

THE DISTRESS IN DUBLIN

ENTHUSIASTIC MEETING IN CHRISTCHURCH.

RELIEF FUND OPENED.

(From our Christchurch correspondent.)

A largely attended meeting was held on last Thursday evening in the Hibernian Hall to consider the existing distress in Ireland and more particularly in Dublin, and to decide on the best means to be adopted in assisting to alleviate in some measure the sufferings and privations of a large section of the people who have been reduced to such dire straits through no fault of their own. His Lordship the Bishop presided, and with him on the platform were Mr. L. M. Isitt, M.P., Mr. J. McCombs, M.P., Councillors G. Scott and D. G. Sullivan, the Rev. Fathers Murphy, B.A., Seymour, S.M., and T. Hanrahan, and Mr. M. Grimes, acting secretary of the provisional committee. Apologies were received from the Very Rev. Dean Regnault, S.M. (through illness), a fact which was referred to in terms of regret by the Right Rev. chairman; Hon. J. Barr, M.L.C.; Mr. G. Witty, M.P.; Dr. A. B. O'Brien, Messrs. M. J. Corrigan, W. Hoban, J. R. Hayward, G. C. Hayward, T. Loughlin, W. Hayward, jun., and E. O'Rourke. All the speakers were in excellent form, and their remarks were essentially to the point. That the speeches met with unanimous acceptance was evidenced by the frequent and substantial applause.

His Lordship the Bishop, in welcoming those on the platform, emphasised the fact that the present was an occasion when all could meet irrespective of opinions differing on other subjects. They were assembled in the sacred cause of suffering humanity, a cause that appealed to all that was best in the individual and community. Continuing, his Lordship said that those present were assembled as friends of Ireland. At the present time there were some who might be ashamed of Ireland, owing to the recent rebellion, but when the true facts were considered, all could still be proud to call themselves friends of Ireland. Their object in meeting together was to assist the poor and distressed of Ireland, and especially of Dublin, where poverty existed in a very manifest form, and for which immediate assistance was necessary. We had ample testimony of this from the press and from the Irish archbishops and bishops. His Lordship also quoted Father Lockington's statement on the situation. Our hearts had gone out in sympathy to the distressed of Serbia and Belgium, and to-day there was a call for sympathy nearer home, in Ireland. In this great war in which the honor and prestige of the British Empire were at stake, 300,000 of the sons of Ireland had fought for the Empire, and many had fought and died. (Applause.) Since the rebellion, Mr. Redmond had stated, no fewer than 61,000 had volunteered to fight for the British Empire. Here was ample evidence of the generosity and loyalty of the Irish nation. His Lordship continued that he did not wish at this stage to speak at any length of the recent Dublin rebellion. Judgment had come to those who might have done wrong, and it would be cruel to say any word that might aggravate their fate. However, even those who were least friendly to Ireland had to admit that the misgovernment of Dublin Castle had been greatly responsible for the catastrophe. The rebellion, however, had not lessened our love of Ireland and our desire to see her free. As long as Home Rule was denied to Ireland, Great Britain was being robbed of the loyalty of her warmest-hearted people. He spoke, his Lordship continued, as a New Zealander, one who was proud to have an Irish father and mother, and one whose love of Ireland was no less than that of one born within her own shores. He loved Ireland, and he would love to see her free. They were present not as friends of the rebellion, but the justice of Ireland's cause was as great as ever it was, and he hoped the meeting would

prove that they were in every sense true friends of Ireland. (Applause.)

Mr. L. M. Isitt, M.P., then moved—'That, having heard of the distress and suffering in Dublin, all friends of Ireland be urged to contribute towards the funds being raised for the purpose of alleviating the distress existing amongst the poor of Ireland.'

In speaking to his motion, Mr. Isitt said that as a result of the recent rebellion, as impotent as it was wrong, thousands of Irish people were starving, and it behoved all other Irishmen to do their best to assist them. He did not sympathise with the rebellion, but he was a Home Ruler, and never concealed the fact. (Applause.) He firmly believed that they would never lay the foundation of the prosperity of Ireland until she received true justice and her emancipation from the British Government. The wrongs that Ireland had received at the hands of England had been very grave and insistent, but they had only been perpetrated at the will of a certain section of the British people. (Applause.) There was, however, an ever-increasing number of the British people who were as earnest in their wish for justice for Ireland as any man born in Ireland. The Irish people did not have any monopoly of the sufferings resulting from British misgovernment; second only to them were the sufferings of the British people themselves, but it was due more to the thick-headedness of John Bull than to his bad-heartedness. Mr. Isitt concluded with an eloquent and stirring appeal for a warm-hearted and liberal response to the cause which was so worthy of their support. (Applause.)

The motion was seconded by the Rev. Father Seymour, S.M., who remarked that while so many were now homeless in Dublin, their breadwinners were away at the front fighting for the Empire and for the cause of each one of those present in the hall. That was why they were being asked to give practical support and succour to Irishmen in the days of distress.

Mr. J. McCombs, M.P., supported the resolution. He was not, he said, going to attempt to say who was responsible for the present distress in Ireland, but he was sure that all who loved her, and who believed in the right of a small nation to govern herself, would succour their brethren, who in their mistaken efforts to win self-government for their own country, had caused this distress. He, too, was a Home Ruler, and prepared to advance the cause by any power he might possess.

The motion was then put and carried unanimously.

Mr. D. G. Sullivan next moved—'That this meeting of the friends of Ireland draws attention to the fact that the generous sacrifices made by Ireland in the battles of the Empire during the war have justified her claims for the fulfilment of the promise of Home Rule.'

Mr. Sullivan, in the course of a brief address, said that the resolution would appeal to Irishmen in any part of the world more than anything else which could be submitted to them.

Mr. George Scott, in seconding the motion, said that whilst they disapproved and condemned anyone who at the present time would come out in open rebellion against his or her King and country, they realised it was their duty to do what they could to relieve the distress and suffering of the poor and innocent who had been rendered homeless and deprived of their loved ones through no fault of their own. They were apt to forget suffering humanity whilst receiving the bountiful blessing which God had given them, and they should all realise that it was their bounden duty to do their utmost to relieve all distress.

The motion was carried.

Mr. H. H. Loughnan moved—'That a subscription list should be opened in the room, and that the amounts contributed should be forwarded to the Dominion treasurer of the movement, the Right Rev. Bishop Verdon, of Dunedin, for transmission to the authorities in Dublin, the Rev. Father Murphy and Mr. M. Grimes to be the local treasurers.'

The motion was seconded by Mr. J. J. O'Gorman and carried.