

is primarily for. During all the years they lived in the... that they had never had the money or the heart to make an improvement. There was no incentive. In the new environment, however, it was different. Within two years the man had built a porch, with a window, at the front door. This alone added 50 per cent. to the attractiveness of the place. Lace curtains appeared at the windows. The frowsy front yard was ploughed up and beds of flowers planted. A neat hedge was planted along the road and climbing roses made patches of color against the walls. When I saw this place it was as trim and attractive as many a prosperous Pennsylvania farm house.

Said the Congested Districts Board man: "I am prouder of things like that, with which we have had nothing directly to do, than of any of the projects which we undertake for the people themselves. It is a great thing to build roads and fences and drains and houses; it is a greater thing to stir the ambition of helpless people, and to see how their spirit expands under the sunshine of opportunity. We gave that man a chance, that's all. The house was a mere shelter when he got it—weatherproof and comfortable, but wholly lacking in beauty. You see what he has made of it—a pretty home. He has done all that himself, without even a suggestion from us. The effect upon his own family, upon his children, must be obvious. But it has its effect upon the whole neighborhood. In time every house within sight will be improved. The example is irresistible. After all, what we do, valuable as the work is, is merely preparatory. We help a little, but the big thing is that we teach the people to help themselves. And it is encouraging to see how quickly and vigorously they grasp the lesson and put it into practice."

**A Remarkable Economic Revolution Effected.**

Having studied attentively some hundreds of pages of official reports, bristling with statistical information, I was fairly impressed with the magnitude of the improvement made during the last seven years by the Congested Districts Board. But, after all, figures are not the most effective evidence. The sight of one trim, comfortable home where there had been a wretched hovel; or of a dozen prosperous farms where there had been empty pastures, carries more conviction than a ream of dry statistics. I accepted the official reports as a matter of course. I learned from them that so many thousand acres had been purchased from the landlords and re-sold to the tenants; that so many thousand families had been lifted from poverty to independence; that so many hundreds of thousands of dollars had been expended for estates, for road building, for drainage, for new houses and other improvements. These facts were striking, and bore sufficient testimony that the poorer districts of Ireland are benefiting by a remarkable economic revolution—the making of the helpless tenants into independent landholders. But until I stood on Mullaghduhy Hill, near Castlereagh, and looked over that wide fertile plain, dotted with the homes of a hundred families, I had but faintly realised what the imposing array of figures meant. Until then I had not understood the accuracy of John Dillon's statement: "The whole face of the land has been changed."

Vivid as was the story told by this bird's-eye view, however, I wanted to learn some details. It seemed to me that in one of the houses I might find evidence more convincing than any description of conditions now as contrasted with conditions seven years ago. I made this suggestion to the officer of the Congested Districts Board, who was my guide. "Select any house in sight," he said, "and go and talk to the family."

We came down from the hill, climbed the wall and descended by a rocky lane to the plain. I chose the first house we reached. It was two storeys high, built strongly of stone, with a slate roof. Plain beyond the point of severity, it had not a single hint of beauty or art to recommend it. The Government has undertaken a work so vast that it has deemed it wise not to expend energy or money in producing artistic dwellings. This seems a pity for surely there is an economic value in beauty, and the housing of the people in buildings of such forbidding plainness tends to discourage aspirations toward higher things. But this seemed a very subordinate issue when I remembered the squalor and misery in which these people were living a few short years ago.

The house stood about 50ft from the road, the front yard filled with growing cabbages of enormous size. We passed around one end, and at the back door were greeted cheerily by a little woman of middle age, but youthful spirits. She came out, beaming with welcome, and smiling proudly when we asked permission to look around her place. She walked with us to the end of the yard—it was paved with cobblestones—and showed us the stable and other outhouses. These, too, were of stone, and slate roofed. At one end of the stable was a huge pile of turf, three months' supply of fuel. At the other end was a concrete pig-sty. "Where you formerly lived," I suggested, "you had no such arrangement as this. You kept the cattle in the house. A shadow passed over her face. We did, sir. But God knows, it was no fault of ours. We lived as we could, and it was bad living. It was four miles from here, ten acres of hillside, that my husband and I and the children had to pick the stones out of with our hands. We

