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FURTHER TAMPERING WITH THE NATIONAL DEMAND.

This long drawn out Home Rule drama has become wearisome, and if the principal actors do not put a little more life into their action they will make an ignominious exit from the political stage. It seems to our mind that there are only two solutions of the Home Rule question, one being what has been described as the "cut direct" between Ireland and England, and the other, an equitable administration of the law in the two countries. We in Ireland, no matter how well the fact may be disguised by professional statisticians, pay out of proportion to our means for the luxuries enjoyed by the English working classes; luxuries, material, political and social, which are unknown in this country. We help to provide a navy and an army to care-take an Empire with which we have little traffic. Even at home here we experience every day of our lives the inequality of the administration of British law. Law duly enacted should create a political condition defining the rights and liberties of subjects. A few years ago we heard the news of a Clare peasant being sentenced to five years' penal servitude for knocking down a few feet of a crazy stone wall, the argument being that his action was calculated to disturb the social status. Last week we read of some Limerick folk, belonging of course to the common, and not privileged classes, being arrested in their beds, manacled, and driven into Limerick city for some trumpety offence against law and order, with the merits of which we have no concern. Last month Sir Edward Carson accepted "full responsibility" for the landing of 25,000 rifles and a million rounds of ammunition on the Ulster Coast, the idea being that the mere Irish who are struggling for the most elementary rights of a Nation should be shot at sight by the proud possessors of the contraband arms. Sir Edward Carson, it is on record, smiled in the face of the Prime Minister as he accepted "full responsibility." Sir Edward slept in his bed that night without fear that his dreams of an Ulster kingship would be disturbed. But then, Sir Edward Carson is a Privy Councillor, not a peasant; he belongs to the propertied class, not the poor. We firmly believe that if his projected march to Cork took place, and he happened to be captured and held in ransom there, the present Liberal Government would finance an expedition to rescue him, with definite orders not to be too scrupulous as to the means employed. Here in Ireland, we all breathed a sigh of relief when we were assured that the last had been heard of "concessions to Ulster," and that the Home Rule Bill would have a "non-stop" progress to the Statute Book. We learn now, with something like dismay, that something in the nature of an amending Bill is to be shunted on to the already belated "express". The Prime Minister's words in announcing this new departure from Liberal policy and promises are:

I am going a step further now than, I think, I have ever gone before when I say, as I do say on behalf of his Majesty's Government, that, while we shall ask the House to give this Bill a third reading before we separate for our Whitsuntide recess, we shall make ourselves responsible for introducing an amending proposal in the hope that a settlement by agreement may be arrived at in regard to the points which are of immediate and outstanding importance.

Why not give a decent invitation to the Tory Party to wipe its feet on the Home Rule Bill and pass on the measure as thus defaced to a spiritless Irish people. Mr. Bonar Law chid Mr. Asquith on the other cheek by remarking that "the position of the Unionist Party had always been that they were utterly opposed to Home Rule, and would accept no responsibility for it, in any shape or form." We quote further from the newspaper report:

Mr. John Redmond said that if peace was to be ultimately brought about and enacted the only way it could be done was by an amending Bill.

The Prime Minister had gone further than that (continued Mr. Redmond) and announced that even if the efforts to arrive at a peaceful solution failed his intention was to introduce an Amending Bill. He (Mr. Redmond) thought that was a very serious decision to announce to the House of Commons and, for his part, he could not commit himself to the approval of that course. If an amending Bill was introduced after failure to come to an agreement he held himself absolutely free to deal with it when it arose.

Everyone knew that in going the length they did in agreeing with the concessions the Irish Party ran great political risks amongst their own people, and (added Mr. Redmond) it was untrue and unfair of the Leader of the Opposition to say they were opposing parties to any thing in the nature of compromise.

But, after all, the reservation of Mr. Redmond's views on the amending Bill inadequately meets the requirements of the situation. We wonder does he realise that a new physical force movement is growing up in Ireland which, when fully developed, will take as little account of politicians as did its predecessors?