

mitted during the early years of the first French Republic were directed rather against the dominant religion, and no attempt was made to destroy the Christian basis whereon French society was built. In Russia, on the contrary, the very foundation on which we stand are being torn up from beneath our feet, and there is no knowing what is below. The Bolsheviks, in their histories, speak with contempt of the French Revolution as merely a rebellion of the bourgeoisie against the aristocracy and their kind, and they speak with much greater contempt of the Cromwellian and Williamite revolutions as conflicts between the nobility and the country gentry on the one side and the sovereign on the other. They insist that their revolution is quite different, and they are right. It is quite different, for in no previous revolution was there such wholesale nationalisation and such an attack on the principle of private property and of the family. Who can foretell the result of this systematic attempt to destroy the religion which created our modern civilisation?

"Since the cutting of the Suez Canal gave the world an idea of the marvels which modern engineering can accomplish, all the rulers of the Nile Valley have exhibited a certain amount of nervousness with regard to the Sudan; and, I daresay, a great power in possession of the Sudan could, by diverting the course of the Nile, convert Egypt into a desert. In the same way the present very risky experiment which the Reds are carrying out on the Russian branch of the great river of religious truth which flows to us out of the past, may convert all Russia into a spiritual Sahara. And the disaster will not be spiritual only; it will affect every aspect of life in Russia. It will convert the vast empire of Muscovy not only into a desert but also into a plague-spot menacing all Europe and Asia.

"I lived in Russia six years, and I know that religion is a factor of enormous political importance there. You may be a Mohommedan, you may be a Hebrew, you may be an agnostic, but if, in considering the Russian question, you leave out of account the religion professed by about 80 or 90 million of the people, you are not a statesman.

"For the first time in European history we have the spectacle of a great nation being rapidly de-Christianised, being taught to repudiate the very essentials of Christianity. Some of the results are already visible, but though the horrors apparent in Bolshevism are very great, they are nothing to the horrors latent in it, or being only slowly revealed. We are, as it were, standing in front of a diabolical apparition whose face, the most dreadful part of it, is being slowly unveiled.

"Trotzky describes the Russian Government's plans for the break-up of the family as cold-bloodedly as if he were a keeper in the zoo talking about the mating of monkeys. In their plans for the abolition of the family, the Bolsheviks have not gone so far as has been reported; they have not established free love; but the tendency of their recent legislation on marriage and education is all in the direction of that most atrocious doctrine of radical communism, the doctrine that children belong absolutely to the State and must be handed over to the State. You will find a project of law on marriage and education in the organ of

the Commissariat of Justice. *The Weekly of Soviet Justice* it is called, dated September 13, 1923; and in the official *Izvestia* of May 26, last year, you will find an article by Kalinin, the President of the Union of Soviet Republics, dealing with the question of how to destroy the Christianity of the peasants, as if it were a question of extirpating locusts.

However, the abolition of the family is still a thing of the future. Let us come to a horror that has actually arrived. We sometimes forget that, till comparatively recent times, slavery was the normal condition of most men and women, not slavery in the metaphorical sense in which alone it is now used, but slavery in the literal sense of that dreadful word, the sense it had in pre-Christian times.

"It took Christianity a thousand years to abolish slavery, which it did at last, not indeed by direct decrees but rather by the creation of an atmosphere wherein slavery withered and finally died. Bolshevism has brought it back, and in some respects the slaves of the Soviet are worse off than the slaves of the ancient Romans, for the Roman slaves belonged mostly to individuals, whereas the Russian slaves belong to the State. Now, an individual has a heart, but a State has none, and this State which the Reds are building up is not only heartless, it has a poison-bag where the heart ought to be.

