

## Current Topics

### The Tactics of the N.Z. Pressmen

With reference to the resolution in favor of self-government for Ireland, proposed at Napier on St. Patrick's Day, Messrs Dolan and Keenan addressed to the local representative of the Press Association a complaint that the resolution had been suppressed:—

"We have been requested by Home Rulers throughout Hawke's Bay to inquire if there was any particular reason for suppressing the report of the local resolution. It is felt, and we think you will admit that there is justice in the opinion, that slanderous sectarian accusations made by the most bigoted fanatics are readily circulated by the Association, with incalculable effects of animosity and hatred between citizens who should dwell together in concord and good fellowship."

Messrs. Dolan and Keenan did well to call attention to tactics of this sort, which are by no means confined to Napier. The New Zealand journalists are certainly guilty of co-operating with Lloyd George and the adventurer Northcliffe in deliberately calumniating Ireland and withholding the truth about her cause. Indeed it would be hard to point out a single daily paper that has not offended truth and justice in this regard. One can only say that it is a well-merited retribution that the daily press of the Dominion is held in such contempt by men of sound views. One other incident will help to shew how low the editors and their underlings have fallen. Recently in Dunedin a returned soldier delivered an interesting lecture on his experiences. He went out of his way to pay a striking tribute to the Catholic hero, Father Dore, who gave his life for his men. The *Otago Daily Times* published the reference to the brave chaplain, but when the report of the *Times* was copied into two other papers—one a daily and the other a weekly—the name of Father Dore and the tribute of praise paid to him were carefully omitted. It would seem that to pay any respect to a dead Catholic hero who was loved by the men as no chaplain of any other Church was would be bad business in the opinion of certain editors. What these gentlemen have done in this instance is very much akin to the tactics of the spouter who did his No-Popery bit by calumniating a dead nun. The action of the editors of the daily and the weekly to which we refer was quite as low and as cowardly as the ghoul's. Can we expect justice for Ireland from men who will not do justice to the dead—even to the dead that died fighting for worthless creatures like the verbose Hun-haters who stayed at home and stirred up strife while Father Dore and others faced death? To pander to low bigotry by the omission in question was the meanest and vilest piece of press-blackguardism that ever came under our notice. It teaches us that it is vain to expect ordinary decency from the same quarters.

### Peace Terms

According to the cables, the clauses of the Peace Treaty compel Germany to renounce all her territorial rights outside of Europe, to disarm her fortifications, and suppress her air forces. The German Fleet and land forces are to be made negligible, the Kaiser to be given up for trial, all damages to be repaid (*sic*), and territory surrendered to Poland, Denmark, France, and Belgium. Another cable gives us in some detail several reparation clauses, as follows:—

Article 1.—That Germany shall be responsible for all losses and damages of the Allies and their nationals due to the war.

Article 2.—The Allies admit that German resources are insufficient to meet all such claims, but require Germany to compensate for all damages suffered by civilians through German aggression by land and sea.

Article 3.—The Inter-Allied Commission will fix the amount of damages for which compensation must be

paid, and will report the same to Germany by May 1, 1921, announcing at the same time the total claims which Germany must meet, and the scheme of the payments, which are to be made over a period of 30 years thereafter.

Article 5.—Stipulates that Germany must, before May 1, 1921, pay a thousand million sterling (£1,000,000,000) in gold, goods, and ships; and the first charge on this sum will be the cost of the armies of occupation and of the supplies forwarded to Germany to enable her to meet her obligations.

Article 6.—Germany is to restore all property taken in invaded territory.

Article 10.—Germany is to defray the cost of the Inter-Allied Commission, granting members the usual diplomatic privileges and every facility.

A second annexe, relating to the functions of the Inter-Allied Commission, requires Germany to issue immediately and surrender to the Commission £1,000,000,000 worth of Treasury bearer-bonds as a guarantee that the first instalment (in gold, goods, and ships) will be payable before May 1, 1921; also a further issue of bonds for £2,000,000,000 immediately, and £2,000,000,000 at a date to be fixed, the ruling rate of interest to be 5 per cent.

Let us recall that President Wilson insisted that there should be no talk of crushing Germany, and that Lloyd George, in some of his utterances, was of the same mind. The President made it clear that America did not come into the war to destroy Germany, but rather to save her. Further, we have had from more than one English statesman warnings that the furious demands of the ultra-Jingoes were likely to lead to greater evils than a wisely moderate policy. Our Press says that the Peace Demands are heavy and humiliating. We do not agree that they are either. The cost of the war per day would amount in a year to more than the total amount exacted by the terms, and moreover it is clearly stated that payment may be made in ships, shipbuilding, and coal. Considering the resources of Germany, even £5,000,000,000 does not seem to us an exorbitantly severe sum for the Allies to demand. Mr. Stead estimated that the daily expenditure on the war amounted to £33,990,000, of which the Allies spent £26,500,000, or £9,572,000,000 a year in round numbers—a sum compared with which the indemnity in money and goods proposed by the Peace Terms is certainly not enormous. The proposals regarding German territory are (on paper) drastic, but we must wait and see how far the account is reliable. Besides, it should not be forgotten that this estimate is drawn up not by a neutral and impartial Power, but by interested persons, many of whom are frankly out for plunder and profiteering. Germany has still to speak, and as there is at least one man in Paris who will see that the settlement is based on grounds of justice, we have yet to learn the minimum demands of the Allies and the maximum to which Germany will agree. It would be very foolish to conclude, as some of our journalists have already done, that Germany will submit tamely to whatever the Allies choose to impose on her. If she should refuse we must remember Lord Milner's warning about what would happen were she driven into the arms of the Bolsheviks.

### The Meek Shall Possess the Earth

Now that the champions of small nations are busy dividing (on paper) their spoils which, contrary to all their protests during the war, they pledged themselves to obtain when they lied at the hustings, let us consider what Champion John Bull, with his iron heel on Erin's head, is going to receive for his immaculate disinterestedness and his noble efforts to secure for all peoples the right of self-determination. A cable recently published sets forth as follows John's reward:—

(1) A great and rising Power of Europe will be disarmed and stripped.

(2) Unprecedented naval supremacy and the German Fleet destroyed.

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