

dangerous to Christian faith, likely to engender and encourage infidel views in the long run. He is a cool hand; a clear-headed man, and likely to make a strong impression on the public mind if he will only persevere. He is a thorough Scot. Pity you had not such a one in Dunedin.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT.

PARLIAMENT was opened at 2 o'clock on the 3rd, the muster of representatives being very limited, only thirteen members having assembled in the Legislative Council, and thirty-five in the House of Representatives. The Premier laid a batch of papers on the table, chiefly regarding Immigration, and including copies of the Handbook of New Zealand. He also introduced a bill to abolish imprisonment for debt, which was read a first time. Mr Vogel explained to the House that the reason of Mr McLean's absence was that he had left Wellington under the impression that Parliament would not assemble before the 16th July, and that he would be sure to be in his place before that time. Messrs Gibbs and Montgomery, new members, were introduced, and took the oaths and their seats. A number of notices of motions were made, and the House adjourned till the 7th. The following is the speech, delivered by His Excellency the Governor, on opening the Session:—

HONOURABLE LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

I have recourse with pleasure to your advice and assistance.

The marriage of his Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh with her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia seems to me an occasion upon which you will be glad to express to her Majesty your congratulations, and my advisers will submit to you addresses for the purpose.

Since the prorogation of the General Assembly I have visited most of the provinces, and have taken every opportunity in my power of acquainting myself with the circumstances of the whole country. I am glad to have, in the course of my tours and visits, become known to a great number of inhabitants, and have had the pleasure of viewing the great natural resources of New Zealand; and the considerable progress already made in their development everywhere is an evidence of comfort and contentment among the colonists, while in those districts, in which Europeans and natives are mingled there are gratifying signs of mutual confidence, and even of regard.

The public works sanctioned by you have been prosecuted with the utmost vigour which the resources at the command of the Public Works Department permitted.

The number of immigrants introduced into the country has largely increased. Papers will be laid before you from which you will gather all the circumstances in connection with the selections and passages of the immigrants, and the views of the Government thereon. You will also learn with pleasure that, without impairing their own responsibility to Parliament, my advisers have made arrangements with the Provincial Governments to aid in locating and settling the immigrants on their arrival in the colony.

The contract ably negotiated by Mr Russell on behalf of the colony, by which New Zealand, in conjunction with New South Wales, has again established a mail packet service with the mother country, by way of the United States, will be laid before you. Owing to a delay in obtaining the ratification of the Parliament of New South Wales, no effect has yet been given to the agreement approved by you last year between the colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand, for establishing telegraphic communication between New Zealand and Australia, and between Queensland and Singapore. The approval of the Parliament of New South Wales, which has recently reached this Government, will, it is hoped, enable measures to be shortly taken to promote a communication so important to this colony.

The general prosperity which prevails throughout the country will be a gratifying proof to you of the wisdom of the provisions which you have made for at the same time increasing the population, and the enlargement of and putting to profitable uses the resources of the colony.

The continued peaceful relations with the native race, and the disposition which the Maoris evince to recognise in your policy a desire to promote the interests of both races, are subjects calculated to afford you the utmost gratification.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

The very considerable increase in the revenue will give you confidence in continuing the great public works of the colony, and in expending money upon immigration.

HONOURABLE LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

I am pleased to assure you of the continued success of the Government system of life assurance and annuities. The time has come when it is desirable you should stamp upon this institution the unselfish nature of the motives which called it into existence, by deciding to relinquish to those who, by using it, have responded to your desire to cultivate provident habits, the profits which may arise from it. My advisers will submit to you a measure which will contain provision for periodically allotting to the policyholders such profits as may be considered safely divisible.

Papers may be presented to you which will enable you to judge that my advisers consider that the Polynesian Islands, their civilisation, commerce, and forms of government present a problem of great interest and importance to this colony.

Measures will be submitted to provide an additional election qualification, to create and conserve State forests as colonial property, to provide a means for guarding against difficulties which may arise in consequence of continued differences of opinion between the two branches of the Legislature, and to make provision for various requirements of a more or less pressing nature. The urgent demands upon their administrative attention, consequent on the rapid progress of the colony and the many matters to which that progress makes prompt attention desirable, lead my advisers to think it expedient not to invite legislation upon questions which do not press for immediate solution.

THE QUEEN, GOD BLESS HER!

YOUR readers must have perused with great pleasure and no little pride the speech of Archbishop Manning, when giving the Queen's health at the dinner on the occasion of the consecration of the Right Rev. Dr. Redwood.

