

The Irish Delegates

MR. DONOVAN IN MILTON

(From our Special Reporter.)

Mr. Devlin's gifted young colleague, Mr. Donovan, arrived at the Bluff on Tuesday morning by the 'Warrimoo'. He was met on landing by the Rev. Father O'Malley and at Invercargill by the Very Rev. Dean Burke. He proceeded to Milton by the second mail train and was accompanied by Gore by the Very Rev. Father O'Donnell. At Milton the distinguished visitor was the guest of the Very Rev. Father O'Neill.

In the evening a public meeting of a very representative character was held in St. George's Hall. The hall was well filled. On the stage there were the Mayor (Mr. D. Reid), Mr. Donovan, the Very Rev. Father O'Neill, and the Rev. H. W. Cleary. Very Rev. P. O'Donnell and Rev. M. Ryan were among the audience.

In introducing the gifted young delegate, the Mayor stated that Mr. Donovan was a delegate of the Irish Parliamentary Party, having been chosen for that purpose by the unanimous vote of the Irish leaders. Mr. Donovan was a gifted speaker and would be able to place before that audience the object of his mission and win their sympathy in the struggle that the Irish people are making to win the privileges of self-government which the people of New Zealand enjoy. (Applause.) The granting of this boon would not lead to the disruption of the Empire and would not be conducive to disloyalty on the part of the Irish people to the Empire. He (the speaker) could never understand the objection to the Irish people enjoying the right of self-government. It was not for lack of intelligence. Irishmen furnished many of the greatest scholars, the pluckiest soldiers, and the most loyal of the King's subjects. (Applause.) Mr. Donovan had been on tour in Australia for eleven months, addressing hundreds of meetings, some of them attended by two or three thousand persons. He had met with an enthusiastic reception and every support from the people of the Commonwealth. He (the speaker) had been before the people of the district for 33 years, and he had never yet known a Milton audience to refuse any cause a fair hearing. He concluded by promising Mr. Donovan a sympathetic and cordial greeting. (Applause.)

Mr. Donovan's Speech.

Mr. Donovan on rising was received with warm applause. He said that he and his colleague, Mr. Devlin, had travelled through every State in the Australian Commonwealth; they had addressed meetings in large and small centres—meetings that were attended not alone by their kith and kin, but by Australians of all creeds and classes, who wished to see extended to Ireland the privilege of self-government which the themselves enjoyed. On that, his (the speaker's) first meeting in New Zealand, he came as an Irish envoy to advocate Ireland for the Irish as they (his hearers) advocated New Zealand for the New Zealanders. (Applause.) They were on the eve of success, and he hoped that he and his colleague would win all intelligent and rational-minded people in the country into sympathy with Ireland. The speaker then contrasted the frequently hostile reception accorded 23 years ago to the Redmonds—who were exponents of the same cause—with the splendid reception accorded to the present Irish envoys. During the interregnum of 23 years the schoolmaster had been abroad. Australia had rallied around them and accorded them magnificent support, contributing £20,000 as a testimony of their sympathy with the struggle of the Irish people to secure the advantages enjoyed by every State in Australia. (Applause.) Continuing Mr. Donovan said that he and Mr. Devlin had come from one of the great Orange centres of the North of Ireland, Belfast, and that in itself was proof of the great change that had taken place in the North of Ireland on the Home Rule question. Their policy was one of

Conciliation.

They were employed in the holy work of breaking down the power of sectarianism and prejudice. This new change and tolerant spirit were shown in a remarkable degree when his colleague, Mr. Devlin won the seat in West Belfast through the united efforts of Catholics and Protestants, who fought side by side. Mr. Devlin appealed to the people of his native city to sink their feuds, and held up before them the banner of conciliation and love for their common country. (Applause.) Mr. Devlin was put into Parliament by the

votes of the independent Orangemen, and when passing by the great shipbuilding yards of Belfast, the Orange workers turned out and cheered their Catholic member as heartily as even Thomas Davis, the Protestant poet of '48 could have wished them to do when he pleaded so pathetically and so powerfully for a union of Orange and Green in strong and abiding love for the old storied land of the Celt. In Antrim also they bore the banner of conciliation, and again Orange and Green carried the day, and routed the place-hunter ignominiously from the field. They had done the same for Mr. Sloan, M.P. By uniting such forces they were fighting the evils of landlordism. Landlordism in its own interests, and in the interests of the Castle gang of place-hunters who had, vampire-like, sucked and drained away the life blood of the people, landlordism had raised the sectarian cry and thus succeeded in keeping the people divided whilst they were being wronged and robbed by a privileged few. The new democracy was exorcising that evil spirit of sectarian strife, and its power to kill it grew greater and stronger as men began more and more to realise all that the triumph of that great cause meant for Irishmen and for Englishmen of whatever class or creed. On reaching Invercargill that day he (the speaker) had been interviewed by a representative of the Dunedin 'Star' regarding Mr. Sheehan's and Mr. Crean's remarks, as reported by the cable, declaring that there was

A Split

in the Irish Party. Mr. Donovan then proceeded to explain the real facts of the situation. Mr. Sheehan had by eighty-four of his colleagues in the Nationalist party been expelled as an undesirable. His expulsion did not represent anything in the nature of a split among Nationalists, but rather emphasised the consolidation of the party. Mr. Crean had joined Mr. O'Brien in the support of what was known as the devolution theory, which was a half-way house to Home Rule. The Irish party would never accept anything less than a Parliament elected by and responsible to the people. They were not prepared to accept a compromise, but required a Parliament elected on democratic principles, similar to that of New Zealand, and their hopes would be realised within the next year or two. Regarding the allegation that he and Mr. Devlin were preaching Mr. O'Brien's policy, they had never preached any other doctrine than conciliation and toleration, and by this means would secure the unification of all creeds and classes, while Mr. O'Brien only wanted to conciliate a small group of landlords. (Applause.) The expulsion of an undesirable was not a split. They had to uphold their prestige and were not prepared to tolerate men who betrayed the principles of the Irish Nationalist Party. For 20 years they were the only party in the House who would not accept power, office, or emolument from the British Government. They stood four-square to the world, fighting for the right of Ireland to be governed by its people, as New Zealand is governed by New Zealanders. (Applause.) It had also been stated by anonymous writers in the Melbourne and Sydney press that he and Mr. Devlin had come to Australia misrepresenting the true situation as it existed in Ireland, and that they were enemies of the English people. These brave slanderers always wait until one's back is turned before they attack him. If they had been guilty of misrepresentation: if they had come before Australian audiences with fables on their lips and malice towards the Empire in their hearts, why did not their critics meet them in the open, come openly upon their platforms, where they were welcome to come, or over their names in the press expose the fables and give proof of the malice? But they dared not, for facts are stubborn things and cannot be explained away, so they preferred to fire their shafts under the shelter of anonymity and when the backs of those they attacked were turned and they had no opportunity of reply. He flung the accusation back in the teeth of those who made it. The people are working together in Ireland, both Green and Orange, and through this union they had already won the seats of Antrim, West and South Belfast. The workers had come to see through what channels they could get reforms, and breaking away from the old landlord and place-hunting gang. Orangemen had stood shoulder to shoulder with their Catholic brothers in the cause of common democracy. (Applause.) And any thinking man could see for himself what the Irish National party had for the past thirty years done in the

Cause of Democracy

and humanity in the British Empire. Let them take the statutes which had been passed by the British House of Commons within the last fifty years, and they would see the part which the members of the