

THE IRISH ENVOYS

A MOST SUCCESSFUL AND ENTHUSIASTIC MEETING

Auckland.

(By Telegraph from our own correspondent.)

The Irish envoys arrived here on Thursday. The committee obtained permission from the Minister of Railways to stop the express on Thursday morning at Otahuhu, where the envoys alighted, and were met by Rev. Father Buckley and Messrs. Gleeson and Lynch, of the city committee. Shortly after Messrs. J. J. O'Brien and M. J. Sheahan arrived by motor-car and welcomed the envoys. As arranged, the envoys stayed at Otahuhu until the afternoon, when they journeyed to the city, arriving about half-past 2 o'clock. His Lordship Bishop Cleary, nearly all of the local clergy, Rev. Mr. Hall (Unitarian), the members of the committee, and a huge concourse of people assembled; and when the envoys appeared the greatest enthusiasm was displayed. With the utmost difficulty Messrs. Hazleton, Redmond, and Donovan made their way to the Bishop's motor. Mr. O'Brien, speaking from the car on behalf of the committee and friends of Ireland, welcomed the envoys, to which Mr. Hazleton replied. He began by saying that they had come not only to a large city, but from the demonstration shown, to a large Irish city. Since their arrival in the Dominion, everywhere they went they were told to wait until they got to Auckland. He could understand it now. He eloquently thanked his Lordship the Bishop, the committee, and friends for the cordial warmth of the welcome extended to them. After three rousing cheers from the multitude, the Bishop's car moved off with the envoys and chairman up Queen street to the Thistle Hotel. Along the street crowds lined the streets to see the envoys, but the crowning effort was

The Public Meeting in the Theatre.

From the talk one heard all over the city during the week, the meeting was anticipated, and anticipations were fully realised. The big building was thronged before the proceedings began, and the sale of tickets was stopped by the authorities. When the envoys, his Worship the Mayor, and Bishop Cleary appeared on the platform the scene was indescribable. The whole audience rose in a body, and handkerchiefs and hats were held aloft. The enthusiasm was intense, and nobody could view the scene unmoved. Those present will long remember it, and in evidence of this, when Mr. Hazleton rose, he said: 'This is Auckland.' Beside the Mayor sat his Lordship Bishop Cleary, the envoys, Members of Parliament, University professors, members of the committee, etc. The proceedings were opened by the Marist Brothers' pupils, who sang the chorus, 'Ireland boys, Hurrah!'

The Mayor said that he was very pleased to preside at a gathering that had met to declare its sentiments with regard to the vexed question of Home Rule. It was about time, he thought, that Ireland had achieved self-government (applause). He was satisfied that the question had an Imperial significance, for it was only when the American conscience was satisfied that Ireland had no wrongs that those relations with the great Republic could be cultivated that were essential to the safety of the southern dependencies of the Empire (applause). In the colonies Irishmen had proved loyal subjects and good citizens. And if that was the experience of those countries where Irishmen had had a chance, no one could exaggerate the benefits that would accrue from the granting of similar opportunities to them in their own country (applause).

Mr. Hazleton, M.P., who was the first speaker, said the one central fact that was impressed upon his mind was the indestructibility of the cause of Ireland. In spite of the long struggle through which they had passed the Irish people had never abandoned the hope of peace, happiness, and prosperity that they would enjoy under free conditions. At last that happy day was at hand, and within sight was the realisation of all for which their forefathers had fought in their endeavor to secure national self-government for Ireland. It was not for separation or for the disintegration of the British Empire that Ireland asked, but for the right to manage its own concerns, and they would not lower the flag or cease the fight until that right was conceded (applause). The remedy which had proved effective in every other part of the Empire would, if applied to Ireland, give a stimulus to the country which alone had fallen out of the march of progress as a result of a most wasteful, expensive, and inefficient system of Government (applause). The great ambition of British statesmen was to complete a treaty with the United States so that the English-speaking peoples might stand together against the rest of the world, but that treaty could not be consummated because there were twenty millions of Irish people in the States who would not sanction it until Home Rule to Ireland had been granted. Home Rule did not mean Rome Rule, as was shown by the fact that during the past 150 years all the leaders of the party, with one or two exceptions, had been Protestants (applause). It was the House of Lords that had rejected Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, but the House

of Lords was upon its deathbed (applause). At last it had gone too far, and the democracy had joined hands in its determination that it should be the people and not the Peers who would rule. Under the reformed constitution Home Rule would be the first great measure of next year, and as the Lords had no longer power to reject it there would be a short and sharp struggle, but a decisive one that could have only one ending—the restoration of the Irish Parliament (applause and cheers).

