentees or by increasing the home manufacture. But the absentee won't return, and therefore our only resource is in the home manufacture.

In

In commerce then we clearly gain nothing, and lose much; let us now examine Revenue; the offer of one million a year in war and half a million in peace is too gross an imposition on our understanding to be believed; the attempt to delude us with the advantage of our contributing to general expences in the proportion of only 1 to 7 one-half, which I have exposed fully, was cloaked with some degree of plausibility, but this is brought forward without any covering to conceal its imposture; can any man, who appeals to his own reason, think it possible, a Union can give Great Britain the means of paying it, or that she would make such a sacrifice without a scheme of renumeration? Does the noble Lord's conduct justify his assertion? look at the supplies of this year; England, as I have stated, raises twenty-one million by loan, and 350,000 l. new taxes, Ireland four and a half million by loan, and 290,000 l. new taxes. If the abilities of the two countries are in his favourite ratio of 1 to 7 and a half, why does he call on us, to exceed the proportion of our abilities? is it for England to save so much of her proportion? or does he mean to avow, that England is not equally interested now, as she has ever been, in preserving us to the Empire, whether our Parliament be surrendered to her or not?

Let us examine our expences, their great increase is in the military. If our present immense military establishment be for *imperial purposes* only, it must continue after the Union, and there is no reason why Great Britain should not pay us the million now as well as then. If it be kept to *prevent invasion of this kingdom*, and thereby secure Great Britain in the point where the minister says she is most vulnerable, why don't she come forward now with the money, and acknowledge her necessity for the forces which are to save her from being wounded through our sides? In either case she has no occasion to wait, nor is there any justice in her waiting for a Union.

But

But if this extended military system, is solely continued for its only other avowed purpose, to *guard our internal state*, I would say to the Noble Lord, *restore tranquillity to us, and then your army will be unnecessary*; he says his Union will do it, but has he any reason to think so? does he find the country grow satisfied with the measure? does he see a love of the Union gain ground? or does he find any species of tranquillity ensue from the discussion? on the contrary, does he not know, it is daily more and more reprobated, from one end of the kingdom to the other? that a general discontent at its being renewed and proposed against the sense of the nation, is agitating the whole kingdom? that these discontents are increased by the destruction it forebodes to many manufactures, which now employ thousands of our inhabitants, and thousands of capital; all which inhabitants must be set adrift, and all which capital must be lost to the proprietors, if the measure be persevered in.

Let the Noble Lord put these questions seriously to himself in private, and let him obey the answer which his own heart and his understanding will give them. When I bid the Noble Lord restore tranquillity, I do it, because he has the means of tranquillity in his power; let him *withdraw the measure, and tranquillity will follow*; it is *his* measure, that wounds the feelings and alarms the spirit of the country. Let him I say again, withdraw it, and he will even find the means in his power more ample, from his having proposed it; for it has created such a union of sentiment, and called forth such a spirit of true patriotism as he could not have foreseen; and all this union and all this spirit will instantly join in gratitude to the Government, and in attachment to Great Britain, for removing the threatened mischief. Its efforts will be directed with all the energy of a people saved from the most vital alarm, to promote content, industry and satisfaction; to cultivate British connexion, and fix it on its only firm basis, mutual interest and mutual affection.

On

On the subject of tranquillizing the country, I wish the Committee to recollect the close of Lord Camden's administration, when the rebellion was crushed, but not extinguished; and how the sudden change of system stopped its extinguishment. I am not an advocate for severity; and I know the value of lenity. '*Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos*,' is the rule I would follow. Had the sudden change of system not taken place, even had it taken place less rapidly, we should long since have ceased to hear of rebellion continuing. There was a want of judgment in the mode too—when rebels were pardoned by hundreds, and got protections in their pockets; some means of honest livelihood should have been opened instantly to them—their houses had been demolished; their former employers unable, if willing, to take them back again; their own country could give no work, and other counties would not receive them. What ought to have been the conduct then? to have accompanied the pardon with the means of livelihood—to have furnished habitations—and repaired instantly the ravages of the rebellion—to have undertaken great and extended works of canals, draining bogs, reclaiming mountains, rebuilding villages, and promoting manufactures; so as while you furnished work to the wretched numbers who had solicited pardon, the country might at the same time be restored again to vigor and industry, after the depression of both by the rebellion. Pardon saved the lives from the sentence of the law; but it was an empty saving; it gave no food; and when the miserable men, whose repentance, if followed up, might have made them good and useful subjects, returned to the country they had desolated, they retired into the rocks and fastnesses of the mountains till hunger drove them down to seek for subsistence by plunder—hence all your gangs of robbers and murderers; and hence all those enormities which gave the appearance of a continued rebellion. Even now it is