never had a crop that would keep the food in our stomachs for a year. Every summer my husband and the big boys had to go to England and do farm work to get enough money for the rent and to carry us through the winter. Now you see, it is all different, she said, simply. She pointed at the house and then at the fields which climbed the slope. A quarter of a mile away the husband and son could be seen among the dark green of the potato plants, working steadily and working not for another, but for themselves. It is all different, she said, simply. And please God, it will stay different. What rent did you pay? I asked. Three pounds a year. This was for the ten acres of worthless land and the bit of a house—a wretched house. And now? Now we have 26 acres of land, all of it raising good crops. We have two cows and a calf, and 40 chickens. For the house and stable and land we pay £20 a year. This is not rent, you see, sir. We're buying the whole place. We're the land owners ourselves, and she smiled happily.

**Diocesan News**

**ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON**

(From our own correspondent.)  
The membership of the St. Aloysius Boys' Club, Newtown, has increased to 90.

Sub-inspector O'Donovan, who had been suffering from a severe illness, is now making satisfactory progress towards recovery.

His Grace the Archbishop will administer the Sacrament of Confirmation on Sunday morning at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart; and at St. Joseph's Church in the afternoon.

On Sunday, December 5, at the St. Mary of the Angels' Church, at 8 o'clock Mass, about 80 children will receive their First Communion.

The annual retreat for ladies at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Island Bay, will begin on January 3, and will end on Saturday, January 8.

Great surprise is expressed in Hibernian circles at the action of the District officers, in encouraging the movement for a separate Auckland District, as chronicled in the recent issues of the Tablet.

The retiring chairman of the Hōfowhēnua County Council (Councillor James McEavey) entertained his brother, councillors and a number of friends to dinner at Wereroa Hotel on Wednesday evening.

The sale of work held last week by Mrs. St. Clair at her home in Hawker street was in aid of the organ fund for the Redemptorist Fathers' Church of St. Gerard, Oriental Bay, and it resulted in a very satisfactory amount being raised.

The boys of St. Aloysius' Club, who were present at the club rooms on Wednesday evening, and who intend to become members of the proposed Cadet Corps (which has been accepted by the Government), were sworn in by Captain Ellis of the Petone Navals. About 50 boys have given in their names.

On Wednesday evening the following were elected as the Te Aro parish representatives for the Catholic picnic which will be held at Khandallah on Boxing Day: Messrs. Clancy, Condon, Ellis, Hyland, Jensen, McGuire, T. O'Brien, Reichel, and Tierney.

The parishioners of Kilbirnie are making efforts to have their church erected as soon as possible. It is expected that the school-chapel will be ready for the celebration of Mass on Christmas Day. An art union has been organised, the proceeds of which will be devoted towards the furnishing of the building.

On Saturday week a cricket match was played between teams from the Wellington Catholic Club and Kilbirnie Wesleyan Club, the former winning by 4 runs. Last Saturday the club was again successful, defeating a team from Milligan's by six wickets and 24 runs. The club's cricket team is under the captaincy of Mr. J. Tierney.

At St. Joseph's Church, Buckle Street, the devotion of the Forty Hours' Adoration will commence on Sunday, November 28, and conclude on Tuesday morning. The special sermon to-morrow evening will be preached by the Very Rev. Dr. Kennedy, S.M. (Rector of St. Patrick's College). The sermon on Monday evening will be delivered by Rev. Father Bartley, S.M.

On Monday Mr. Henry Scott, son of Mr. J. Shortt, of Invercargill, was married to Miss Margaret Ethel Wallace, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Wallace, of Waikauri, at the Catholic Church, Phoenix. The bridesmaids were attended by Miss E. Wilson, and was given away by Mr. Millett, and Mr. W. Eccleton acted as best man. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Father T. McKenna. Mr. and Mrs. Shortt afterwards left for Rotorua.