

## Current Topics

### Sinn Fein

By Sinn Fein we mean here ourselves, the *New Zealand Tablet*. A general meeting of the shareholders was held at our offices last week, and for the benefit of those who were unable to attend we wish to make public our financial situation at the present time. The Directors spoke on the subject of the balance sheet, and all expressed their satisfaction at the progress made during the year. We need not point out that the year was one of extraordinary difficulties. The price of the paper on which the *Tablet* is printed went up to 6d a pound, while a few years ago it was only 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d. Ink and lead increased three hundred per cent. in price. Owing to the number of men going to the war many subscribers were lost. Yet as a result of the foresight of the Directors, and notably of our Managing Director, we were able to publish the paper at the old price while most of the papers around us increased their prices by fifty and a hundred per cent. Owing to the absolute necessity of economising we had to cut off a very large number of free copies and exchanges during the year. Subscribers who were unreasonably in arrears were also cut off when advices failed to have any effect. We had to embark on a new policy of refusing orders unless accompanied by cash. In spite of such drastic measures the financial report was most satisfactory. After allocating over £600 as a security against doubtful debts a dividend of 5 per cent. was declared. Further, the Managing Director announced that our subscribers were over three hundred more now than at the beginning of last year. The announcement that the Directors had passed a resolution sanctioning the erection of new and up-to-date offices was received with general approval. Mr. Shiel spoke in very encouraging terms of the soundness of the company at present. We venture to think that this news will be welcome to all those who supported us so faithfully during the year that has passed, and we here take the opportunity to express our personal thanks for the encouragement received from so many good friends.

### French War Orphans

We have received a bundle of leaflets in connection with the "National Association of the War Orphans," and we beg to state most emphatically that if they who forwarded them imagine we are going to support the project they are much mistaken. We have more than once referred to the efforts of the French Government on behalf of the war orphans. What we said before we still hold. The movement may be a very deserving one as far as its object is concerned. It may be inspired by pure Christian charity for all we know. But the best things in the world are corrupted by circumstances, and it is precisely the attendant circumstances in this case which impel us to put Catholics on their guard. We are told: "The education of the orphans of the war which is an urgent social work and the most important of all, demands a continuous effort and considerable funds." What we are not told is that the French Government has refused to give any assurance that the orphans' faith shall be safeguarded and that efforts will be made to have them brought up in the religion of their parents. So suspect is the movement that we have read already in French Catholic papers grave warnings against its dangers. We have a wretched Freemason Government in France, and we have every reason to distrust them. It were better that the poor children were cast adrift on the world, dependent on the charity of the neighbors, than that they were entrusted to the tender mercies of men who have made it a boast that they would put out the lights of Heaven. Viviani can weep crocodile tears over the orphans when it suits him, just as he wept when in America over the destruction of the French churches. The American Catholics were not deceived. They knew how he had treated French churches and French priests and nuns, and to what base uses he had

applied the fruits of his plunder. Neither shall we be deceived when a propaganda in favor of a movement which originates with men like him is recommended to our consideration. In this, and in many other "charities" we advise all our readers to look well ahead and weigh carefully in the light of religion and justice the proposals put before them.

### How England Repents During War-time

From time to time we read in our cables that a man who has not set up the idol, Jingo, as a substitute for God speaks out frankly in condemnation of the low state of morals in England at present. The Bishop of London made a very forcible appeal for national seriousness, which would have been more forcible still had it been less theatrical. Father Vaughan has with his accustomed candor denounced the rottenness of English society, high and low. Admiral Beatty struck a truer note than any of them when he hinted that at present the people were unworthy of victory, or even of peace, and that the sooner they came to regard the war as a scourge the better for themselves. We here quote a passage from a letter written in London. It is a fair indication that London is almost as bad as this land of godless schools and wowsers-ridden statesmen:—

"England is, indeed, a great country. Within the past two days upwards of 300 applications have been made for divorce by poor persons here, the majority of them, I believe, soldiers; and the number of applications is said to be increasing daily. I see that in Cork the young men beat off the streets the enterprising itinerant ladies who try to introduce there a breath of our London atmosphere. In other parts of Ireland, I observe, the courts, on testimony no stronger than a policeman's recollection of alleged seditious statements, sentence young men to long terms of imprisonment with hard labor. Here in England, on the other hand, persons convicted of bigamy get mere nominal sentences. But, as a police officer remarked to me yesterday, if bigamy, or even polygamy, were a crime in England, half the adult population would be under lock and key. Another police officer told me recently that he intended to retire, at any cost, before the end of the war: because so much domestic faithfulness and infidelity would be disclosed when soldiers, accustomed to blood-letting in Flanders, returned home, that a policeman's life would be not worth living. I am glad you called attention to the resultant spread of disease and immorality, and I hope you will keep at it. Have you seen the recent statement by a distinguished English judge that in the eyes of the law in England a husband had no legal property in the person of his wife; that she was the mistress of her own destiny, and if she chose to give herself to another the husband was not entitled to punish the man to whom she went? I hope you keep in touch with the English magazines, which are very enlightening these times, and that you have not missed Father Bernard Vaughan's address at Dundee."

### The Prejudiced Press

We use the word prejudiced in its strictest sense. Our press is so prejudiced that we cannot afford to trust it now when political matters are discussed. Any one who reads between the lines of the cables reported on March 13 must be convinced that huge sums of money are set apart for press propaganda work. Mr. Lloyd George, for reasons which it is not difficult to surmise, supports this nefarious scheme while Mr. Asquith, to his credit, denounces it. Although propaganda work in Canada was mentioned expressly we may take it that the campaign is universal. As a matter of fact we need no such admissions to prove to us that the press is untrustworthy. Which of us is not so weary of reading news that is contrary to all the dictates of common sense that we come to the conclusion that the authority of the newspapers on war matters is of no account whatsoever? There may be yet a few innocent people who accept statements as true because they read them in the papers, but the number is a