

FEATURES OF THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

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MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET.

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiae causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.

Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.

April 4, 1900.

LEO XIII., Pope.



WEDNESDAY, JULY 2, 1924.

IRISH AFFAIRS

WE have given prominence this week to accounts of interviews between President Cosgrave and Sir James Craig and an American journalist, and our readers will gather from them a clear idea of the whole situation caused by the deadlock over the Boundary Question. Once more, the Prime Minister of the Six Counties wants to have a conference. He has had conferences until everybody concerned is tired of them; and every one of them was rendered futile by his determination to hold fast to the Nationalist territory which his recent persecution has made more insistent than ever that the rule of the Orangemen shall end. Sir James now evidently sees that the British are no longer either willing or able to evade the obligation accepted by themselves under the Treaty. The Chairman of the Boundary Commission has been appointed and is already on his way to England. The independent papers of England are backing the Free State in its just demands that the Treaty must be duly honored, and even Lord Birkenhead considers that he and his friends have had enough of Ulster bluster. From Mr. Cosgrave's remarks it is obvious that the Free State will have the whole Treaty or no Treaty, and he shows no disposition to give Sir James another opportunity to mark time, by agreeing to a useless conference.

The cables report that the British Government has sanctioned the demand made by the Free State for a separate representative at Washington. Indeed the Government could not do otherwise as it was expressly mentioned that Ireland's status should be equal to Canada's, and Canada, not altogether to the satisfaction of England and certain Imperial Jingoos, has already asserted her right to a plenipotentiary who shall look after her concerns without reference to the nominee of Downing Street. The same Jingoos view with small favor Ireland's attitude, and we have had some foolish articles on what they call the unfortunate tendencies of Irishmen to regard the Empire unfavorably. Irishmen have now their own ambassador, their own flag, their own postage stamps, and in a short time they will have their own currency. Our learned critics appear unable to recognise the fact that no Irish

patriot cares for the Empire, and that every Nationalist in the Free State views the Treaty as a step towards absolute independence. It was made quite clear to the whole world that the terms were only accepted as the best compromise available at the time, and that Griffith and Collins and the other Irish signatories held firmly that it was for them only a step forward in the march of the Nation. With few exceptions, all of us who support the Free State do so because the majority of the people stood by it; did the majority reject it we certainly should not hesitate to support them as we did before the Armistice; and we are just as certainly with the majority whom we know to be true to the ideal of complete and full freedom for Ireland. The followers of de Valera and Griffith divided on a question of means rather than of aims: Collins and those of us who stood by him considered that the acceptance of the Treaty was the best thing under the circumstances for the welfare of the Irish Nation, with full consideration of its aspirations for the future; de Valera and his friends rejected the Treaty because they were unable to see eye to eye with the majority; and, as far as the opinions of supporters of the Free State are concerned, it was not their ideals that were wrong but their methods. They have fortunately abandoned the tactics which were so costly for the country, and, although rather late in the day, they have decided that their cause is best promoted by constitutional methods. Many of them found their oath to the Republic an obstacle to entering the Dail Eireann, not choosing to interpret it as de Valera declared he must interpret it—namely, as an oath to do what was best for Ireland under the circumstances. Many who flocked to the Republican banner did it no great credit during the reign of terror, but among the leaders and in the rank and file were and are thousands of sincere Irishmen who were guided by their ideals as they saw them. Apart from the damage done to the Nation both materially and spiritually, the spirit of these men must help to keep alive and vigorous the common aspiration to full freedom; and their criticism and their watchfulness will certainly never allow the *Oireachtas* to become tainted with West British or Imperial notions.

England never had and has not now any right whatsoever to interfere with the government of Ireland. She is, for Irishmen, an unjust aggressor who, owing to circumstances, has been compelled to relax her grasp on the throat of Ireland. The Irish Nation belongs to the Irish people, and they will not cease to push forward on their march until Irish people alone have in their hands the fullest freedom to govern their own country, without consideration for the selfish interests of outsiders. Moreover, the two races are poles apart, in religion, in ideals, in traditions. Every true Irishman views British interference and British customs in somewhat the same way as he regards the filthy Sunday papers which are sent across the Irish Sea from Liverpool and Manchester. They are a nuisance of which Ireland will be rid at the earliest opportunity. And, as for the twaddle we have seen written concerning the substitution of the Irish tricolor for the Union Jack, Irishmen, while remembering how their flag was won and by what a victory it was consecrated, have no illusions whatever as to the flag of England. Lastly, Mr. Thomas has told us that he and his friends object to an Irish Republic. It does not matter. British Labor loaded the boats that brought arms for the Black-and-Tans to Ireland, but Ireland beat the Black-and-Tans; and the day will come when Labor or other Governments will be as powerless to deny Ireland her full rights as a Tory Government was to crush her.

A report on the Catholic schools of the Province of Quebec, the most Catholic province in Canada, shows that in the last eight years there has been an increase of over 80,000 pupils in the elementary schools.

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