The Reply.

After a few pleasant introductory remarks, Father Cleary entered upon a general description of the circuit which he had made round the earth during the past 11 months. There were two countries that interested him most profoundly. One was Canada ; the other, he need hardly say, was ' dear old Ireland where the grass grows green.' He was greatly impressed by the vast spaces of the Dominion, by the boundless wealth that lies in its soil, and by the great resources of its rivers, forests, fisheries, and mines. The Hon. Alexander Morris, the father of a friend of his, and formerly Governor of Manitoba, was, he believed, the first to foretell the marvellous progress of the great North-west and West, which has turned Canada into one of the brightest jewels in the British Crown. He (the speaker) crossed the Pacific by the Canadian-Australian line, in the ship Moana, called at Suva, and visited the mid-ocean paradise of Honolulu. The good New Zealand ship made a record trip, and during the last stretch of the voyage cleaved through the water at the rate of seventeen and one-third knots an hour. He reached Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, in the pleasant northern spring-time, visited the noble pile of its Government buildings, which are the pride of the province, and one of the architectural boasts of Canada, and which, by some extraordinary feat of financial legerdemain, were erected at the relatively insignificant cost of £190,000. Then on to

Vancouver,

along a noble waterway of 84 miles studded with wooded islands and bounded on left and front and right by a noble-panorama of snow-capped mountains. Vancouver was one of the most charmingly-situated cities he had ever seen. It is built upon a splendid deep-water harbor, which claims, with Rio and Nagasaki, the distinction of being the finest harbor in the world. In its busy streets you encounter dapper Japs, staid Chinese, and bronzed and broad-faced Indians. At its wharves lie ships from the United States, Alaska, China, Japan, and every part of Australasia. It is, in fact, the head of the great waterway to the Orient and to Australasia, and is fast rising to the position of being the Liverpool of the west, and one of the great trade emporiums of the world. Behind it rise the massive, snow-topped mountains. Only 27 years ago its site was a dense virgin forest of the tall cedars and the immense Douglas firs (that used to be called Oregon pines) which constitute one of the precious possessions of British Columbia. That province is but one of the feeders of Vancouver, but you could drop New Zealand into the middle of it and yet have a good-sized country to spare. Vancouver is the Pacific terminus of the

Canadian-Pacific Railway.

The owners of that great transcontinental trade-route is one of the most remarkable corporations of its kind in the world. After the confederation of the British North-American Provinces in 1867, the Government of the newly-formed Dominion undertook, for political and commercial purposes, the construction of a great national highway to connect the Atlantic seaboard with the shores of the Pacific. The work was begun in 1875. It was blocked by party fears and party jealousy. In 1880 it was surrendered to the Canadian-Pacific Company. They undertook to construct the remaining 1900 miles of iron road, and received as a national gift the already constructed lines, 25,000,000 dollars in hard cash, and 25,000,000 acres of agricultural land along or near the route. They took a ' header ' into the work, and, with an army of workmen and thousands of tons of dynamite, placed the rails through the rich, red soil of Manitoba and the rolling pastoral downs farther west at the rate of three to six miles a day. Their progress was necessarily slower and more toilful through the rock-ribbed mountains and rugged defiles of the Rockies. The great project was completed in 1885, when the last rail was well and truly laid by the Pacific waters of Burrard's Inlet, in the virgin forest, on the spot where Vancouver now stands. The company had then nearly 5000 miles of railway, including the longest continuous line in the world—extending for an unbroken stretch of over 3000 miles, from Quebec to the Pacific. Subsequent purchases and constructions have given them close on 12,000 miles of iron road, and their communications with the Far East are completed by a splendid service of steamers to China and Japan. Nothing in all his (the speaker's) tour so captivated his mind as the impressive scenic grandeur of the 600 miles of rail through the three great parallel and conjoined ranges of the Cascades, the Selkirks, and

The Rockies,

from Vancouver to the foothills and the rolling pastoral downs that surround Calgary. It was a moving panorama of indescribable beauty—of clustering mountains soaring to 15,000ft. in height and clad with everlasting ice and snow, tumbling cascades, and noble salmon rivers like the Fraser, the Columbia, and the Thompson, now moving through green valleys, now opening into lovely lakes that outrival in their setting those of our own beautiful land, and anon rushing in wild career down dark canyons and rugged defiles. It is the boast of the Canadians that those 600 miles of mountain afford the most picturesque and varied scenery that lies along any line of railway in the world, Switzerland not excepted. The great ice-field of the Selkirks alone extends over an area of more than 200 square miles, and with a tolerable acquaintance with the picturesque central European republic, he felt convinced that no combination of tours there could equal the varied magnificence that greets the eye in the 600 glorious miles of railway that lie between Vancouver and the great rolling prairies that begin at the foothills around Calgary. As one who had journeyed by the Otago Central line and over the Rimutaka he was greatly interested in the ingenious devices and precautions to secure safe travelling through the steep defiles and winding gorges of the Rockies—the elaborate guard system, the frequent patrols, the powerful brakes the guard-rails, and the patent safety switches at all turnouts from the main track, which prevent the possibility of derailment from a misplaced switch.

