

Irish National party had played in getting just and humane legislation passed. Twenty-five years ago, just as Parnell was beginning to become a power in the British Parliament, his was the voice that successfully pleaded for the abolition of flogging in the army, --just as to-day the voice, that has after years of earnest and persistent pleading succeeded in abolishing the abomination from out of the navy, is the voice of Mr. Swift McNeill, the Irish Home Rule member for Donegal. Every measure that made for the betterment of farmer, laborer, and artisan, every measure that made for the freedom of peoples, every measure that tended in its policy to elevate and upraise and extend the liberties of England, Scotland, Wales, of Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, had no more whole hearted, eloquent and devoted admirers in the British House of Commons than the brave unpurchasable band of Irish patriots who occupy the Home Rule benches. There is not a trace of malice towards any living being in any fibre of their hearts: they are kindly Irish of the Irish with love and friendship and generous help for the cause of the afflicted and the oppressed under whatever sky they dwell, or at whatever shrine they worship. (Applause.)

The speaker then went on to say that Mr. Devlin and he had not come out to Australia to appeal for sympathy on sentimental grounds, but by facts and figures to show that theirs was

A Just Claim.

He then quoted the dictum of the Prime Minister of England that even good government was no substitute for self-government. He dealt with the time in Ireland's history when it had a Parliament of its own, and the fraudulent manner in which the Parliament was taken away; then came the pathetic story of the decay of population, and the disgraceful condition of the country after over 100 years of Castle rule. He showed how shamefully Ireland had been neglected in every direction. The Parliament of Westminster mismanaged the affairs of Ireland, and every thinking man must come to the conclusion that in this, the 20th century of civilisation, forming part of the Empire and interested in its welfare, all the States and colonies have a right to conduct their own domestic affairs in a way suited to their circumstances and conditions. Out here a few were opposed to Home Rule, and they based their objections on the following grounds. They said that three great facts had to be taken into account before Home Rule could be given to the Irish people:—1. That to give to the Irish people such a Constitution as they enjoyed out here would mean the disruption and dismemberment of the Empire; 2, that Home Rule meant Rome Rule, and that would mean religious ascendancy; 3, that the Irish people were not competent to govern themselves. Take first the bogey of dismemberment. They had to travel 16,000 miles to hear this argument seriously trotted out.

Mr. Donovan then showed that the loyalty of the Australasian Colonies and Canada was due to the fact that they had self-government, and reminded his audience that no empire ever rested safe on the dissatisfaction of the people. He dealt with the calumny that Home Rule would lead to persecution, and other objections to self-government, which he showed to have no foundation. The majority of members from Ulster were Home Rulers. The few who were not of the Nationalist party were mostly in the pay of the Government and were drawing fat salaries ranging from £2000 to £10,000 a year. They talked much of loyalty: of course they did. They would readily understand how easy it is to be loyal for £2000 or £10,000 a year. (Laughter and cheers.) Their cause was a cause of justice. They wished to establish a policy of international friendship, of amity and concord, between the British and Irish peoples; to bury past bitterness in a blessed oblivion of forgiveness and peace. He believed the end of this struggle is near, and that they, Mr. Devlin and himself, were the last envoys that would come to Australia on such a mission as they had come on. The triumph of the Irish cause, he believed, was near, and whether it came in two years or in ten the fight for freedom would continue till victory was achieved. (Applause.) The great heart and conscience of the British people had been touched: in Ireland they had their own people banded together in a great organisation; they had on their side all that is best of America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. With these mighty moral forces fighting for the right to nationhood of their own historic land, they would go on with their faces to the dawn, prepared for whatever sacrifices may still be demanded of them, but at the same time confident and assured that the golden sun of liberty, with its blessings of peace, prosperity, and happiness, would in the immediate future burst once more in splendor over the

green valleys and fair hills of holy Ireland. Mr. Donovan concluded, amidst warm applause, by thanking the young New Zealanders, the ladies, the audience generally, and all sympathisers with the Irish cause.

Resolutions.

The following resolution, moved by Mr. Martin and seconded by Mr. J. Tough, was passed unanimously: That this meeting of residents of Tokomairiro, having heard Mr. Donovan, is of opinion that the Irish people should get the right to manage their own affairs, as enjoyed by New Zealand and other sections of the British Empire.

On the motion of Dr. Sutherland, seconded by Mr. J. Moroney, a subscription was opened. It met with a generous response, the sum of £60 clear being raised in the smallest centre in New Zealand in which a meeting has yet been held.

A vote of thanks to the Mayor brought the proceedings to a close.

STRATFORD.

(By wire from our travelling correspondent.)

Stratford, January 8.

Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P., one of the Irish delegates, addressed a large and enthusiastic meeting here on Monday evening. The distinguished visitor was welcomed to the town by the Mayor. A resolution in favor of granting self-government to Ireland was carried with great enthusiasm. A sum of about £150 was collected on behalf of the Irish Parliamentary fund.

WAIMATE.

Mr. Donovan (writes our Timaru correspondent) is expected to speak at Waimate on Friday, the 11th inst., Mr. Devlin having been obliged to delete the town from his itinerary. Already many prominent Timaru Irishmen are making arrangements to be present on the occasion.

WANGANUI.

The reception committee in connection with the visit of Mr. Devlin (writes our Wanganui correspondent) held a meeting on Thursday evening, when the final arrangements were made. It was reported that the Mayor (Mr. C. E. Mackey) had kindly consented to welcome Mr. Devlin at the Railway Station on January 10. The secretary (Mr. Lloyd) and his committee are working hard, and everything points to the meeting being one of the most successful held in Wanganui.

WELLINGTON.

Mr. Devlin (writes our Wellington correspondent) is to be entertained at a social gathering here on Saturday evening next. I understand that Mr. Donovan, the other envoy, will be on the West Coast about the 17th inst. Mr. T. E. Y. Seddon, M.H.R., for Westland, intends to remain on the Coast until Mr. Donovan's departure.

PALMERSTON NORTH.

January 6.

At a final meeting held after Vespers this evening Mr. M. Hodgins in the chair, the joint secretaries, in connection with the coming visit of Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P. and Irish envoy, in the Zealandia Hall, Messrs. Ed. Butler and W. Ryan, announced that Mr. Maurice Cohen, the Mayor, would take the chair and preside at the meeting on Friday next, and that the only other speakers would be Mr. E. W. Hurley (ex-Mayor) and Mr. J. M. Johnstone.

AUCKLAND.

Mr. Devlin (writes our Auckland correspondent) had intended to start at New Plymouth on the 8th but Stratford made such a strong claim that he has decided to begin with a speech there on the 7th. He will go overland to Stratford. Mr. Donovan will be engaged in the south, and will not arrive here until the 28th. Mr. Devlin arrives on the 20th, and will be the guest of our Bishop while here. The meeting in the city is likely to be on the 30th. A strong demand now comes from the King Country for Mr. Devlin.

NEW PLYMOUTH.

A Press Association message states that Mr. Devlin addressed a crowded meeting in the Theatre Royal on Tuesday evening. A motion was carried unanimously affirming the desirability of granting self-government to Ireland. Cheers were given for Mr. Devlin.

OTHER CENTRES.

Mr. Donovan addressed a meeting at Lawrence on Wednesday evening, and will speak at Waimate on the 11th, and afterwards at Ashburton.