

IRISH FUND

The following circular letter has been sent to his clergy by the Archbishop of Wellington:—

Archbishop's House,
Wellington, December 12, 1919.

Dear Rev. Father,—I have just received from his Grace Archbishop Mannix a letter reminding the delegates to the late Irish-Race Convention how desirable it is to have immediate action taken in every diocese to honor the pledge of that Convention.

The success of that great Irish gathering is on everybody's lips, and the lesson it taught will not soon be forgotten by friend or foe.

But the work is only half completed. The delegates who filled the Auditorium spoke for the Irish race in the Commonwealth and in the Dominion of New Zealand. No uncertain message did they send to Ireland and to Ireland's chosen leader, Eamon de Valera, but they also passed, with equal unanimity and enthusiasm, the following resolution, while they pledged Australia and New Zealand to give effect to it:—

"That an Australasian Fund be opened to help the people of Ireland to press to a successful issue their legitimate claim to self-determination. That the Archbishop of Melbourne, the Hon. John Meagher, Bathurst, New South Wales, and Count O'Loughlin, K.C.S.G., Victoria, be treasurers of the fund, and that the Dominion of New Zealand and the States of the Commonwealth be invited to organise local efforts in support of a Central Fund."

It now devolves on us to carry out that resolution, and by a systematic effort to make the Australasian-Irish Fund worthy of the Convention and of the cause. Each State will organise its own fund, with its own treasurers; the Dominion of New Zealand will do likewise, and all the local funds will be transmitted as early as possible to the three treasurers appointed by the Convention, as the trustees of the Australasian Central Fund.

It has been suggested that the most convenient way of giving the people an opportunity of supporting the Convention appeal would be that each Bishop should invite his own priests to organise parish collections. The various societies which were represented at the Convention would, I am sure, gladly undertake to make a personal appeal to all those who are in sympathy with Ireland's aims. I desire myself to act on that suggestion, and I, therefore, ask you to be good enough to organise a local committee to solicit contributions within your own parish. The people are only waiting for an opportunity to honor the pledge of the Convention, and the sooner that opportunity is given them the better. It is most desirable that, so far as possible, all contributions should reach the Central Fund by the end of February next.

There will, I trust, be a healthy rivalry in a good cause between the different States and dioceses and parishes.

I feel sure that New Zealand will do her part nobly to make the Irish Fund a great success, and I confidently rely upon priests and people to be prompt and generous, as they have always been, in the hour of Ireland's need.

I am, Rev. Dear Father,

Sincerely yours,

* FRANCIS REDWOOD, S.M.,
Archbishop of Wellington.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

As we were absent until after Christmas, and as no mail was sent to us while away, we take this occasion to thank our numerous friends for their good wishes and kind messages during the past two weeks, and to wish to every one of them a New Year rich with peace and blessings. We thank all *Tablet* readers for their loyal support in the past, and it is a compliment to them to say that we feel we may count on it in the future. It is not at all unlikely that we shall want it, and that we shall all need to stand fast together.

The Editor regrets that he has been unable to deal personally with a great number of letters addressed to this column during his absence. On looking through the innumerable communications awaiting him, he found that in nearly all cases the questions had an actual interest about election time, and that there is nothing to gain by going back over them now. If any letters that needed an answer were mislaid, the Editor hopes that the writers will be considerate enough to remember that there was an accumulated mass of letters, papers, and MSS. dating back over two months to be dealt with, and that some things may have found their way into the W.P.B. which did not belong there.

D.B.—Letter received; thanks for enclosed verses. A Happy New Year to you.

Inquire.—Yes, it is not unusual to grant a dispensation from abstinence from meat on occasions on which a large number of people might suffer considerable inconvenience if no dispensation were granted.

P.J.M.—To tell the truth, we did not worry about the Prohibition vote at all. Like most people, we took it too easy. Of course, it is a woman's vote, speaking generally. The voting of the soldiers last April revealed that fact. It does seem a strange thing after that revelation that the men of this Dominion should so tamely submit to be governed by women. No matter what pledges we get, no matter what other people say, we would never for a moment consent to put it in the power of politicians to control the right of a priest to celebrate Mass. As for the attacks made on us by the person whom you mention, we only laughed at them and him. They supplied their own best answer and were beneath contempt. They were exactly what we should have expected from that quarter. The only Dry District mentioned in the Bible (as far as we remember) is Hell. And from all accounts Dry Districts in the United States are a rather fair imitation of the original. Our Lord and Master made wine and gave it to others to drink. That is surely good enough for ordinary Catholics to go on with. No doubt, did He live to-day, Prohibitionists would denounce Him as they denounced Cardinal Gibbons. Archbishop Ireland was decidedly not a Prohibitionist. In the volume he published as containing his mature opinion on questions of the day, he said clearly that right reason and religion prevented him from having anything to do with the extremists, and he made it clear that his strictures on saloons referred to the abominations peculiar to America. No second-hand Prohibition quotation is of any value against the first-rate evidence of the book to which he put his name, with the assurance that it contained his deliberate opinions.

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