Settlement.

followed close on the heels of the Canadian-Pacific navvies. Villages and towns sprang up like magic from the soil, and farm settlement went on at a merry pace. A generous land policy and judicious and persistent advertising attracted a stream of population to the rich red soil of Manitoba, the broad pastoral areas that run up to the foothills of the Rockies ; the gold, copper, and silver-lead mines ; the magnificent forests, and the teeming salmon fisheries of British Columbia. Coming from a country with an alarmingly falling birth-rate and no proper official encouragement to immigration, he was greatly struck by the long processions of immigrant trains that he met as he moved eastward through the Dominion laden with sturdy immigrants—a great number of them with families—hailing from almost every country in Europe, but chiefly from Scandinavia, Russia, and Austria (especially Galicia). The two Dakotas and other adjoining States of America contributed last year 30,000 to the rising tide of immigration that is doing so much to develop the resources of that pushing and prosperous country. He had seen something of the ranching and farming life of the North-west, of Canadian electrical progress, and of the mining industry and the saw-milling trade—this latter, with its ingenious system of boiler-furnaces automatically fed by sawdust—and could assure his hearers that New Zealanders interested in these pursuits could learn many a useful lesson from their cousins in the Dominion. He left Canada, after having travelled almost the whole length, with a strong conviction as to its future greatness, and with the feeling that its North-western and Western provinces will develop, out of their present heterogeneous elements, a new and sturdy race that will be neither British nor French, but speaking the British tongue, and by their industry and frugality adding materially to the progress and prosperity of their great young country.

Father Cleary also spoke of his trip through

The United States

and of the 'hustling,' the feverish commercial activity, and the strenuous, nervous living of that remarkable people. He spoke in pessimistic terms of the conditions of labor in the great Republic, contrasted them with the more contented and settled state of things in New Zealand. He also referred to the fearful prevalence and vast extent of strikes, the long hours of the miners, the little fellow-feeling that seems to exist between employer and especially the unskilled employe, the relative neglect, in factories and mines, of the precautions which people in New Zealand take for the safety of the individual, and said that the great trusts held the workers in the hollow of their hands, and that the enormous departmental stores were gradually squeezing 'the small man' out of commercial existence. Failing the adoption of some broad and reasonable system of ameliorative labor legislation, he foresaw a serious crisis in the United States, which might possibly end in some partial and modified form of State socialism, such as the nationalisation of the mining industry. The workers, if they must be slaves, would prefer to be tied to the State, which could be controlled by the force of public opinion, rather than by the bondsmen of bloated private corporations that have neither a heart to feel nor a body to kick, nor a soul to save.

He was sure that many of his hearers were asking him with their hearts, if not with their lips, the question : ' How is old

Ireland

and how does she stand ? ' She was still the land of the tear and the smile. He had things sad, as well as pleasant, to say. There still remained exasperating political grievances and rankling discontent. It was a mistake to suppose that the British Parliament was the ruler of Ireland. A set of irresponsible officials in Dublin Castle were the actual rulers of the country. Dublin Castle was, in effect, the central bureau of a great political organisation of Irish landlords, and its government of Ireland was simply a conspiracy against popular rights. Over vast areas of the country there were, as sizes after assizes and sessions after sessions, blank criminal calendars and white gloves for the judges. Yet this nest of irresponsibles proclaimed, during his stay in the country, county after county of the most crimeless nation in the world, deprived the people, with a stroke of the pen, of many of the elementary rights of citizenship, subjected them to an exasperating system of coercion and brute force, at the mercy of an armed and hostile garrison of military police. The speaker described the still prevalent system of jury-packing, the trial of political opponents by paid servants of Dublin Castle, who hold their positions during 'good behavior' and are removable at the will of the governing officials, and the significant unanimity with which those 'removables' have for a long time past been inflicting vindictive and degrading penalties, for statute-made misdemeanors, on the trusted parliamentary and civic representatives of the people. The drain of population was also still going on at a melancholy pace. In dealing with