

Owing to the absence of Monsignor Gillan, the duties of Vicar-General are being discharged by Ven. Archdeacon Brodie, who for the present is residing at the Bishop's House, Ponsonby.

Excellent leaders are appearing in the Auckland *Star* on the Home Rule question. They contain a true national ring, and are worthy of the best National newspapers in Ireland.

The Cathedral Feis in the Town Hall continues to attract large attendances, and its success is now assured. It is expected this week will crown all previous efforts.

The new *Star* of the Sea College, on the Takapuna estate, was blessed by his Lordship the Bishop on Saturday morning. Fathers Holbrook and McMillan assisted. The college is situated on one of the best sites in the vicinity of Auckland, and commands a magnificent view for miles around. It has accommodation for fully one hundred children.

His Lordship the Bishop and clergy gathered at the Cathedral presbytery on last Thursday to bid au revoir to Right Rev. Monsignor Gillan and the Rev. Father Tormey, and to welcome back Rev. Father Furlong. His Lordship said that Monsignor Gillan had labored in the diocese for 27 years, and was now about to take a holiday. The priests took advantage of the occasion to make a presentation to Monsignor Gillan. Father Tormey, who will be absent until next year, was the recipient of useful gifts from the priests some time ago. Both leave by the Marama this evening.

An unusual scene occurred in the Miners' Union Hall, Waihi, on Sunday night at the conclusion of an address by Mr. R. F. Way on 'The Martyrdom of Ferrer,' under the auspices of the Waihi Socialist Party. When the lecturer had finished the Ven. Archdeacon Brodie, of St. Joseph's Church, who, with a number of members of the Catholic Club, was present, took the platform, and stated that when he gave a lecture on the same subject before the Catholic Club he was careful not to offend anyone, Socialist or otherwise. That night Catholics had listened to great abuse, also to insults to all they held near and dear. The Archdeacon dealt at length with the unreliability of McCabe as an authority on Ferrer, and briefly vindicated the Catholic Church and clergy from the lecturer's attacks. If the lecturer would invest (he said) in a penny catechism he would know the Church's teaching on indulgences, and would not make such rash statements regarding them. Many Catholics were members of the Miners' Union, and he (the Archdeacon) protested against its platform being used by speakers to insult beliefs of Christians. If an apology was not forthcoming it would be necessary for Catholics to leave the present union and form a Christian Workers' Union, with the same object as the present one. There would be no 'scabs' or 'blacklegs,' but an assurance would be given that the conscientious beliefs of every member would be free from insult. Mr. May's reply was a denunciation of Christianity, and particularly of Catholics and priests. The Archdeacon throughout got a very good hearing, only one interruption occurring during his discourse, which lasted twenty minutes. The audience consisted mostly of Socialists. The affair has caused a considerable sensation locally, and the Catholic workers at Waihi are quite determined to see the matter through.

At the usual fortnightly meeting to-night of the Hibernian Society (Rev. Father Holbrook, president, in the chair) the following resolution was passed:— 'This branch of the Hibernian Catholic Benefit Society heartily congratulates the Ven. Archdeacon Brodie for his spirited public protest entered by him last night at Waihi against the attacks on the Church and its doctrines and practices by a Socialist lecturer.' The secretary was directed to forward a copy of the resolution to Archdeacon Brodie.

His Lordship Bishop Cleary had just returned from the country when seen to-day by a *Star* representative,

who asked his opinions on the Home Rule Bill. After a brief perusal of the cable message, his Lordship said: 'In its broad features the Home Rule Bill, as cabled, seems to be a serious and statesmanlike effort to right an old and grievous wrong. Taken as a whole, it is preferable to the measures of 1886 and 1893. It makes better provision for the conditions now prevailing in regard to land purchase, and, in view of the severe pressure of local legislation on the Imperial Parliament, the educative work which has been done among the British public and British members of Parliament on this subject during the past ten years, and the restricted power of the House of Lords, it seems to me that the present Bill has a much better chance of reaching the Statute Book than either of its predecessors. There are two features of the measure which, however, do not appeal to me—one is the proposal to remove the control of the Land Purchase Act from the Irish Parliament; the other is the proposal to reduce the annual grant to £500,000, to be gradually reduced to £200,000.' In regard to the latter provision his Lordship remarked: 'The Financial Relations Commission was composed mostly of Englishmen of mark, experts in the domain of finance, and represented all political parties. At their head was a man of such outstanding talent in finance as Mr. Childers, a former Chancellor of the Exchequer. Well, in 1894, this commission reported that Ireland was taxed 'beyond its proper taxable capacity to the tune of £2,500,000 annually. I have not the precise figures before me, and speak from memory, but, calculated on the basis of conscience money, the amount due by England to Ireland is over £400,000,000, and since 1904, instead of an improvement in the financial relations between the two countries, matters have gone from bad to worse, the taxation of the western island having risen by about two millions a year, while her population has decreased by about 200,000 during the same period. The cost of the home government has in the same period also gone up from £1 4s 6d per head of the population to close on £2 per head. It is, in fact, the most extravagant government in the civilised world, and it seems to me that the proposed £500,000 per annum seems but a paltry composition for this enormous debt due by the richer to the poorer country.' 'As regards the religious difficulty,' continued the Bishop, 'it is really not at all serious; there is only one part of Ireland where any special form of protection is needed for its religious minorities, and that is the north-east corner of Ulster. Nevertheless, I am glad to see that even the needless fears of the non-Catholics there are to receive every consideration, and finally I rejoice that the time is at least over when Irish Members of Parliament (as a witty one among them said) had no chance of a hearing from a British Minister unless they came before them with the head of a landlord in one hand and the tail of a cow in the other.'

Welcome Home to Father Furlong

(By our Auckland correspondent.)

April 12.

Rev. Father Furlong, who left last year on a twelve months' holiday, returned by the Mongolia early on Wednesday morning. That evening there was a very large number of parishioners present in St. Leo's Academy, Devonport, to bid the popular pastor a hearty welcome home. On the stage with Mr. J. J. O'Brien, who was in the chair, were the Ven. Archdeacon Brodie, Rev. Fathers Holbrook, Cahill, Brennan, Dignan, Tormey, Finn, Golden, Ormond, Forde, O'Farrell, and O'Malley; also Messrs. Wright, Moylan, P. Walsh, W. Whelan, and J. P. Graham.

The chairman said that the pleasing duty of formally welcoming Father Furlong home, on behalf of the parishioners, had been entrusted to him. He was delighted to be present, for no one held Father Furlong in higher esteem than he. They had all followed their parish priest in spirit through the great continent of America, and on to Ireland. They had watched with eagerness, too, for his return, and were