

IRISH NEWS

GENERAL.

English dominion in Ireland is taking no risks. Almost daily the Irish papers report arrests on suspicion or on specified charges of such "crime" as "unlawful assembly on the occasion of a funeral" or failing to answer questions concerning events. And some of the captives are still of school age. The latest development of the Irish Police was the seizure of a motor cycle belonging to a Catholic priest at Philipstown. It is suggested that the motor bike was "back-firing."

A Dublin correspondent, writing in the *Manchester Guardian* with regard to the Home Rule Act, says tersely that Parliament must shortly decide whether Ireland "is to be paid or to be cheated." Unless Parliament should agree to deliberate and formal repudiation, the advent of Home Rule must be automatic. The Home Rule Act received Royal assent on September 18, 1914. Its application was postponed till "the end of the war." That date will legally arrive on the day when the Peace Treaties are signed. Thereafter the Ministry must either acquiesce in the operation of the Home Rule Act or ask Parliament to repeal or modify or extend the Act.

IN IRELAND'S CAUSE.

Striking proof of the growth of the movement for Irish self-determination amongst the Irish people of Liverpool was afforded by the size, character, and enthusiasm of the great St. Patrick's Eve demonstration held in the Stadium (says the *London Catholic Times*). The building, which comfortably accommodates 5000 people, was crowded to overflowing, the huge gathering including many priests, professional men, members of the City Council, and other public bodies, and a large number of officers and men of the colonial and American armies and navies.

In front of the platform hung a flag of gold and white and green, bearing the inscription:—"Sinn Féin sets no bounds to the march of the Irish nation." National songs of the most vigorous type were sung in Irish and English, the choruses being heartily taken up by the huge audience, whilst a special feature of this portion of the programme was the presence, in old Irish costume, of the Irish pipers' band from St. Joseph's School, Manchester, whose playing and dancing evoked the warmest appreciation.

The more serious side of the meeting opened with a tribute to the memory of those who had died for Ireland since last St. Patrick's Day, and the according of a vote of sympathy to the relatives of Mr. Pierce McCann, M.P., a deported political prisoner who recently passed away. Then a resolution was adopted demanding the release of the men and women still imprisoned on political charges, calling for the withdrawal of martial law and the army of occupation in Ireland, and asserting Ireland's right to self-determination.

Mr. P. J. Kelly, city councillor, who presided, declared, in a speech which the audience punctuated with cheers and other expressions of approval, that the Irish were a fighting race, and were to-day surrounded by an atmosphere which fitted in with their racial characteristics. England had fought the Germans for four years, and had beaten them; but she had not conquered Ireland after more than 700 years, and the Irish people were determined that they would be the victors in the end. In her appeal to the impartial tribunals of the nations, Ireland was not crying out for help. She was asking for justice. Whatever the result might be, England, though her armed forces might enable her to oppress Ireland, could never hold the Irish people spiritually.

Mr James Moran, proposing the resolution, pointed out that the guilt of the Government which imprisoned men and women on false charges and ill-treated them in prison was shared by those Irish in Great Britain who condoned these acts by their silence, and who made no effort to secure that justice should be done. It was

their duty to support Ireland in her struggle for national existence, and they should be proud of the privilege of helping to win freedom for their own land.

Mr. C. O'Callaghan seconded the resolution, which he described as part of Ireland's declaration of right and of her determination that justice, long delayed, should prevail at last.

Alderman Luke Kenny, ex-Mayor of Hyde, commenting on the treatment of Irish prisoners, said that, with one exception, there could be found in the records of no nation, civilised or savage, an instance of Catholics being compelled to approach the Holy of Holies with manacled hands. The Irish people were determined that Ireland should be the mistress of her own destinies.

Dealing with President Wilson's part in the Peace Conference, Mr. Kenny said his coming to Europe meant freedom for many small nationalities which would otherwise have been left in bondage. His departure must not see Ireland the only small nationality still in slavery. Ridiculing the "German plot," he declared that Ireland wanted German rule as little as she wanted Lloyd George rule. Her desire was not to introduce new task masters, but to get rid of old tyrants.

The singing of "God Save Ireland" by the vast audience terminated the proceedings.

CREED TESTS AND IRISH RAILWAYS.

A luminous example of how Protestant ascendancy is maintained in Ireland emerged at a meeting of the Great Northern Railway Company of Ireland in Dublin last week (says the *Glasgow Observer* of March 8). It may be remembered that some years ago when the Great Northern Railway Company of Ireland was promoting a Bill in Parliament, one of the Irish members compelled the company to agree to the exclusion of any creed test in its bestowal of clerical employment. The undertaking was given. The company agreed to make its appointments by competitive examination, imposing no creed test, and giving situations strictly in accordance with the result of the examination in educational subjects which it agreed to hold. But apparently it has been possible to discover "a way round." For at last week's meeting of G.N.R. shareholders Mrs Sullivan said she had been informed that doctors conducting medical examination of candidates for clerkships asked as a first question what school the candidate had attended. One applicant, Andrew James Doyle, who had taken first place at the examination, replied to the doctor's question by saying he had attended the school of the Christian Brothers in Belfast. He was rejected on "medical grounds." Two days after he sought medical examination from a leading Ulster physician, Sir Alexander Dempsey, of Belfast, who stated that he was in good health and sound constitution and physically and mentally fit. Another candidate, W. A. Deeney, who took the 13th place in the examination, was asked by the doctor what school he attended. He replied, "Christian Brothers' School, Omagh." He, too, was medically rejected, and on seeking independent medical examination afterwards was certified "in a very healthy condition in every way." No candidate educated at any Christian Brothers' School was admitted in the appointments following the last examination.

The chairman of the company admitted that the candidates had been questioned as described. The statement of the medical men was that they were obliged to enter into conversation with each candidate in order to ascertain his nervous condition, and the first question naturally asked was, "Where were you at school?" The company "must be guided entirely by the advice of their own medical expert," was the last word of the chairman. In that case the company's undertaking to refrain from creed test is absolutely valueless in face of the facts adduced. And Catholics in Great Britain may learn from the incident how it is that Protestantism and Unionism are in Ireland synonymous terms.

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