not

not too late to do much; the expence will soon be repaid by the benefits; improve those mountains which gave the rebels shelter, carry roads through them; add to your agriculture and pasture the thousands of acres which present themselves for the purpose in all your wide extended bogs; explore your lands for the mines they are supposed to contain, and you will shew your wisdom.

The Right Hon. Gentleman next the Noble Lord seems to wish to say something, I acknowledge a liberal grant has been moved for by him to the Dublin Society—and I acknowledge it the more because it was at my instance—but 10,000*l.* can go a very little way—its object must be confined to suggesting the proper modes, or procuring knowledge in the practical execution—as to speedy effect it will do little. I say again, give employment to the homeless wandering objects of your pardon, and you will reclaim them to industry and quiet—some few abandoned men may remain and continue their life of plunder and outrage, till the law shall overtake them; but I never can believe that a man who is not lost to all hope, will refuse the fair price of labour, and prefer a life of alarm and the risk of ignominious death, to the sweets of an honest livelihood.

Sir, these are means to restore the country, but the Union cannot do it; it is not only a ruinous, but impracticable measure—and I am not afraid of being called presumptuous if I foretell that it will be found to be so before the final law takes place. The very terms shew such a distinctness of interest that it has no semblance of a real Union of Nations, it is but a Union of the Parliaments, the Nations will remain separate and distinct. What is your whole string of twenty or thirty resolutions or articles that are now the objects of debate,

debate, but so many instances of the necessity arising from distinct interest, to fetter and tie down the United Parliament? to limit its functions as to Ireland, lest it might misunderstand or mis-judge our interests, because they are distinct—it is no way restrained as to Britain, it is to continue a free Parliament for that kingdom, because it *resides there*, it is to be limited as to Ireland, *because it does not reside here*. The framers of the measure are convinced that 4 1-half millions of people require a resident Parliament, and they endeavour by restrictive regulation to make the United Parliament a substitute; as if human wisdom could foresee throughout futurity, all the events and all the changes, to which a resident one is alone adequate. I say again, the measure will be found impracticable; I have said so often, and 4 1-half million in a separate island require a resident legislature and of course a separate one.

The noble Lord talks of twenty years, and seven years, and twenty years, and so on, for new alterations. What a farce is it for us to think we can frame adequate and irrevocable provisions for the events of distant times? Our ancestors did not attempt it for us, and are we so much wiser than they? The noble Lord should at least wait with his project till those times arrive—He and the Right Hon. Gentleman next him have proposed in the course of this committee *not less than ten alterations* towards abating or correcting the injuries which their articles concerning the commerce would have inflicted on this country, all unforeseen, and unintended by them, on *Calicoes, Muslins, on Cotton-twist, on Tinplates, on wrought Iron, on Bullion and materials of Lace, on Steel-manufacture, on Salt, Hops, and Coals*—are not these so many glaring instances of the miserable defects of this Union scheme, and of its incapability to regulate the affairs of Ireland? What has suggested
and

these alterations, but the examination of witnesses here, which has given them the information? Information which they did not know was wanting, while they were in England; which they did not look for, and could not have received there. And do you need a stronger proof of the necessity of a resident Legislature, and of the insufficiency of any other? The mischiefs and ruinous consequences of the whole measure occur so fast to me, that I could go on another hour in detailing them, but I will refrain and only add, that great as the objections are to this measure, numerous and irrevocable as are its injuries, they are all rendered still more obnoxious by the mode in which it has been introduced and supported.

