

Irish Race Convention: Miss Jessie Mackay's Departure

(Contributed.)

Miss Jessie Mackay, of Christchurch, who was selected as one of the New Zealand delegates to the Irish Race Convention at Dublin or Paris, commencing on January 21, 1922, arrived in Wellington by the ferry steamer on the morning of Sunday, 13th ult. She was met on behalf of the executive of the Self-Determination League by Mr. P. J. O'Regan (President) and Mrs. T. J. Bourke and Miss Eileen Duggan, and during her stay in Wellington Miss Mackay was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Duggan, of Wellington South.

Miss Mackay was formally presented with her credentials at the Hibernian Rooms, Willis Street, on the evening of Monday, 14th. Members of the National Executive, the Wellington Provincial Executive, the Hutt branch, and the ladies' committee of the League being present. Mr. O'Regan in the course of a short speech said that though they all felt New Zealand would be worthily represented at the convention by the three delegates selected, yet the appointment of Miss Mackay was peculiarly appropriate. A New Zealander by birth, of Scottish (Highland) extraction, Miss Mackay had endeared herself to the friends of Ireland in New Zealand by her splendid advocacy of Ireland's cause in the columns of a press that was by no means friendly. There were many ties between Scotland and Ireland, and it was a historic fact that a gallant Scotchman, Sir Ralph Abercromby, had refused to impose the brutalities of martial law upon the people of Ireland in 1798. Miss Mackay's advocacy of the cause of self-determination for Ireland was not something of yesterday, but those who were familiar with her writings in the press knew that for years past she had maintained the right of the Irish people to govern themselves according to their national traditions and sentiments, and she had evinced not only close acquaintance with the history of Ireland, but with the principles underlying the Irish demand. Accordingly, it was peculiarly appropriate that she should have been selected spontaneously and with enthusiasm as one of New Zealand's delegates to the pending convention. As for the deliberations of that convention they all felt that it was not for the people of this or any other country to dictate to the people of Ireland in the matter of their own government, and whether they insisted on complete independence or would accept a compromise falling short of that ideal was a matter entirely for themselves and not for us. He had much pleasure in presenting Miss Mackay with her credentials showing that she was one of the duly accredited representatives to attend the convention on behalf of the friends of Ireland in New Zealand. (Applause).

Miss Mackay, in the course of a brief speech, expressed her thanks for the honor conferred upon her, an honor she had never thought of when time after time she took up her pen on behalf of Ireland. She had first become interested in Ireland by reading her ballads and later her history. Years ago she had named her "The Woman of Nations," and so she styled her still. She felt confident, however, that a better day was dawning, that prejudices and misunderstandings would pass away, and that Ireland would come into her own as one of the nations of the earth. They could rely that according to her ability she would do her best to prove worthy of the honor conferred upon her as one of New Zealand's representatives at the coming Convention. (Applause.)

Miss Mackay took her departure from New Zealand in the Remuera, which sailed from Wellington for England via Panama on the 15th ult. A number of friends and sympathisers attended at the wharf and bade her farewell.

MISS MACKAY'S EXPENSES.

In connection with the representation of New Zealand at the coming Irish Race Convention, Mr. P. J. O'Regan, president of the Self-Determination for Ireland League of New Zealand, authorises us to state that at the national convention held at Wellington in October last, it was determined to raise the sum of £600, the estimated amount to defray Miss Jessie Mackay's expenses, each Provincial Council contributing not less than £100. At the date of

Miss Mackay's departure from New Zealand, not more than half the required sum had come in, but six members of the Wellington executive immediately provided £50 each in anticipation of the fund being fully subscribed in due course, and accordingly Miss Mackay was presented with the full amount prior to her sailing on the 15th ult. The following payments are acknowledged:—

Wellington Provincial Council (out of moneys in hand), £100; North Canterbury Provincial Council, £100; Otago Provincial Council, £100; New Plymouth branch, £25; Raetihi branch, £22 17s; Blenheim branch (on account), £16; Ohakune branch, £10; Petone branch, £9; total, £382 17s.

Since writing the foregoing statement, Mr. O'Regan advises us of the receipt of the Westland Council's quota of £100.

The Irish Settlement

Directly the news arrived of the Irish settlement, steps were taken to convene a meeting of the National Executive of the Self-Determination League of New Zealand. Accordingly the executive met on Thursday evening, and subsequently the president, Mr. P. J. O'Regan, made the following statement:—

We rejoice most heartily at the great reconciliation between the two nations. On the terms of the Treaty we have no comment to offer. It is enough for us that they have been accepted by the chosen representatives of the people of Ireland, inasmuch as we have complete confidence in the courage and capacity of the men in whom the nation has repeatedly and emphatically declared its trust.

The result is a complete answer to Ireland's defamers and a lasting vindication of her persistence in maintaining through eight centuries a continuous and wearied struggle. Britain has now given her unreserved approval of the cause which has inspired Ireland's martyred dead, in defence of which her sons, even in our day, have willingly laid down their lives.

We would point out that the Treaty now arrived at goes much further than the measure of self-government which a few years since was met with threats of armed resistance. Assuredly it must be regarded as a matter for deep regret that the bloodshed and ill-will incurred since that time might easily have been averted.

Now that, responding to the deep-seated desire of the people of Britain, the British Government has met the national aspirations of the people of Ireland, we feel assured that the two nations will henceforth give the world a continuous and conspicuous example of brotherhood and goodwill. Accordingly, we join with the rest of our fellow citizens in rejoicing at the conclusion of the historic struggle.

We propose at an early date to afford an opportunity to the friends of Ireland in this country suitably to commemorate the great event.

Sacred Heart Girls' College

The following pupils of the Sacred Heart Girls' College (Sisters of the Missions), Ferry Road, Christchurch, were successful in passing their examinations in Pitman's shorthand:—Pitman's speed examinations (eighty words per minute): Irene Ashton, Mercy Cook, Lena Keane; fifty words per minute: Doris Blyth, Rita Corbett, Eileen Gartly, Ena Gillespie, Vera Kiely, Kathleen Leahym, Kathleen Mahoney, Sara McCartin, Madge O'Malley, Rima Pope, Olive Price, Melba Tulloch; pitman's theoretical examination: Maureen Cuneen (first), Edith Clarke (second), Ena Jackson (third), Agnes Clarke, Margaret Fahey, Madeline Kennedy, Vera Kiely, Grace Smith; Pitman's elementary examination: Dorothy Overtqn. At the recent standard VI. examination held at the Sacred Heart College, the Sisters of the Missions' Christchurch schools presented 36 candidates, of whom 34 secured proficiency certificates and one competency.

The tongue of the slanderer is what St. James terms it, a raging fire which scorches all within its reach, turns its fury against the good and the bad, leaving behind it ruin and desolation. It feeds with delight on what is most sacred and secret, destroys what is most solid, and blackens what it cannot consume.