

Topic Page: [Redmond, John \(1856 - 1918\)](#)

Summary Article: **Redmond, John Edward**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

1856–1918, Irish nationalist leader. He was elected to Parliament as a Home Rule member in 1881 at the height of the obstructionist program of Charles Parnell. When the Irish nationalist group split as a result of Parnell's involvement in the O'Shea divorce case, Redmond became chief of the pro-Parnell group. On reunion with the majority (1900), he was chosen as chairman of the combined Irish party. He served on various commissions that led to the Wyndham Land Purchase Act of 1903 (see Irish Land Question) and gradually gained the leadership as well as the chairmanship of the Irish party. When the Liberals came to power in Britain in 1905, Redmond had no choice but to support them even though the policy they then advocated was one of “devolution” or merely administrative Home Rule for Ireland. He gave them particularly strong support in their effort to limit the power of the House of Lords, which strongly opposed Home Rule. Passage of the Parliament Act of 1911, which accomplished this purpose, made feasible the introduction (1912) of the third Home Rule Bill. In the ensuing crisis caused by the militant opposition to the bill in Northern Ireland, Redmond reluctantly gave his support to the Irish Volunteer movement, a military organization raised to counter the threat of the newly formed Ulster Volunteers. When World War I broke out, Home Rule was approved (1914), although suspended until after the war. Redmond turned down a cabinet post in the coalition government of 1915. He had declared Ireland's loyalty to the Allied cause in the war, and the Easter Rebellion of 1916 was a great blow to him. He supported the plan to begin the operation of Home Rule with the temporary exclusion of Ulster, but his power and influence were declining, and at the end of his life he was opposed by the revolutionary Sinn Féin.

See biographies by W. B. Wells (1919) and D. Gwynn (1932); study by S. L. Gwynn (1919).

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