"Russian workmen cannot change their occupation. They cannot go on strike. They cannot form themselves into associations, except Communist associations. They are herded together like beasts. They are disgracefully underpaid. They cannot write to the newspapers, unless to praise the Government, because all the newspapers are Government property. If they agitate against the Government—which, by a cruel irony, calls itself 'the Government of the Poor and the Oppressed'—they are denounced as enemies of the revolution, hirelings of the capitalists, and, in extreme cases, are imprisoned or shot without mercy. Only a month or so ago there was a great strike of transport workers in Petrograd, but the meetings of the strikers were broken up by the troops and all the leaders arrested. In March, 1919, the workers at Astrakhan went on strike owing to insufferable economic conditions and non-payment of wages; hundreds of these were shot down or drowned in the Volga. I could give you scores of instances like this. The Soviet Government always takes the same position. It says: 'We are the Workers' Republic. We are the Revolution personified. How dare you oppose the immutable decision of the workers? How dare you raise your hand against the Revolution?'

"The workers might have something to say to this, but they are not allowed to say it or to print it. And, mark you, the majority of the workmen are now anti-Bolshevist, but as they are unarmed, while the Bolshevik workmen are well armed and drilled and are supported, moreover, by an army which is quite loyal to the Soviet which feeds it well, there is no chance of the non-Bolshevist workmen overthrowing the Government.

"Gentlemen, this whole Russian business is an awful instance of the tyranny of words. This junta of desperate men who have, most of them, nothing in common with the Rus-

sian workmen, has only to call itself 'the Workers' Republic' and a large number of well-intentioned enthusiasts throughout the world throw up their hats and cheer."

A POPULAR RAILWAY OFFICIAL

MR. M. MILLER HONORED.

A large and representative gathering of some 80 Invercargill railwaymen met in the Federal rooms last evening (says the *Southland Times* for February 27) to bid farewell to Mr. M. Miller, who for the past five years has held the office of stationmaster at Invercargill. The evening took the form of a smoke concert, Mr. S. C. Doyle, traffic clerk, presiding, and a very pleasant time was spent, the enthusiasm of the many speakers testifying to the popularity of the retiring officer.

The Chairman, in briefly opening the function, said he was sorry to think that their guest had "done in" his 40 years. He did not have the pleasure of a long acquaintance with Mr. Miller, but he had always found him a thorough gentleman and a most courteous and efficient officer.

Mr. A. Gee, in proposing the toast of "The Management," referred to the excellent relations which had always existed between management and staff in Invercargill, a factor that had contributed greatly to the success of local Departmental work.

Messrs. R. P. Gillies and J. Barnett responded to the toast.

Mr. W. Hartley proposed the toast of "Kindred Societies," and said that he hoped that in the future relations would continue to be as pleasant as in the past.

Messrs. J. Sheehan and E. Fogarty replied to the toast in suitable terms.

PRESENTATION TO THE GUEST.

The Chairman, in presenting to Mr. Miller a very handsome hall clock, suitably engraved, and a full dinner set, which he asked the guest of honor to accept on behalf of Mrs. Miller, said that Mr. Miller had been stationed in Invercargill for five years. He was an excellent officer and a thorough gentleman. He felt sure that everyone present would join with him in wishing Mr. Miller a long and happy retirement.

Mr. W. Hartley supplemented the remarks of the previous speaker by saying that it was doubtful if Invercargill would ever have a better man in the position Mr. Miller had held. He hoped that their guest would be long spared to enjoy the benefits of superannuation.

Messrs. J. Patterson, J. Sheehan, R. Burrell, E. Newman, R. Hayles, J. Shepherd, T. A. Hansen, W. Smith, F. Airey, W. Swale, P. Edmonds, T. J. Bell, C. Jenkins, T. Kelly, R. A. Rammage, L. Whelan, W. Gorinski, E. Fogarty, and T. J. Donovan all endorsed the previous speakers' remarks, and on behalf of the various departments.

Mr. Miller, in a happy and typical speech, thanked the large gathering for their kind good wishes. He felt he could not do better than review his career with the Department. "I was feeling a little blue when I came here this evening," he said, "but your farewell has been so kindly that I have completely recovered." Mr. Miller continued that he first entered the service at Port Chalmers, where he was stationed for five years, and in 1893 he was promoted to a chief clerkship at Westport. He then spent some years at