Suppose an historian at a future day writing an account of these times, and that not having our information, he were to judge from appearances only, he might say the sentiments of the nation revolted at the measure, and the Commons rejected it; the Minister however persevered; that the Place Bill, which was intended to secure the freedom of Parliament he misapplied, and perverted to the purpose of drawing that Parliament over to his opinion. Upwards of forty Members were changed by it in the course of two months the Parliament remained nominally the same, but the Members were so altered by the unconstitutional operation of that bill, as to convert the minority into a majority; that the old rule, *divide and conquer*, was thoroughly put in practice; that even religion was not held too sacred to be made an engine of. The Protestant was set against the Catholic; the Catholic against the Protestant. Parliament against the People, and the People against the Parliament; when he was beaten in the former, he appealed to the people, and when the people failed him, he recurred back to the Parliament. The Absentee was encouraged, and led forth against the Resident; the Consumer

against the Manufacturer; the duties which were acquiesced in for years, to encourage the home fabrics, were suddenly announced as so many oppressive taxes on the consumers; and the Loyalist who supported, was set in array against the Loyalist who opposed, and who was vilified with the opprobrium of connecting himself with the rebel and the traitor.

The Peerage too, which ought in reason to have had its numbers closed as they stood at the day of his Majesty's message, was kept open for eleven months till January 1801, in order to allow the Minister to use his Majesty's prerogative of conferring honours, to influence the Commons; that the loyal zeal of the kingdom was worked on to grant supplies far beyond its due proportion; and this act of liberality was turned into an argument for embracing the Union, in order to save bankruptcy. That the country was covered with unusual military force, far beyond any thing ever known; and tho' the rebellion was put down, and disturbances appeared only in a few districts, *martial law was enacted and re-enacted universally throughout the kingdom* without any apparent occasion to require it; that under its operation the reprobated measure was urged by the whole weight, influence and power of Government; that Members who voted against the Union were dismissed from office, so as not to leave a placeman in the minority, and all the offices of honour or profit were confined to the majority. That the voice of the people was so far stifled, that many sheriffs appointed by Government refused to convene the counties to petition Parliament.

Such might be the account of the historian, who could judge from appearances only; we who live at the time would be sure, state it otherwise, were we to write.

As

As to martial law, I wish not to be mistaken; I was always for strong and vigorous measures against rebellion. The noble Lord knows I was so; and he knows that Lord Camden did proclaim martial law while Parliament was sitting, by the advice of those whom he honoured with his confidence; among whom I shall ever be proud to have a right to rank myself. He never applied to Parliament for a law to enact it; his regard for the constitution was too great. When it was afterwards enacted, I mean after he left the kingdom, I lamented the councils that advised it; not that I thought its powers unnecessary, but I considered those powers to rest in the executive; that if the Lord Lieutenant exercised it, and took the responsibility, Parliament would indemnify him, and the constitution would remain whole; His act would be a sort of extraordinary exertion, to which the constitution being no party, would of course be no way weakened; but the making it the law of the land has a different effect; without adding a single grain of power or energy, it makes the constitution guilty as it were of suicide, and while it takes the semblance of law, suspends all law. It records the breach on the statute book, and leaves a precedent for other breaches and future repetitions, on occasions less adequate, and under monarchs who may be less attached than our present gracious sovereign is to the Constitution.

These are my sentiments still, and I implore the noble Lord to reflect seriously on the consequence if he is determined to proceed, and try to force this fatal measure on the nation;—let him endeavour at least to give it stability, let him repeal the martial law bill, which he has just revived, and let him not supply to the spirit of discontent which he must expect to follow, the argument, that the Union was made under the influence of that bill, that Parliament first suspended, and while it was so suspended, surrendered the Constitution.

Constitution. In saying this, I talk not of the competence of Parliament, but of martial law, the enacting of which, is so novel, so contradictory to every idea hitherto entertained, unresorted to, I believe, in England, through all its rebellions, civil wars and insurrections, that one is at a loss to know where the Constitution is, while it exists, or what is the power of Parliament if that law comes in contact with it. Neither do I mean in saying this, to discourage or object to the full exercise of all its power, but I say, the executive is of itself adequate to that exercise, when necessity calls, and may get it sanctioned with the approbation of both houses for his indemnity, without injuring the Constitution.

