

to us. After the capitulation of Antwerp, the distracted population was asking what would happen to Belgians of military age, or such as would reach that age before the occupation had ended. Baron von Huene, the Military Governor of Antwerp, authorised me to re-assure the distressed parents in his name. However, as there were rumors in Antwerp that at Liege, Namur, and Charleroi, youths had been seized and forcibly carried off to Germany, I begged Governor von Huene to be so good as to confirm in writing the oral assurances he had given me. He replied that the rumors of deportations were baseless, and gave me without hesitation the following written declaration, which was read aloud on Sunday, October 18, 1914, in all the parish churches of the Province of Antwerp: 'Young men need have no fear of being carried off to Germany, either to be enrolled in the army or to be subjected to forced labor.'

Immediately after the arrival of Baron von der Goltz in the capacity of Governor-General at Brussels, I went to ask him to ratify the guarantees given by Governor von Huene to the Province of Antwerp, extending them to the whole country, without any time-limit. The Governor-General retained my petition, in order to consider it at his leisure. The following day he was good enough to come in person to Mechlin to express his approval, and in the presence of two aides-de-camp and of my private secretary, to confirm the promise that the liberty of Belgian citizens would be respected.

In my letter of October 16 last to Baron von Bissing, after reminding him of the undertaking given by his predecessor, I concluded: 'Your Excellency will understand how painful the burden of responsibility I should have incurred towards families would be, if the confidence they placed in you through me and at my earnest entreaty should be so lamentably disappointed.' The Governor-General replied: 'The employment of the Belgian unemployed in Germany, which has only been initiated after two years of war, differs essentially from the captivity of men fit for military service. Moreover, the measure is not related to the conduct of war properly speaking, but is determined by social and economic causes.'

As if the word of an honest man were terminable at the end of a year or two years, like an officer's lease! As if the declaration confirmed in 1914 did not explicitly exclude both military operations and forced labor! Finally, as if every Belgian workman who takes the place of a German workman did not enable the latter to fill a gap in the German army.

We, the shepherds of these sheep who are torn from us by brutal force, full of anguish at the thought of the moral and religious isolation in which they are about to languish, impotent witnesses of the grief and terror in the numerous homes shattered or threatened, turn to souls, believing or unbelieving, in Allied countries, in neutral countries, and even in enemy countries, who have a respect for human dignity. When Cardinal Lavigerie embarked on his anti-slavery campaign, Pope Leo XIII., as he blessed his mission, remarked: 'Opinion is more than ever the queen of the world. It is on this you must work. You will only conquer by means of opinion.' May Divine Providence deign to inspire all who have any authority, all who are masters of speech and pen, to rally round our humble Belgian flag for the abolition of European slavery. May human conscience triumph over all sophisms, and remain steadfastly faithful to the great precept of Saint Ambrose: 'Honor above everything'—*Nihil preferendum honestate.*

In the name of the Belgian Bishops,†

(Signed) D. J. CARDINAL MERCIER,
Archbishop of Mechlin.

† We have been unable to communicate with the Bishop of Bruges.

OBITUARY

MR. BENJAMIN JOSEPH HART, WETHERSTONES.

We deeply regret to announce the death of Mr. Benjamin Joseph Hart, Wetherstones, Lawrence, one of the pioneers of Tuapeka district, and a generous benefactor of the Church. Death came very peacefully on Thursday morning, February 1, in the presence of most of the members of his family, after an illness of some months borne with wonderful brightness and patience. His last days were cheered by the visits of all his sons and daughters, and of numerous friends, including his highly esteemed friend, the late Monsignor O'Leary, himself at the time in failing health. Rev. Father Kaveney, of Lawrence, attended him frequently and gave him the last Sacraments of the Church. Mr. Hart was a convert of some fifty years standing, his conversion being due to the prayers and example of his devout wife, who died nineteen months ago. He was ever remarkable for his exemplary Catholic life and large generosity in every good work of religion and charity. The Church in Lawrence and all the Catholic institutions of his parish, St. Vincent de Paul Orphanage, South Dunedin, and many other Catholic institutions owe much to his liberality. A few years ago he purchased a large property (estimated to be worth £2000) on Pine Hill, Dunedin, and presented it to the Dominican Nuns, of which Order his daughter is a member.

Mr. Hart (says the *Tuapeka Times*) was born in Tasmania 84 years ago, and came of a good old English stock of the Jewish race, from whom no doubt he inherited that shrewdness and level-headedness which characterised his dealings with his fellow-men. As a young man he migrated to Victoria and, following the occupation of mining with its many excitements and vicissitudes, visited most of the goldfields that sprang up day by day. Here he married, and found in his Irish wife a devoted life-partner. He came to New Zealand early in 1862 and proceeded direct to Wetherstones, Lawrence, where he had since resided. For many years after his arrival in the Colony he followed up his old occupation as a miner, and then in 1884, in partnership with Mr. J. K. Simpson, bought out the Black Horse Brewery. He always maintained his interest in mining matters, floating several successful dredging companies in and about Lawrence, and being chairman of directors of most of these mining ventures. Quite recently he took a prominent part in the purchase and working of the Blue Spur Consolidated Company's claim, being a director up to the time of his death. In all business matters he was a man of exceptionally sound judgment, keenness, punctuality, and it was always said of him that his word was as good as his bond. Outside business he was a keen lover and promoter of horse-racing and athletics, an ardent poultry fancier, and perhaps the most successful cultivator of daffodils in New Zealand.

The following children are left to mourn the loss of a devoted father: Mr. Henry Hart (manager Simpson and Hart, Ltd.), Lawrence; Mr. Edward Hart, Waverley, Taranaki; Mr. Albert Hart, Lawrence; Mr. Fred Hart (chief clerk, Supreme Court, Wanganui, now on active service); Mr. Ernest Hart, Lawrence; Mrs. Rattray, Melbourne; Mrs. Ronald Montgomery, Lawrence; Sister M. Xavier, Dominican Convent; Misses Ethel and Eva Hart, Wetherstones.

The funeral took place from the Lawrence Church on Saturday afternoon, and was attended by a very large number of old friends from near and far. Rev. Father Kaveney, of Lawrence, officiated at the graveside. Rev. Fathers Howard (Milton), Corcoran (Roxburgh), and Liston (Holy Cross College) were also present.—R.I.P.

Gargle,
Sniff up,
or Swallow

FLUENZOL for Throats,
Catarrh,
or Influenza