

### The Boundary Question

The capitalist papers in England have recently been veering round towards the side of the Orangemen. Articles have appeared in such journals as the *Times* and the *Daily Mail* defending Sir James Craig's attitude and arguing that England is not bound by the Treaty. It is nothing new to find such papers backing those who are ready to break faith with Ireland, but, on this occasion, the weight of the honorable sections of the press is thrown decisively on the side of the Free State. Following the peremptory declaration of the *Manchester Guardian* as to England's clear duty in the matter, the *Nation and Athenaeum* says:

Sir James Craig has announced the refusal of the Ulster Government to appoint a representative on the Boundary Commission, which the Government has decided to set up in conformity with the Irish Treaty. There is room for considerable doubt as to the precise procedure which should now be followed. Can the Commission function legally without the Ulster representative? If not, would a representative nominated by the Governor be a representative appointed by the Government of Northern Ireland within the meaning of the Act? Or must a further Act be passed, either authorising the Chairman and the Free State representative to act alone, or providing for the appointment of an alternative member? These are questions of considerable legal nicety, which must rest primarily with the Law Officers to determine. But on the essential issue there is room for no doubt at all. We must fulfil our obligation, and set up the Commission, however constituted, to revise the Ulster boundary in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty. It was entirely right to make every effort to reach an agreed settlement, before proceeding with this course. But now that these efforts have broken down, we can honorably delay no longer.

We regret that the *Times*, in its laudable desire to do justice to the Ulster point of view, should have cast doubts on the binding nature of our obligation, arguing sophistically that the provision for an Ulster representative made the promise of the Commission conditional on her consent. Such an interpretation is utterly at variance with the manifest intention of the Treaty. Nor can we escape from our duty by accepting the Ulster plea that the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 constituted an equally binding and prior obligation towards her. On this point the letter of Lord Justice O'Connor in the *Times* of May 2 is conclusive. The Act of 1920 had neither the form nor the significance of a treaty. It was simply an Act of Parliament, subject, like any other, to subsequent amendment, and expressly reserving the full sovereignty of the Imperial Parliament. On the other hand, our agreement with the Free State was couched in the form of a treaty, and was designed to represent a solemn compact between the two countries. Ulster may have reason to complain that we should have signed this treaty without consulting her. The fact remains that we did sign it, and subsequently ratified it; and the only possible course for us to pursue to-day is to execute it.

### Societies

In an article on the subject of "Societies, Secret and Other," the eminent Jesuit theologian, Father Slater, gives the readers of the *Catholic Times* for their guidance some useful information which in its essentials we publish for New Zealand Catholics.

The Catholic Church shows no desire to cramp the social instincts of her children; but it is her duty to guide them and prevent them from going astray. She does this in various ways. There are some societies which she condemns, others she approves, others again she neither condemns nor approves; she allows Catholics to use their liberty and join them if they like on their own responsibility.

Canon 684 tells us that "the faithful are worthy of

commendation if they join associations which are erected or at least approved by the Church; but let them keep aloof from secret societies, from those which are condemned, seditious, suspect, or which strive to withdraw themselves from the lawful vigilance of the Church."

In this Canon Catholics are forbidden to join *five kinds of societies*.

First, they must keep aloof from secret societies which often under oath require a promise of secrecy from their members even towards ecclesiastical and civil authorities, and blind obedience to the orders which may be given them by the heads of the secret societies. Certain secret societies have been condemned by name. By Canon 2335 those Catholics incur excommunication simply reserved to the Holy See who join the Freemasons or other societies of the same kind which machinate against the Church or lawful civil authority. The Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office issued a decree on August 20, 1894, condemning by name the three American societies known as the Odd-fellows, the Sons of Temperance, and the Knights of Pythias. The American Oddfellows during the course of last century separated from the English society of the same name, and developed a quasi religion and ritual of their own.

Seditious societies are such as by violent and unlawful means strive to attain ends which in themselves may be lawful. Under suspect societies we may place such as the Young Men's Christian Association, against whose activity Bishops were warned by a letter of the Holy Office dated November 5, 1920.

Any society of Catholics which endeavors to elude the lawful vigilance of ecclesiastical authority thereby falls under suspicion.

The Church positively recognises only those societies which have been erected or at least approved by herself. The erection of certain societies is reserved to the Holy See, which frequently empowers delegates by indult to erect them. Unless the contrary is expressly stated in the indult the exercise of such a privilege requires the consent of the local Ordinary. But the consent of the local Ordinary for the erection in any place of a religious house implies consent for the erection in that house or in the church annexed to it of a society which is not constituted after the manner of an organic corporation and which is peculiar to the religious Order to which the house belongs. The local Ordinaries have authority to erect associations whose erection has not been reserved to others by the Holy See. There are three kinds of *religious societies of laymen*.

Third Orders, like that of St. Francis, have for their primary object the promotion of a more perfect Christian life among their members. Pious Unions, such as the Society of St. Vincent of Paul and the Apostleship of Prayer, have for their object the exercise of certain works of piety or charity. The Code gives the name of Sodalties to those Pious Unions which are constituted after the manner of an organic corporation with presidents and officials. Sodalties erected for the increase of public worship are called by the Code Confraternities in the strict sense. Arch-confraternities have power to aggregate to themselves associations of the same kind.

Such institutions as these are so numerous in the Catholic Church that nobody can possibly belong to them all. It is desirable that each one should select one or two which are compatible with each other and to which he is attracted, and endeavor to practise the good works enjoined with as much fidelity and constancy as possible. He will thus, with the blessing of God, obtain the benefits which the Church had in view when she instituted these associations.

My brother, when thou seest a poor man behold in him a mirror of the Lord, and of His Mother.—St. Francis of Assisi.

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