Could I offer advice further to the noble Lord, I would bid him state the following question fairly to himself, abstracted from all arts or influence. Are the sentiments of the people for the measure?—he must know they are not, they are most cordially against it, and if so, is there wisdom or common sense in not deferring it, till the nation, through whose co-operation only, it can be beneficial, shall declare their uninfluenced wishes to receive it? For me, I oppose it from a firm conviction of its ruinous tendency, and under that conviction I shall now give a decided negative to your reporting the articles.

*In Answer to a Reply made by Lord Castlereagh,
the Speaker rose again.*

HE said his voice was much oppressed by cold and hoarseness, but if it were much more so, his astonishment at the noble Lord's language and his unprovoked attack, would give him power of exertion to make himself heard.

He proceeded,

The noble Lord has said, it was his duty to rescue the kingdom

dom from me and my system, as he was pleased to express himself; that I was joined with a party in this House to carry that system; and that of all statesmen, I was the last that Government should consult on the affairs of Ireland.

Sir, I know of no system, I know no party but the noble Lord's rash and ruinous system and the party he has formed to support it. I stand here alone, unconnected with party, and I say without fear of contradiction that there is not on this side of the House a man who opposes this measure from any other cause or under any other tie than the conviction of his own mind. Our bond of Union, call it party or whatever name you please, is a detestation of this destructive measure, and a common wish and a common endeavour to save our country from its baneful consequences.

The noble Lord's attack will make no change in me, it won't disturb my temper, nor arouse a feeling, but that of astonishment at his strong and personal declaration against me on the part of Government, and at his puny attempt to fix on me the name of a leader of party. My conduct is directed by the conviction of my own judgment, and while that conviction continues, and that mace remains within these walls, to give me power of utterance, I will continue to oppose his Legislative Union throughout all its stages. No, sir, I am of no party; I am proud to hold the same opinion with such a mass of talents, property and independence as oppose this measure, and oppose it with a steadiness which no party motives could inspire, and which nothing but conviction could ensure; but should their opinion change, and mine remain, I will continue to raise my voice against it, though I were to stand alone.

Sir, the noble Lord is a political projector, and he has rashly hazarded the peace and prosperity of this kingdom by
introducing

introducing a project which he will find at last impracticable. It is *from him and his system* that I rise to rescue the country. Is there a man in this House, I am sure there is none out of it, who will believe that I propose a measure to injure Ireland? and if there be some men within these walls, I may ask how many are there out of them, who believe that he is proposing one to serve it. You all see, and every man out of the House knows, that I stand up solely in defence of the Constitution against his innovating system. He is the mover, he is the aggressor, I am only on the defence, I am *trying to retain our Parliament, our Freedom and Constitution, all which he is endeavouring to carry with him to Britain, and deliver to the British minister.*

Where or what then is the system he calls mine? I have proposed none; I have had no communication since Lord Camden left us with the ministry or the cabinet, and you know I neither have proposed, nor can propose any thing here; the situation you have honoured me with, precludes me; What then does he mean by my system? by my party? nothing, but my refusing to yield my own strong conviction to his theoretic, visionary, and destructive speculations. In every other point, Government has had my support.

He says, I have the peculiar art of concealing my political resentments. I claim no such merit; I cannot conceal them, because I have them not. I entertain none. But has the noble Lord that art? He has just given ample proof of the contrary, for the whole of his attack has shewn the visible workings of his political resentment.

The noble Lord is a young man, and he should not attack me. He will find it beyond his strength to persuade the people that I would injure Ireland; perhaps there are who think, that he may find it equally beyond his strength to persuade

suade the people that he is serving it; of that I say nothing, I speak of myself only. I have spent a long active life in endeavours to promote the welfare of Ireland, and it is not for me to make a comparison, let the nation make it between us; let our acts and our conduct declare it.

