

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 promoveri per vias Veritatis et Pacis.

LEO XIII, P.M.

Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

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.

The New Zealand Tablet

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1925.

PROGRESS IN IRELAND

THE answer to the question, How does Ireland stand? varies nowadays according to the political views of the person who undertakes to furnish the information. "Die-Hard" organs, such as the *Morning Post* and the *National Review* have no good word to say for Irish Catholics or Nationalists, past, present, or future; the de Valeraites have told us consistently for the past three years that the Government could not last another month; and American visitors, as a rule, return favorably impressed with the prospects of the country and the activities of the Executive. Amid such a diversity of views, one welcomes a statement which gives an array of plain facts on the evidence of which the man of no party may form for himself a reasonable opinion. Such a statement was made recently by Mr. O'Higgins, Minister for Justice, who reviewed in detail the progress made during the three years which have elapsed since himself and his colleagues took office.

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He attacks the pessimists who "putting a stethoscope to the country's breast deliver a grave diagnosis." "The country is very sick," they say, "what she needs to cure her is war with England, or war with the North-East of Ireland." He asserts that she is not sick, but convalescent, mentally, morally, and physically; and that what she needs most is peace and hard work. The luxury of a civil war cannot be enjoyed by any nation without unfavorable reactions, but he protests that the people who attacked the Free State in its infancy ought to be the last to blame it for not being more robust at three years of age. There is, in Ireland as everywhere, a degree of economic depression; there is a

degree of unemployment; and some young people are leaving the land of their birth. But that is not as grave as in neighboring countries, and it would not be as bad as it is "if some people had more practical patriotism and less bull-headed fanaticism." The Government recognises that the remedy lies in settled conditions, enterprise, and hard work, and that the cure suggested by those who want war is as futile as taking strychnine for a toothache. "Let us," he says, "get done with fooling, and get on with the work"—a sentence that sounds like a voice from the grave, for such was the call ever on the lips of Michael Collins during the last months of his life. As to how the Government is practising what it preaches, he explains that order has been restored and confidence established by the peaceful conditions of Ireland at present. Moreover, among the steps taken to promote prosperity, a dead meat factory is shortly to be erected in Waterford to remove the losses entailed in sending live cattle to English markets, as was done for so many years past. In Carlow a beet sugar plant is to be set up immediately, and it will be completed in time to receive the crop for the coming year. Other counties are waiting for the results of this enterprise, and it is reasonable to expect that many more plants of the same kind will arise in the near future. The Government recognises that Ireland is an agricultural country, and that the farmers are the backbone of national well-being. Hence it is anxious to lay carefully and scientifically the foundations of agricultural prosperity; and the framework has been provided by the Land Act of 1923, the Live Stock Breeding Act, and the Egg Act, which, with the organised co-operation of the farmers, ought to result in a speedy improvement in their conditions. To complete the land purchase, to standardise agricultural produce, to enable the farmer to maintain the supply of a consistently good article to the English markets, and thus to withstand competition from the Continent, has been the aim of the Ministry for Agriculture. The farmers must be made realise that better methods and better organisation are necessary to hold markets that are threatened by trained rivals in other lands; and the Department of Agriculture regards it as its chief function to teach such methods and to establish such organisation. The Cabinet has not confined its attention to the agricultural districts. After the war the cost of building had become almost prohibitive. To effect a revival the Government offered to undertake two-thirds of the cost of housing schemes initiated by municipal authorities, and the results have been encouraging, many thousands of houses being already built, while applications for thousands more are pouring in constantly. Rapid progress has been made in improving the roads, and there is general satisfaction with the way in which the work has been carried out. Between September 1923 and September 1925 upwards of £2,500,000 have been spent on the roads, whereas between 1909 and 1922 the amount spent by the British Government for the same purpose in Ireland was only £700,000. The work of drainage was also carried out in many dis-

tricts, and during the past summer in twenty-seven such districts 2750 men were employed on this task. Irish engineers are at present busy in Dublin working out a scheme for the draining of the Barrow.

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Mr. O'Higgins claims that his brief stock-taking is evidence that the Government has not been idle for the three years of its existence. It was much hampered not only by criticism but by armed opposition. Funds had to be found for other purposes, and the expenditure necessitated by certain events had limited the resources available for reconstruction. "I claim," he said, "on behalf of the Government that its three years' stewardship will stand the closest examination. In patient toil we have carried our bricks to the structure, rearing from the chaos of 1922 the ordered State fabric of 1925. We have fulfilled our trust. I believe I see as well as any distinguished visitor such social and economic evils as exist in the State. Not one of them exists in greater measure than three years ago, two years ago, or last year. On the contrary enterprise and development are in the air. We have passed out of the ravines. The people know their own country and can make what they will of it. No amount of cant about midnight treaties can alter that. It is my faith in the new spirit that is abroad that causes me to raise my voice in emphatic dissent from the verdict of the pessimists." Mr. O'Higgins is an able Irishman, and a tireless worker. He is certainly in a position to speak with authority on what has been done; for few men have had a larger share in the doing.

CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' JUBILEE

Old Boys of the Christian Brothers' Schools, Dunedin, will be glad to learn that preparations are in train at present for the worthy celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the arrival of the Brothers in New Zealand, whither they were brought fifty years ago next April by Bishop Moran. There is no need to remind past pupils of what the Brothers have done during these years: none know it better than they who have been educated in our Dunedin Catholic schools. They all, without exception, look back with gratitude to their old teachers; and, all over New Zealand, are now delighted to have an opportunity of marking their appreciation for the past by making the Jubilee celebrations eloquent of their gratitude. From this note, which is suggested by a successful meeting of the Dunedin Old Boys, held on Sunday evening, past pupils all through the Dominion will learn that the date appointed is the Easter of next year. It is certain that there will be a great gathering for the event, and this timely notice may help visitors to combine the Jubilee with the Exhibition. We understand that a programme already drafted for the celebrations meets with general approval, and it is anticipated that while the function will mark as a red letter day the fiftieth anniversary of the coming of the Brothers, it will also serve as a pleasant reunion of the Old Boys who went forth during the half century.