Mr. Donovan, the next speaker, said the present mission promised to achieve a success that would eclipse the splendid record of Mr. Devlin's campaign. There was striking evidence of a change of opinion towards the cause within the four years that had since elapsed. Their demand was simply Ireland for the Irish—the internal control of their own affairs, the management of their domestic concerns, and the liberty to work out their destiny in their own way. The condition of Ireland was a disgrace to any country calling itself civilised—the one blot upon the Empire, for it suffered a regime of coercion, oppression, and injustice, and yet the Irish were called disloyal because they asked for liberty so that, it was alleged, they might persecute the Protestants. That story had been exploded long ago, for the people who were opposing Ireland's claim in Ulster were a few reactionaries whom they could never hope to convince (applause). The fight the Irish party was making was a just and equitable one, based upon historical grounds as well as upon expediency (applause).

Mr. Redmond, M.P., described the difficulties which had been experienced by the mission led by his father thirty years ago, and contrasted his experiences with those of the present envoys, who had been received everywhere with the official recognition of Mayors, representative citizens, and clergymen of every denomination (applause). That alone was sufficient, he said, to show that the cause was one of freedom, liberty, and progressive democracy. All old, bolstered-up bogeys had been refuted long ago, and they were now no more believed in England than they were in New Zealand, and they had not come to the Dominion to convert the 'old guard' in the nationalist ranks, but to show New Zealanders, who were not connected with Ireland in any way, that it must have the same concession as Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand had gained (applause). The King of England had joined in the fight against the reactionary party in the House of Lords, and his Majesty had promised that if the need arose he would create 500 new Peers, and swamp the House of Lords to prevent a repetition of the blunder it had made in rejecting the Budget. Not only was the King allied with the Party, but his representative in Ireland (the Lord Lieutenant) was an ardent Home Ruler. Sir Henry Campbell Bannerman had declared in relation to Ireland that the best government ever known would be no substitute for self-government, and that was the position of the Irish party at the present time (applause).

A Pledge of Support.

On the motion of Mr. W. J. Napier, seconded by the Rev. R. J. Hall (Unitarian) the meeting unanimously carried the following resolution amidst prolonged cheering: (1) 'That this meeting of the citizens of Auckland expresses its hearty thanks to Messrs. Hazleton, Redmond, and Donovan for their able presentation of the case for Home Rule for Ireland, and earnestly hopes that during the lifetime of the present Imperial Parliament a measure will be passed into law granting to Ireland the power of self-government through its own legislature, which is the inalienable right of every free people'; (2) 'That this meeting pledges itself to support the Irish Parliamentary Party under the leadership of Mr. John Redmond, until Ireland's parliamentary freedom shall have been secured.'

After Mr. Donovan had spoken, a collection was taken up by twenty-four collectors, during which Mr. Egan sang 'The minstrel boy,' and Mr. Bourke 'A nation once again.'

The Mayor then announced that the total sum subscribed to date was £1058—a record for an Irish meeting in the Dominion, said the Mayor. The announcement brought forth great cheering. Subscriptions received since the meeting have brought the amount to close on £1100.

A feature of the meeting was the enthusiastic ovation accorded to the Rev. Mr. Hall. When he came forward to second the resolution, the whole assembly rose and cheered him, and the effect upon him was such that he could not begin his remarks for some time. After each of the envoys had thanked the people, friends, and committee for the magnificent result which had exceeded their most sanguine expectations, the Marist boys sang as a finale, 'God save Ireland,' the audience standing and joining in the chorus. So ended the most memorable Irish gathering ever held in this city. Mr. Harry Hiscocks ably presided at the piano, and Dunne's orchestra also assisted.

The envoys attended the 9 o'clock Mass yesterday at the Cathedral, afterwards visiting the Marist College and Convent of Mercy. At both places they were cordially welcomed, particularly at the convent, when all the Sisters assembled in the community room, where the envoys delivered brief addresses.

At 1 o'clock his Lordship the Bishop entertained the Envoys, the Mayor, the executive officers, committee, local clergy, Rev. Mr. Hall, and others at luncheon at the Palace. In the afternoon Mr. Napier took them with friends for a water excursion, afterwards entertaining them to dinner at his house in Devonport. This morning the delegates separated, Mr. Hazleton going to North Auckland, Mr.