The noble Lord acknowledges that the contributive proportion between the kingdoms may cease in three years. He congratulates himself on my having proved it, and exults in the prospect that the separate interest of the nations are to be identified so soon. He adds emphatically, *the sooner the taxes are equal the better*, and avows his hope that the burden is to fall on us in 3 years. I give him credit for this declaration, for I am sure he wishes so; but see the casuistry of his argument. When the separate debts are extinguished, the distinct interests which they create will certainly cease, and we are then to commence equal taxes; but the proposition says also, that when the separate debts come to the proportion of contribution $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, we are to commence equal taxes, and therefore says the noble Lord, when we commence equal taxes, the separate interests created by the debts, will cease, applying the result of the one alternative to the other. No, Sir, as long as England owes 7 times and a half as much as we do, so long do our separate interests in the debt continue, and so long should she pay 7 times and a half as much as we do, and it would be the height of injustice that we should pay equal with her. Until then, the very proportion which he says identifies interest, is founded on the distinctness of interest, else equality, and not proportion would be the measure; and therefore, if the framers of his articles have artfully or inadvertently declared that on a certain proportion, which is a child of their own brain, taking place between the respective debts, our respective interests in those debts shall be deemed equal, though the very proportion declares them unequal, their saying it,

it, may shew their folly, but never can make the debts nor the interests arising from them equal, nor destroy the distinctness they create.

There is an absurdity in arguing on a debt as if it were wealth, and that when we attain the given proportion by becoming poorer, or doubling our debt from 25 to 50 million, and England attains the same proportion by lessening her's; we grow wealthy thereby, and are able to pay share for share, instead of paying only one share for every seven and a half.

The Noble Lord says, that in comparing the additional burdens laid on the two kingdoms during the present session, I omit the income tax of Britain; certainly I do, because it was laid on in the sessions of 1798, not in the present session, the burdens imposed on which were the object of my statement.

He says, the true comparison would be in the expenditure; but even that was not my object: because the expenditure in part is defrayed by means created in preceding sessions. However, I will take it so; in the great article of our expence this year, the military, which, if I recollect right, is 4,200,000 here, and about 12 or 13 millions in England, far above 1 to 7 $\frac{1}{2}$.

The Noble Lord charges me with a general system of protecting duties; and says he founds his charge on my questions to the gentlemen at your bar, that they all went to shew the advantage of protecting duties. This is like many other charges he has made; taking an acknowledged fact like that of my examining and then drawing inferences not warranted by it, and blending the inferences with the fact to give them the colour of truth.

In

In 1785 I was an advocate for keeping the duties which then existed, and did tend to protect our manufactures; those duties had not been laid on in hostility, nor were they deemed hostile by Britain; but I was a still stronger advocate for shutting the door against others, as acts of hostility, and the propositions of that year did shut the door.

My sentiments are the same now. I wish to retain those that now exist, as I then wished to retain what then existed. I have not proposed, nor do I propose to add any now. There is a great difference between retaining those we have, and imposing new ones; in retaining them we preserve our faith with the individuals who have expended their money, educated their children, or devoted themselves to particular trades on the strength of their continuance.

But gentlemen say they ought not to be continued, because they raise the value on the consumer; and that we sacrifice the consumer to the manufacturer. They quote the sugar duties to prove it; and they have unfortunately chosen an instance in which the proof wholly fails them. It has appeared in evidence that the protecting duty on refined sugar, is now only 5s. 5d. the hundred weight, that is, a halfpenny and a small fraction a pound; yet sugar is 3d. to 6d. the pound dearer here than in England. They must look then to some other cause in the importers or retailers; and they would do well to consider how much higher the price might be raised by the same persons, if we had no refineries here to keep it down.

Callico and muslins are another instance which they bring forward, and because our duties on the import of them are from 30 to 50 per cent. they say the Irish goods are to be from 30 to 50 per cent. dearer to the Irish consumer than the like British goods would be. The fact is stated in evi-

