

HIBERNIANS IN CONFERENCE

The affairs of Ireland were the subject of discussion at the commencement of the Dominion conference of the Hibernian Society, opened in Christchurch last week. The matter was brought up while the place of honor was occupied by the Mayor (Dr. Thacker, M.P.), who attended the conference to accord the delegates a civic welcome.

"I wish to indulge in no perfervid Irish oratory, but I will quote to you three English opinions," said Bro. M. J. Sheahan (district treasurer), introducing the subject. "I will tell you what has been said by Lord Robert Cecil, a well-known Tory, the Liberal leader, Mr. Asquith, and the Labor leader, Mr. Arthur Henderson. Lord Robert Cecil said: 'I do not believe anything has ever happened, in my recollection, which has been worse than what has been done. It seems to me the worst possible course that any Government could pursue. A Frenchman said to me at Geneva, "We are simply amazed. We do not understand what you are doing in allowing your armed forces to commit crime." We have not yet seen the result of that terrible mistake. It is not only that we have lost our reputation in foreign countries, though that is serious enough, but the harm which is being done in our own Empire. It is going to effect us. If we have to face difficult times in this country this is going to act in a hundred ways.' The Liberal leader, Mr. Asquith, speaking of the Government's work in Ireland, termed it 'the hellish policy of reprisals.' Mr. Arthur Henderson said at Birmingham: 'The British Government in Ireland has completely broken down. I go further, and claim that even the military measures have equally failed. We can find no parallel in the treatment of Ireland in the modern history of any democratic country. It is a policy of Hunnishness not surpassed in the days of the great war. In comparison with some of the exploits of the Government agents in Ireland, the slaughtering of Cromwell appeared to be mild and reasonable. Life was safer in Brussels during the occupation of Germany than it is in Cork, Limerick, or Tipperary. The policy of terrorism is increasing in intensity and maddened ferocity.'"

Bro. Sheahan moved:—

(1) That, in common with the overwhelming mass of the Irish people of various faiths, with representative English Liberals, Unionists and Laborites, with prominent English journals, with the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, and with seventeen Episcopal leaders of the Established Church in England, this New Zealand district meeting of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society records its solemn protest against the regime of militarist oppression and crime which has brought such bitter woe upon Ireland.

(2) That this meeting, furthermore, strongly affirms the just and inalienable right of the Irish people to control their own affairs.

(3) That copies of these resolutions be sent to the Prime Ministers of New Zealand and England, and to the Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh.

The statements quoted, coming from Englishmen said Bro. Sheahan, were proof of public opinion regarding matters in Ireland. It became the society to enter a protest against the way the Irish were being treated. In entering that protest they were simply doing their duty, not only to Ireland, but also to the commonwealth of nations. He had the greatest pleasure in submitting the resolution.

Bro. Michael Walsh, of Wellington, seconded the motion. "It is with a full sense of sadness that I rise to do this," he said, "and I sincerely hope that this will be the means of obliterating a motion moved at Auckland some six years ago. It is staggering to me to think that we as a body have not moved along these lines before. I sincerely hope that in the future this society will be the first in the van. We ask for Ireland that measure of justice that is due to her. You know the history of Ireland, and do you think that we, as descendants of the Irish people, will accept charity from the English people? We were told that we fought

the war for the liberty of small nations. We fought for self-government by constitutional means, and we were refused it. It is a mockery to quote any statement coming from an Englishman, because they are not serious. The Hibernian Society was formed to protect Irish people, and we have got to make Ireland the fight all the time." What were they going to do in the future if they were not going to stand for the cause of the Irish people? Did they think their mothers and fathers left Ireland with light hearts. No! They left everything dear to them to build up a heritage for their children in New Zealand. He appealed to them, if at any time there was on an executive any Irishman who was not playing the game to Ireland, to get to the back of the cause and see that he did play the game.

Bro. Burke suggested that a copy also be sent to the President of the United States. Ireland had practically been challenged to show what was the opinion in the Dominions of the treatment of Ireland by England.

Bro. M. F. Cooney (Timaru) suggested that the protest should go to de Valera also. England had plenty of money for propaganda, and they all knew of the lies that were being issued. He seconded the amendment.

Bro. H. McKeowen (Greymouth) asserted that it was no use sending the resolution to Lloyd George or Mr. Massey as they would only go into the waste-paper basket. There was only one man they should be sent to, and that was Winston Churchill, the newly-appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies.

"We have got into a rather serious vein," said the Mayor (Dr. Thacker), whose remarks bisected those of the last speaker, the Mayor having to depart in order to fulfil another engagement. "It is even getting a bit volcanic. I would have liked to have stayed to hear the debate, but I might have taken part in it, and then people would have said, 'Dr. Thacker is off the lines again.'"

The resolution was unanimously carried, and it was agreed to accept Bro. Burke's amendment.

A motion of appreciation of Dr. Kelly's work as Editor of the *New Zealand Tablet*, was also carried. Bro. Walsh said that Dr. Kelly had "nailed the Irish flag to the mast."

RE-OPENING OF CHURCH AT KARIKARI.

During the latter half of 1919 the Catholic Church at Karikari was removed to its present locality, Tahu-whakatiki, at an expenditure of over £200. The work was creditably performed by Mr. H. J. Vickery assisted by Matatia, Paoro te Kirikau, Taite, Wepiha, Charles Blake, J. Condon and others, whilst the painting, both inside and outside the church, was tastefully done by Mr. J. Mackay. Because of the many Maori gatherings, both here and in other places, the re-opening of the church had to be postponed until Easter Sunday of the present year, when the Very Rev. Dean Lighthouse, assisted by Fathers Holierhoek and Westeinde, solemnly blessed the church in the presence of a great gathering of Maoris and Europeans. The day was an ideal one. Great, too, were the preparations made by the local Maoris, who, in a most lavish and hospitable manner, entertained several hundreds of guests. In the matter of generosity the non-Catholic Maoris outdid by far the Catholic Maoris. The total sum collected for the rebuilding of the church and for the entertaining of visitors amounted to no less than £280 from all sources. Special thanks are due to the Very Rev. Dean Lighthouse, of Rotorua, who delivered in Maori a most eloquent sermon appropriate for the occasion; to John Marara, Paoro te Kirikau and Miss Lundon for the training of the children, whose beautiful singing, in Maori and Latin, was a revelation to all who heard them. A final word of thanks is also due to Henare Werohia, the secretary, also to Mr. J. Bidois, and the energetic committee who by hard and persevering work have made the latest Maori gathering one of the most pleasing and successful ones held for many a day.