Her Majesty, said the Archbishop, is a "just sovereign." Could higher praise than that be given to any ruler? She is the first English sovereign to whom, for the past 300 years, Catholics could award such praise. The manner in which the toast was received on this happy occasion showed that the hearts of Bishop Redwood's guests were brimful of the most affectionate loyalty to Her Majesty and the reigning family. These loyal sentiments are no doubt fully shared in by the readers of the TABLET, in common with all other Catholics throughout Her Majesty's widely-extended dominions. If the great body of the Catholic subjects of the Protestant Sovereigns of England have in time past, from a sentiment of religious duty, held fast to their loyalty, as they did in temporal affairs, even when they were being treated by Government with injustice and remorseless cruelty, how much more now must they be attached to the reigning sovereign—the just and good Queen Victoria? What a contrast does the conduct of Queen Victoria afford to that of the German Emperor in the treatment of his Catholic subjects! Nay, what a contrast between her conduct and that of a portion—though but a small portion—of her own subjects, whom Archbishop described as "firebrands and madmen," ready to set fire to the four corners of the Empire, if thereby they could only destroy the Catholic Church. There may be a few misguided though well-meaning Catholics who cherish disloyal sentiments to Her Majesty's throne; but who are they? Not, certainly, the men who habitually frequent the Sacraments, or who show a devoted feeling of loyalty to the Church of which they profess to be obedient children. They are men whom no one would like to trust in any affair of consequence, whether domestic, social, or political.

Not only is Queen Victoria just to her Catholic subjects, but the "people of England" at large also now show a manifest inclination to befriend us. They hear us patiently. Anti-Catholic prejudices are fast disappearing in England, in spite of the strenuous efforts of a few "firebrands" to keep alive and fan into a furious blaze a feeling of distrust and hatred towards Catholics. The mad firebrands are few in number. They find, however, some influential representatives in the Press, Parliament, and the Pulpit, and elsewhere. In spite of that, the Archbishop says emphatically "he fears them not." Their power to injure us is not great now, and it is becoming less and less every year. For this happy and cheering state of things in England we are indebted in no small degree to the influence which his Grace himself exercises over "the imperial race" of Englishmen of high and low degree. He is an Englishman, and a Londoner. He knows the English temper well. The English of all ranks—the poor especially—know, appreciate, and trust him. Great as the virtues of the Catholic ecclesiastics of other countries may be; powerful as may be the influence which such virtues are calculated to exercise, and no doubt have exercised and still produce on the English mind and heart; yet Archbishop Manning, from the mere circumstance of his being an Englishman, and having at a former period of his life been a dignitary in the Established Church, I believe has produced and is still producing in England an impression on the feelings of the Protestants masses in favor of the Catholic religion, such as no "alien" could produce, though possessed of equal or even greater natural talents and superior Christian graces compared with his. What Archbishop Manning has said of the relation in which Catholics in England stand to their beloved Queen, and to the noble Saxon race generally, applies in a great measure to us in New Zealand. If Victoria be a just Queen, Sir James Fergusson, her representative here, is also a just Governor: just to all, and just to Catholics more especially, because they more especially need his protection. We have seen him on a recent occasion stand publicly forward to defend them from a groundless aspersion cast upon them by a respectable and influential portion of their Protestant fellow Christians, at a Bible Society meeting in Auckland—an aspersion which year after year is repeated in one form or another at the annual meetings of this society, and which is contained in almost every religious publication or "tract" which issues from the Protestant Press of England. The calumny I refer to is that which falsely accuses the Roman Catholic Church of having anathematised the Bible, and prohibited the laity by a universal law to read the sacred volume. Sir James said he could find no warrant in history for such an assertion. He considered the object of the Bible Society was not likely to be forwarded by speakers of Bible Society meetings casting unmerited and injurious aspersions on Roman Catholics. It is to be hoped all Protestant zealots, and the Protestant clergy and Press generally in New Zealand, will profit by this mild reproof from the lips of Her Majesty's representative. If there be "firebrands" in England who at any sacrifice of the public interests would set Catholic and Protestant by the ears by inflaming the religious animosity of both by means the most unscrupulous, by statements either utterly false or grossly distorted exaggerated, we have the same or a similar class of men here in New Zealand. The conductors of the Dunedin, Auckland, and Canterbury Press, and Mr Lawyer Barton know well to whom allusion is here made. They would not, perhaps, set fire to the four corners of New Zealand, if only they could thereby destroy the Catholic Church, which they now see conquering on all hands, though they might go a great way in that direction. But "we fear them not." Fortunately, though they have abundance of types and printing presses and glib tongues, they do not carry with them the feelings of the thoughtful, well-educated, and generous portion of the New Zealand Protestant public. Their influence, it must be admitted, is still considerable. They have still power to harm us, and are not slow to use that power; but it is on the wane. New Zealand Catholics have their own apathy and tame, abject spirit, in a great measure, to blame for being so much at the mercy of their enemies. Let them register and everywhere unite in self-defence, like freemen, who know their duty and are resolved to perform it. Instead of doing this, they squabble among themselves, allow their enemies to divide and consequently to conquer