

(hear, hear). And then again they also, I dare say, feel that if you get a larger voice in the sending of a representative to Parliament you will demand some more Liberal measures than you have hitherto got; and therefore I do not wonder very much that these Conservative peers are greatly opposed to your getting a voice in the legislation of the country—(cheers). It is very pleasant to find that some of those peers are moving somewhat in the direction of renovating their own House. We have heard of two or three of these noble peers proposing that the House of Lords should be renovated. I am not one of those who think that we should do away with a Second House altogether; I think it should be reconstituted. If I might venture to make a suggestion as to its reconstitution, it would be somewhat in this way—That the half of the House of Lords should be nominated by the Crown, and the other half elected by the nation—(hear, hear). By this means we would have a better House of Lords. Or, another way would be, let the half of them be elected by the peers of the realm, and the other half by the people of the realm—(applause). If we had such a House of Lords, we would not, I am sure, find them objecting to pass the laws pertaining to the welfare of the people of this land, as we have hitherto seen them doing—(hear, hear). I have very much pleasure in seconding the motion proposed by Mr Hutcheon, and trust it will be unanimously adopted by you—(loud cheers).

Mr James Robertson, Laurencekirk, in supporting the motion, said—I need not say that I am very proud to be deemed worthy of a place on this platform—(a Voice—“Very good”)—and to raise my voice in support of the resolution which has been so ably put by Chief Magistrate Hutcheon of Turriff, and seconded by your townsman, Mr Henderson of Devanha House—(cheers). The mover and seconder of this resolution have told you in language far better than I can command what Mr Gladstone, the Grand Old Man—(cheers)—has been trying to do for us in the House of Commons—as well as the “dirty trick”—(laughter)—which the gentlemen upstairs have played us—(renewed laughter)—and therefore I trust a long speech will not be expected from me. As the time given to speakers is very limited, I think it would be unwise in me to waste it by saying anything at all about our illustrious leader of the House of Representatives. Too much simply cannot be said in his favour, and that of his colleagues in the Ministry; their conduct is beyond all praise. I would, however, crave your attention for a little, but only for a little, while I say a word or two about that other House which is not representative. They think they have a right to say Nay to the will of the people, and they have used that prerogative in refusing two millions of working men the franchise. I am but a unit in that great mass of people, but I feel sure they will all agree with me when I say—What right have they to dictate terms to us, who claim to be free—to us, whose fathers have fought—aye, and bled—with Wallace and the Bruce at Bannockburn and elsewhere in the cause of freedom?—(cheers.) Am I, whose son can be admitted under the lodger franchise up in the great metropolis, to be denied a vote here simply because I occupy a humble cottage?

—(hear, hear, and cheers.) I say no, gentlemen; a thousand times no. Are two millions of working men to be browbeaten in this way by some two hundred noblemen, though not noble men?—(“No, no,” and applause). Lord Salisbury—(hisses)—has said that we are indifferent whether we get a vote or not; that we don’t want to have a voice in the representation of the people. But, gentlemen, I think that the procession which we have this day seen pass through the streets of your magnificent city, and the moving multitude of people who form this bright assemblage, and who have come from all parts of this and the adjoining counties, and at very considerable expense and trouble, will open his eyes to the true state of the matter—(applause). We do want a vote, gentlemen; we have wanted it too long already. Let the Lords know that we will not want it very much longer. Lords, fersooth!

Ye see yon birkie ca’d a Lord,  
Wha struts an’ stares an’ a’ that.

—(laughter.) Gentlemen, I have to ask your forgiveness for detaining you, and hoping you will be unanimous in passing the resolutions before you, I bid you good night, and God speed true reform—(cheers).

Mr Alexander Meston, Anguston Quarries, Peterculter, also supported the resolution, and, in doing so, said—In appearing before you to-night as one of the representatives of the unenfranchised working classes, I must confess I feel some diffidence in attempting to address such a large assemblage—in fact, if it were not that the urgency of the case demands that every man should put his shoulder to the wheel and do what he can to strengthen the hands of the present Government—(cheers)—I would not have allowed myself to be put in this position. It is a common saying that the Aberdonians are a hard-headed people, but the present meeting shows that whatever their heads are, their hearts are in the right place; and The heart’s aye the pairt aye that makes us richt or wrang.

—(applause). It gives us who reside in the country very great encouragement to see so many of our town friends, who are in the possession of the franchise already, giving us their sympathy and support on this occasion—(cheers). It clearly shows that in making our demand for an immediate extension of the Franchise as demanded in the resolution just read, we are within the bounds of moderation, and, being so, we are the more determined to have it—(a voice—“And will get it too”). The working classes in the country districts only wish to be put on an equal political footing with those resident within the burghs. We hold that taxation without representation is an injustice we will not longer submit to.—(loud cheers). The resolution further says that the conduct of the House of Lords in refusing to pass the Franchise Bill is “unpatriotic, unstatesmanlike, and unstraightforward,” seeing they refuse to pass the bill, the principle of which they entirely approve. They are professing great love for the working classes—(laughter)—but we do not reciprocate their love; we have been too often hoodwinked by Tory promises in the past to place any confidence in them in the future—(hear, hear, and applause). Nay, we will rather follow the dictates of such champions of the people’s rights as Gladstone, Chamberlain, or Bright—(great cheering).