

which he later had printed as a pamphlet.<sup>4</sup> The jury, all Protestant, was persuaded to bring in a verdict of 'Not Guilty'. On the eve of the trial he noted in his diary, '[I] am certain that no other counsel would take the line I contemplate — of insisting that the Bp. rightly called the Black and Tans murderers and that he was amply entitled to use the term "glorious Easter" in reference to the 1916 rising in Dublin'.<sup>5</sup> The case was O'Regan's most public success and brought him great satisfaction. No apology had been offered to the enemies of Ireland and of free speech. With the Irish issue apparently solved by the Anglo-Irish treaty, O'Regan was content to leave the future political complexion of that country to the Irish themselves. When the Irish Self-Determination League in Wellington folded in 1922 he wrote, 'In one way I am pleased the rationale for the League's existence is about to end for [the] one reason that we have enough to do with our own affairs in this ass-ridden country.'<sup>6</sup>

O'Regan failed in his repeated attempts from 1919-22 to bring the Liberal and Labour parties to an electoral accord. Based on the promised passage of a measure of proportional representation, the plan was to avoid vote-splitting in favour of the Reform Party. 'Our object . . . is to arrange a working understanding as between Liberal and Labour—in which Massey and his crowd of Tory crooks and mediocrities will be completely wiped off the board'.<sup>7</sup> He was more successful in influencing a hesitant Catholic leadership to view more kindly the emergent Labour Party. Opposition to conscription and sectarianism, and support of electoral reform and Irish self-determination had brought the two groups together, with O'Regan providing a crucial personal link. His letters denouncing Masseyism appeared in both the *Maoriland Worker* and the *New Zealand Tablet*. The Catholic hierarchy had been coldly unsympathetic to Labour before the war. By 1922 Archbishop O'Shea and Bishop Liston were rejoicing in the party's advances. O'Regan and Liston exchanged telegrams of congratulations in December 1922 after the Labour Party's success in the general elections.<sup>8</sup> 'How I long to be in the political fray!' he wrote as the news of the Reform losses arrived in December 1922.<sup>9</sup>

The historian will appreciate the perceptive shafts which O'Regan aimed in his diary at the political personalities of his day and especially at his colleagues in the legal profession. The student of New Zealand sectarianism will also value the glimpses afforded by his papers of Catholic political turmoil beneath the surface unanimity of the hierarchy.<sup>10</sup>

Promotion to the Supreme Court bench in 1937 as Judge of the Arbitration Court removed O'Regan from active participation in political life, but his diaries lost none of their pungency. The appointment came, appropriately, under the new Labour Government. The deposit of his papers in the Alexander Turnbull Library will surely