

The resolution was put by the Mayor and carried with extraordinary enthusiasm.

#### MR. DEVLIN'S SPEECH.

Then Mr. Devlin rose to speak. He is an animated personage in conversing. On the platform he is another person altogether. He is the personification of sincerity, and fairly teems with the cause he has at heart. It was this zeal and earnestness in the man that won him the sympathy of his great audience. This morning I spoke to a gentleman of great attainments. He is one whose sympathies are certainly not Irish, and he went to the meeting with his mind, if anything, against Home Rule. He came away powerfully impressed with the sincerity of the advocate, and described the address as something far surpassing anything of its kind ever heard in this country. This is the general opinion.

The speaker on rising received an ovation. He appealed to the instructive love of liberty in the breasts of his audience, and in this was the strength of his appeal. In dealing with the contention that Home Rule meant Rome Rule and in exposing the fallacy of such an argument he was particularly strong; the facts he adduced of Protestant members being returned by constituencies for the most part Catholic were convincing arguments, and the mixed audience were satisfied that the cry of Rome Rule was, to use the words of the advocate himself, a grey-haired calumny. Mr. Devlin expressed his deep and warm obligations to the meeting for the public spirit and devotion to the cause that inspired them to assemble there that night to lend their sympathy to Ireland struggling to be free, and he especially thanked the Premier for his courage and for his imperial political sagacity for lending the prestige of his high position and the force of his political wisdom to the adjustment of a great question, vital not only to Ireland but to the Empire, and all that made for its solidarity and its glory. He came not only as an Irish envoy, but as the representative of the

#### Most Powerful Democratic Party

that ever stood for social progress on the floor of the British House of Commons. The Irish Party had been instrumental in placing on the Statute Book some of the most beneficent measures for the toilers of the Old Land. He was there that night to plead for Home Rule, for an Ireland for the Irish, just as there was a New Zealand for the New Zealanders. He quoted from the Blue Books to show that the population of Ireland was fast ebbing away—that population which was the greatest asset of any nation. The most alarming feature of the tide of emigration was that 95 per cent. of the emigrants were from twelve to forty-five years of age. It was the young, the powerful, and the virile that were going from the shores of Erin. He reminded them of the fact 80,000 Irish peasants were compelled, by the conditions obtaining in the land, to live in hovels that were not to be compared to the dog kennels of the landlords. He then referred to the alarming increase of lunacy, cancer, and consumption, an increase proved to be due to the wretched conditions of life as the result of misgovernment. He next dealt with the question of taxation. Ireland with a population of nine millions contributed two millions to the Imperial Exchequer, while now, with a population half as large, she contributed ten millions. It was said Ireland was disloyal, and why? He had travelled throughout many parts of the Empire, and everywhere he found loyalty prevailed where there was self-government; surely the conclusion was that if Ireland were disloyal, and he did not admit the fact, it was because the right of self-government was denied her. Mr. Devlin next dealt with the sectarian cry of Rome Rule, and he quite exploded the old theory. His reference to the Protestant leaders of Ireland fairly brought down the house, and when he spoke of the pictures of Our Lady and the Protestant patriot, Robert Emmet, being hung side by side in the Irish homes he scored a point perhaps the most telling of his speech. His appeal for the preservation of the last remnants of a noble race fell on sympathetic ears, and then he closed his brilliant, powerful, and touching address with the firm hope that the next envoy to these shores would bring the message of Ireland's freedom. There would be waited across the seas a message as sweet as the tones of the Vesper bell summoning the people to prayer in the peaceful places in Ireland.

After an address lasting for an hour and thirty-five minutes Mr. Devlin resumed his seat amidst loud and prolonged applause.

Mr. P. J. O'Regan reminded those present that members of the Imperial Parliament received no emolu-

ments. They were supported by their followers. He was therefore to announce the collection. The Parliament of Great Britain, he continued, could not fail to grant to the Irish people what it had granted almost unasked to the South African Dutch. He then read a list of contributions already received totalling over £230.

The collectors then proceeded to canvass the assemblage, and a liberal response was made. It is expected that the total result will be somewhere between £400 and £500. Donations are still coming in.

#### OTHER SPEECHES.

The Premier said that although not one of the chosen speakers for that evening he was there as a New Zealand citizen to join in showing their appreciation of the great work being done by Mr. Devlin—the splendid Irish envoy, who had just charmed them all with his eloquent speech. For oratorical ability, descriptive power, and sympathetic appeal and force he felt he was right in saying that they had never heard a better speech in any part of this country. The reason they recognised that was because he spoke from his heart, and that he was voicing the sentiments not only of his own country but of many millions of people outside Ireland, who believed that the present system of ruling Ireland must be changed. We in New Zealand recognised that we were in a free land—a free people in the true sense of the word. We were impressed more than he could indicate with the fact that the solidarity of the Empire, the knitting together of every part of it was absolutely essential for its preservation from the attacks of dominant powers, which did not see eye to eye with England, Scotland, or Ireland. He desired to announce for the first time that the Government of New Zealand had just concluded a reciprocal treaty with the recently created self-governing colonies in South Africa. He moved a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Devlin. Apart altogether from the cause the speech was an intellectual treat.

Sir Joseph, who spoke splendidly, received great applause. The vote was carried amidst cheers.

His Grace Archbishop Redwood spoke to the motion in an eloquent and forceful speech that was punctuated with loud applause. He referred in appreciative terms to the earnestness and invincible arguments of Mr. Devlin's address. It seemed inconceivable that any man without prejudice could hear these arguments and not be a firm believer in the cause of Home Rule. Mr. Devlin was raising a great force of public opinion that must one day, and soon, carry Home Rule for Ireland. He believed, as he hoped, that the grand triumph was near at hand.

Mr. Devlin made a most feeling reply. He moved a vote of thanks to the Mayor, the Premier, and Archbishop Redwood for lending to the movement the prestige of their high position. He hoped that this free and beautiful land so prosperous to-day would have a continuance of its wonderful progress.

The singing of the National Anthem closed a meeting that may, without the slightest exaggeration, be described as the most enthusiastic ever held in this city.

Mr. Devlin left this morning for Rotorua.

#### MR. DONOVAN'S ARRIVAL.

Mr. Donovan, Mr. Devlin's colleague, leaves Hobart for the Bluff on January 4.

#### Mr. Devlin and the Hibernian Society

During his stay in Christchurch (writes our own correspondent) Mr. J. Devlin, M.P., was taken for a drive by the members of the St. Patrick's branch of the H.A.C.B. Society. The party accompanying Mr. Devlin were Rev. Father O'Connell (chaplain of the branch), Rev. Father Hyland (representing the Kaiapoi branch), Mr. Gibbons, of Melbourne, Bro. McVeigh (New Headford), Bro. Riordan (Leeston), Bros. Sellars, Dineen, and Doolan (president, vice-president, and secretary respectively of the St. Patrick's branch), Bros. P. Burke, R. O'Brien, T. O'Connell, sen., Evans, J. McCormick, E. Power, and O'Shea. The route taken was by the Exhibition, Fendalton and Riccarton, then on to Mount Magdala by way of Halswell.

While on the journey a halt was made for lunch, when Bro. Sellars proposed the health of Mr. Devlin, referring to his connection with the Society, the Home Rule cause, and concluded by wishing him a successful mission.