The Parnell Commission

THE OPENING SPEECH

FOR THE DEFENCE



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THE OPENING SPEECH FOR THE DEFENCE

DELIVERED BY

SIR CHARLES RUSSELL, Q.C., M.P.

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PREFATORY NOTE

AFTER the termination of the action of O'Donnell v. Walter in July 1888, the Special Commission Act, 1888 (51 & 52 Vict. ch. 35) was passed :—"An Act to constitute a Special Commission to inquire into the charges and allegations made against certain members of Parliament and other persons by the defendants in the recent trial of an action entitled O'Donnell v. Walter and another."

The Right Hon. Sir James Hannen, Sir J. C. Day, and Sir A. L. Smith were appointed Commissioners under this Act, and after a preliminary meeting on the 17th September this Commission held its first sitting on the 22d October 1888.

The Times was represented by :--The Attorney-General (Sir Richard Webster, Q.C., M.P.); Sir Henry James, Q.C., M.P.; Mr. Murphy, Q.C.; and Mr. W. Graham; with Mr. John Atkinson, Q.C., and Mr. Ronan, of the Irish Bar.

Sir Charles Russell, Q.C., M.P., and Mr. H. H. Asquith, M.P., appeared for Mr. Parnell.

For other members of the Irish party the Counsel were :---Mr. R. T. Reid, Q.C., M.P.; Mr. F. Lockwood,

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Q.C., M.P.; Mr. Lionel Hart; Mr. Arthur O'Connor, M.P.; and Mr. Arthur Russell; with Mr. T. Harrington, M.P., of the Irish Bar.

Mr. Davitt conducted his own case, as did also Mr. Biggar, M.P., and Mr. T. M. Healy, M.P.

The "Blue Book" referred to in these pages was printed for the purposes of this Commission, and contains all *The Times* leaders, articles, letters, and reprints, constituting what is known as "Parnellism and Crime," together with the pleadings and proceedings in the action of O'Donnell v. Walter.

Sir Charles Russell's speech was concluded on the 12th April 1889, and has, in this publication, been revised by him from the official shorthand notes.

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