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MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET.

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiæ causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.
Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.
April 4, 1900.

LEO XIII., Pope

Current Topics

Lord Hopetoun's Resignation.

The Federal House of Representatives has lately had under discussion a Bill entitled the Governor-General's Establishment Bill, under which provision was made for increasing the Governor-General's salary from £10,000 to £18,000; and the practical rejection of the measure by the Federal House has produced a somewhat unexpected result in the shape of the resignation by Lord Hopetoun of his position as Governor of the Commonwealth. The reason advanced by Lord Hopetoun for taking this step is that the salary is altogether insufficient to enable him to adequately maintain the dignity of his office. He complains that he is 'expected to pay the staff, visit the various States, pay all travelling expenses excepting railways, occupy two great Government Houses, pay for lighting, fuel, stationery, telegrams, postage (other than official), dispense hospitality, and maintain the dignity of his office,' on £10,000 a year, and he declares that he cannot possibly do it. Hence he has asked to be recalled, and the latest cable announces that his decision on the matter is irrevocable.

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Reading between the lines of Lord Hopetoun's communication to Mr Chamberlain one cannot help feeling that other causes than the mere monetary difficulty have contributed to induce the Governor-General to ask for a recall. The monetary trouble was admittedly a purely temporary difficulty which could almost certainly have been obviated by some sort of provisional arrangement which should hold good until the Federal capital was finally established, yet the Governor-General made it the occasion of an 'irrevocable' decision to resign. We suspect that Lord Hopetoun, who appears to be a man of great administrative capacity, is keenly and deeply disappointed at the office of Governor-General being made an almost purely ornamental one, the holder being left practically without administrative power, and this, coupled with a very natural feeling of pique at the question of his salary being haggled and wrangled over in Parliament, has turned the scale in inducing him to make his decision final. On the question as to whether or not Lord Hopetoun can maintain the dignity of his office on a salary of £10,000 in a way that he considers adequate and proper he is himself the best, and indeed the only judge. But on the broad question as to whether or not £10,000 a year is a sufficient sum to enable a capable man to do justice to such a position we are all entitled to an opinion, and for our own part we confess that we are entirely in sympathy with the view adopted by the Federal Parliament on the matter. If Lord Hopetoun, or anyone else who occupies such a position, cannot on such a salary maintain the equipage and give the number of social functions which he considers desirable the obvious remedy is to reduce the retinue and curtail the social functions. It often happens that the expenditure in those directions is really wasteful and unnecessary, and in some cases positively mischievous, and in our view there would be far more gain than loss to the true weight and dignity of an office from lopping off a lot of functions and festivities from which no

adequate return is obtained. That sort of thing was well enough once but the necessity for it is fast passing away, and in an educated democracy the authority and dignity of an office should depend, not on pageantry and display, but on qualities that appeal to intelligence and reason. 'Plain living and high thinking' are just as desirable in a Governor as in the governed and the ideal Governor is one who will set an example to the community in that as in other respects. The action of the Federal Parliament is a plain intimation to future Governors that expenditure must be kept within reasonable limits and that useless extravagance is in no way desired by the Commonwealth; and that view of the question all true friends of the democracy will cordially approve.

A Remedy for Irish Emigration.

The very serious condition of things disclosed by the recent census returns for Ireland has naturally given rise to a feeling of grave alarm amongst the political and religious leaders of the people, and amongst all who have the best interests of the country at heart. During the 10 years ending with the year 1901 no less than a quarter of a million of people left the country. The population now stands at a little less than four and a half millions, and during the past 60 years the same number of people emigrated as remains in Ireland to-day—in other words, in a little over 50 years the population of the country has decreased by very nearly 50 per cent. It is to be remembered, too, that for the most part, it is the young and the strong who have thus gone abroad, leaving the aged and infirm behind, and the tide of emigration is still flowing, flowing more steadily and rapidly indeed to-day than ever it did. It is evident that if this drain continues the country will simply bleed to death, and unless some remedy be promptly applied the Irish race at home is even now on its way to extinction. What is the remedy? What can be done to stem the tide of emigration which is fast draining off the very life-blood of the nation? This is the question which confronts the leaders and friends of Ireland and which must find an answer if the country is to be rescued from the threatened depopulation and decay.

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One solution of the problem has been recently suggested by the Most Rev. Dr. O'Donnell, the gifted Bishop of Raphoe, and his scheme is definite and practical, and gives all reasonable promise of being effective. His proposal is, to put it briefly, a practical application of the principle—which is being every day more and more fully adopted by all the progressive countries of the world—of 'the land for the people.' 'We must,' writes his Lordship, 'use the land to support the people.' The only adequate remedy for depopulation is to run the plough up to the very slopes of Tara. We must spare the dust of heroes and the memorials of the past; and it is not necessary to break up all the grass lands of the country. But there is not a county in Ireland where more than half the land under grass could not be turned to far better account in tillage, if held in farms of moderate acreage and cultivated by the hands of the occupying families, with hired help only as a supplemental aid. The proposal is to be carried out by methods and machinery very similar to those with which we are familiar under the Land for Settlements Act, which has proved so satisfactory and successful in this Colony. 'A department or commission,' continues Dr. O'Donnell, 'with powers for the