

THE NEW ZEALAND TABLET

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MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiæ causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.
Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.
April 4, 1900.

LEO XIII., Pope.

Current Topics

Ballarat's New Bishop

From a private and particularly well informed source we learn that the Right Rev. Dr. Higgins, Bishop of Rockhampton (Queensland), has been appointed to the See of Ballarat. The able and distinguished Prelate is gifted with great zeal, tact, and administrative ability, and his loss will be sorely felt in the widowed See from which his new appointment removes him. We cordially wish him length of days and a flowing measure of success and blessing in the new sphere of work to which the Holy Father's wise decision transfers him. And we congratulate the diocese of Ballarat on having secured, as successor to the Right Rev. Dr. Moore, a Prelate in every way so fitted to adorn it, and so zealous to seize the opportunities for advancing the glory of God that are offered to him in his new field of episcopal activity.

Rev. Mr. Isitt and Father Hays

When Artemus Ward was going 'all so bold,' and uninvited and unannounced, 'to see Albert Edward the Prince of Wales,' he filled the royal attendant up to the chin with 'indigent cirprise.' We confess to having experienced a somewhat similar shock of astonishment—minus the 'indigence,' however—on reading the report of remarks made by the Rev. F. W. Isitt when, on Friday last, he acted as spokesman of a deputation of the New Zealand Alliance to the Methodist Conference in Wellington. 'In the course of an address,' says the telegraphed report, 'the Rev. Mr. Isitt made interesting reference to the approaching visit to New Zealand of the Rev. Father Hays, who will reach the Bluff early next month. Mr. Isitt mentioned that it was in consequence of an appeal from Wellington Catholics that the visit was being paid. It had been said that only eight Catholics signed that appeal, but the speaker had been told by some Catholic informants that there were 200 signatures on the appeal when it was received by the Rev. Father Hays. There had, however, been nothing done by the signatories towards meeting expenses, and the Alliance undertook to deal with these.'

The element of 'cirprise' to us is this: that, with the history of that notorious Wellington address before him, the Rev. Mr. Isitt could have used the utterances with which he is credited in the report quoted above. What purported to be a copy of that address was, in

the first instance, sent to us for publication. In substance it was strongly Prohibitionist; in style a crude and bombastic barbarism. The name of the sender did not appear upon it. There was no indication as to whom it was addressed—we subsequently learned that it was intended for Father Hays. It contained no signatures, and concluded with the statement (anonymously made) that it was 'signed by 200 Catholics.' The third paragraph contained the following outrageous calumny, couched in tangled and ungrammatical speech, upon the Catholics of New Zealand:—

'We are all the more anxious for our fellow-Catholic colonists when we recognise our Catholic proportion of the population is one in seven, while unfortunately in the police and gaol statistics we regret the figures read one in every 2.50 of the drunkards of New Zealand.'

In our issue of October 1, 1903, we showed that the paragraph just quoted was a brazen falsehood. The 'police and gaol statistics' make no such statement as is there attributed to them. No statistics have ever been published of 'the drunkards of New Zealand.' Only those who, being unable to pay fines or being refused 'the option,' are actually sent to gaol, have their religious belief stated in the statistical returns. The Registrar-General (as stated by us in our issue of December 10, 1903) takes pains to prevent misconception on this score, for he has said—what everybody already knew—that 'it must be remembered that drunkenness is punished more by fine than by imprisonment, so that the figures in the gaol tables do not represent the full number of persons punished for that offence.' As a matter of fact, they represent only a small fraction thereof, and the heavy toppers that are dragged before the 'beak' are, in turn, but an insignificant fraction of those that dethrone their 'bosom's lord' by over-deep potations. Your moneyed drunkard, for instance, can load himself with drink at home till he sees blue stars and spotted rattle-snakes. If he tipsles unwisely outside, he is escorted home in a cab. The poor man takes in his liquid cargo in the saloon and—especially if he has the lively temperament of the western Celt—he gets 'run in.' But so long as a noisy 'drunk,' or a fuddled sot that falls into the hands of the police can compound his folly with a fine, his religious belief or disbelief never comes under the Government statistician's eye.

We were not prepared to lightly accept a statement—much less an anonymous one—that two hundred Wellington Catholics set their hands, at least knowingly, to that clumsy slander upon their co-religionists

For COUGHS,
COLDS,
BRONCHITIS

Take

RONNINGTON'S CARRAGEEN IRISH MOSS