

The New Zealand Tablet.

FIAT JUSTITIA.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 1892.

PROGRESS AND JUSTICE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

THE Catholics of New Zealand provide, at their own sole expense, an excellent education for their own children. Yet such is the sense of justice and policy in the New Zealand Legislature that it compels these Catholics, after having manfully provided for their own children, to contribute largely towards the free and godless education of other people's children!!! This is tyranny, oppression, and plunder.

THE LAND BILL.

THE Land Bill of the Government has been declared to be in some respects a good Bill, even by the Opposition. Under such circumstances one should have thought that its second reading would have been permitted without much opposition and debate, and that Hon. Members would have waited for the committee stage before showing their teeth. But such is not the case. A motion has been made, with the approbation of the Opposition, that the provision of the Bill in reference to freehold is not satisfactory. This has been accepted as a no-confidence motion, and thus an avalanche of bootless talk threatens the House of Representatives, to the waste of public time and money. What is our House of Representatives about; what does it mean? It seems to be under the impression that its business, for which it draws a handsome sum of money annually, is to talk, talk, talk, and do little else than eternally talk nonsense. Everything that Members can hope to gain by the impending discussion could be gained in committee, and to committee, therefore, Members should have hastened. We agree with the Government that something should be done, and something done speedily, to check the tendency of freehold land becoming concentrated in the hands of individuals, and that companies and syndicates should be absolutely prohibited from becoming possessors of freehold land. But this is no reason why there should be no small freeholders. We think nothing can contribute more to the security and prosperity of a country than a multitude of small freeholders, and we think, therefore, that sensible men not bent on a party scimmage could easily, in committee, come to a satisfactory conclusion on this point. We say that everything possible should be done to discourage and prevent landlordism—a system which has engendered untold evils in every country where it has been established, and in the second place that companies and syndicates should be absolutely forbidden to hold an acre of freehold land. It has often happened that individual landlords have been just, humane and rational men, who have given equitable terms to their tenants, but land companies and syndicates have no soul, no conscience. Their primary, and, indeed, almost only object and *raison d'être*, has been large dividends for the shareholders, and equity and humanity and the public good, if holding any place in their estimation, have held a very secondary one. Therefore, we say, let an end be put as soon as possible, consistently with justice and sound policy, to land companies and all syndicates, and let everything possible be done to prevent the growth of landlordism. But it does not by any means follow from this that moderate freeholds should be prevented. Restrictions should, indeed, be imposed so that no freehold should exceed a certain moderate limit, and no man be free to become possessed of more than a certain moderate amount of freehold land. All this could be brought about in many ways, as is done in some of the most civilised countries of Europe. Testamentary restrictions and the compulsory division of freehold land on the demise of holders could do much in this direction, and the impossibility of alienation of homesteads, as in America, could also help. Where there is a will there is a way, and if our Legislators were really in earnest means could be easily found to prevent individuals from monopolising the land of the country

to the impoverishment of the people, and the depression of the country. This discussion, therefore, on freehold, which threatens to be long and bitter, could be easily prevented, and a settlement arrived at, if Members understood their business and were in earnest in desiring to do it. But everything now-a-days is made a party question, and thus the interests of the people are sacrificed to the fancied exigencies of party warfare. We should advise the Premier to put down his foot at once and stamp out this silly party move by invoking the power of the House to put a stop, not to legitimate debate, but to a bootless flow of silly and purposeless talk, so that the real business of the country may be speedily and satisfactorily transacted. It is painful to bystanders to be obliged to contemplate in sorrow how the business of the country is so monstrously neglected in Parliament, whilst Members by their folly and unmeaning talk make themselves a spectacle to men and angels. The real interest of the country and the real worth of legislation are seemingly not much thought of by men who are making fools of themselves by posing as orators and political economists, whilst they are most efficaciously demonstrating to a gaping world their almost utter ignorance, and their utter want of a sense of responsibility, as to the real object of political and Parliamentary life.

THE BISHOPS' RESOLUTIONS.

IN another column we publish a circular to the Roman Catholic clergy of New Zealand, containing some resolutions agreed to by the Bishops at their recent meeting in Dunedin. To some of these it is not necessary we should now refer in particular. But there are others to which we beg to draw particular attention. The Bishops speak mildly and moderately, but nevertheless forcibly, as regards the education question. They recommend particular attention to the registration of Catholic voters, and as a preliminary to this end, as well as for other purposes, enjoin the taking of a census of Catholics in each locality. Then as to voting and giving pledges to candidates for Parliament, their Lordships are emphatic. They resolve that Catholic voters should abstain from pledging themselves to any candidate, in order that their freedom of action may be kept intact, and, most important of all, that Catholics should not vote for any candidate who neglects or refuses to pledge himself publicly to support in Parliament a measure giving aid to Catholic schools. Experience proves that this recommendation is most important and necessary. It has happened again and again that candidates for Parliamentary honours, during their canvass, promised Catholic voters to support a grant for providing aid to their schools, but when safely in Parliament violated their promises to their Catholic constituents and voted directly against their just claims. Catholic voters, therefore, should take to heart this resolution of their Bishops on this most important subject. This action of the Bishops comes from their long and watchful experience and their deep sense of duty both to their co-religionists and their country, whose welfare is dear to them. They see the best interests, moral and civil, imperilled by the present system of godless education, and they call on those on whose attention and obedience they have a claim to do their duty and their part to promote the true interests of this country. Theirs are words to which all Catholics ought to pay particular attention and to which we feel convinced they will pay very particular attention. From these well-considered and well-weighed words we are to conclude that the Bishops regard the Catholic who votes for a candidate who refuses to pledge himself publicly to do justice to Catholic schools by helping to obtain aid for them from public funds as a man who is recreant to his solemn duty, as one who offends by allying himself with the enemies both of God and his country. It is clear from these resolutions now referred to that this is the opinion and teaching of our Bishops. These words, therefore, are weighty and will, we have no doubt, fall on willing ears.

IN another place our readers will find a circular addressed to the clergy, and which contains the resolutions adopted at their late conference by the Archbishop and Bishops of the colony.

THE sensation of the week in Dunedin has been a concert given by Mr Arthur Salvini. Mr Salvini has returned to this city after many years absence, during a portion of which he received in Italy a musical and artistic training which has enabled him to make the best use of the very high gifts nature had conferred upon him, and to

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