dence to be otherwise ; and the manufacture being of the value of 750,000l. a-year, gives a clear proof that the work is extensive enough for competition to keep down the price. But there is another answer arising from the nature of this particular manufacture ; the British market is often glutted with it ; and the overflow must be sold, even at a loss of 20 per cent. or more ; at such times the import of it into Ireland would be so great, as to prevent our manufacturers getting the real value of their goods, the market would be filled with the British overflow, and our people must retire from the business. But there is also a more general answer : some manufactures do require a protection ; and the price of that protection must be paid, if you wish to nurse the undertaking ; whatever therefore additional the consumer pays, is like a bounty, and that bounty is raised in the most economical manner ; only on those, who decline to use the Irish fabric. Look to British policy in almost every article, particularly in the very article of sugar ; how highly does the consumer pay in the monopoly to the West Indies, when foreign sugar islands, and even our own East Indies, could supply him cheaper. However, I will not go into the general question ; it has ever been my principle to promote mutual affection, and not mutual hostility with Great Britain ; nor did I in 1785, nor do I now, deem the retaining the duties we are in possession of, to be hostility.

The Noble Lord says, that the Cotton manufacture will be affected more than any other by this measure ; I agree with him : but I did not expect from him so distinct an avowal, *that it was not worthy of preserving, and that it must be put down.* I saw his detail tended to it ; but I did not think he could really entertain the idea, until he declared it. His calculation of our losing 350,000l. a-year, by encouraging it, is too theoretic, too fine drawn for me to take up

up time in refuting it; nor do I believe, if he could prove it, that he could find means to turn the money to any other good purpose; it would travel with the other 350,000*l.* a year out of the country, never to return; and of course would add another to the many impoverishing drains from this kingdom. But is it possible he can really hold such sentiments towards a manufacture, while he admits it works up goods to the value of 700,000*l.* yearly; and with the evidence before his eyes, that it employs 25,000 hands in the neighbourhood of Belfast only, and perhaps 100,000 altogether in the kingdom? yes! he avows the melancholy truth.

Another reason he assigns for destroying it, is a very curious one, to serve the linen trade, that it may not take the linen weavers away; why was this never found out by any of the trade? On the contrary, I should suppose the linen manufacture would be benefitted, and receive great power of extension by an encrease of weavers capable of turning themselves to the linen looms, when the cotton business may be overdone, as the witnesses tell you, has often been the case.

The next position is still more extraordinary, for this very manufacture which he says ought to be put down, he tells you almost in the same breath, that we may hope in time to have a profitable export of to Britain, and he reads some words of mine spoken in 1785. I won't tire the Commons with explaining them; had I expected him to quote them, I would have brought Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville as I did last year, to answer him for me.

But to put an end to all this talk against these manufactures, let me ask if they are unprofitable, unworthy of encouragement, or impolitic, what has Union to say to them? Why does he not proceed to put them down without a Union. I always saw the object of the measure was to take

take away our Constitution and our Parliament, but a further object is now avowed, to take away these manufactures also.

The Noble Lord alludes to a sentiment expressed formerly by me, "that we are well as we are," when I compared the Constitution under his project, to the man who was well, would be better, took physic and died. I applied the phrase to our Constitution only, and against the insane or rash theories of political quacks. He applies it unfairly for me to the intestine disturbances. I never used it to them, nor to the temporary calamities arising from rebellion or invasion; I argued there was no more reason to alter a Constitution under which we had enjoyed political liberty and national prosperity on account of rebellion, than there was on account of invasion, nor would the alteration prevent the one more than the other; on the contrary, I argued that the having a happy Constitution, and knowing how to value it, which is the case with all the loyal men of Ireland, is a surer means to guard against rebellion and invasion, than admitting such an innovating system to destroy it.

I said our Constitution was *well and sound*, and wanted none of his amending; I say so still, nor will I ever advise to change it on account of the past insurrection, rebellion or invasion, all which it has been adequate to over power, which are temporary calamities, to be cured by temporary exertions, and for which a permanent change is neither necessary nor desirable.

When I said the Constitution was well, I could not be so silly as to say there was nothing in Ireland capable of amendment, but I say the Noble Lord's *Union will not amend any thing, but will make every thing worse*, and I repeat again, that

that while I view his project in the ruinous light I do, I shall continue to oppose it. Nay more, if my opinion could waver, and any extraneous circumstance could bind me down to persevere in it, it would be the Noble Lord's unprovoked and unmerited attack this night.

THE END.

Houses of the Oireachtas