

THE HOME RULE BILL IN THE LORDS

In the debate on the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill in the House of Lords the Earl of Dunraven said he should support the Bill, because he believed that the adoption of the principle of devolution was necessary to any scheme for drawing together the component parts of the Empire. He hoped the House would not adopt an attitude of sterile negation towards the underlying principle of the Bill. He invited the House to consider the vast change for the better which had taken place in Ireland since Home Rule was last before them. Thanks very largely to beneficent legislation passed by the Unionists, there was to-day a new Ireland. Land Purchase had changed the face of the country. In England Parliamentary institutions had been degraded and party politics had degenerated into mere opportunism. The whole machine of party government had broken down, and it was impossible for Parliament to deal with the multifarious mass of business that came before it. Unless the principle of relegation to subordinate bodies was adopted, the Government would fall into the hands of an irresponsible oligarchy. Until the question of Home Rule was settled they could never have a contented Ireland and a free and unfettered Parliament. He had come to the conclusion that the grant of Home Rule would not entail calamity or injustice. He maintained that the people of Ireland were not disloyal. They were discontented with a form of government which had been forced upon them against their will, and over which they had no control. It was within the power of Parliament to remove the causes of discontent and produce in Ireland equally beneficial results to those which had followed the extension of Self-government in Canada. Admitted that the Bill was an experiment, he contended that it was worth trying. The consequences of failure could not be calamitous, and the prospects of success were good. Religious animosity had been

Fanned Into an Unnatural Flame.

Irish Catholics were the most tolerant people on earth, and the Protestants of the North, in any event, could take care of themselves. The idea of two nations in Ireland was a purely British invention, and it was untrue to say that the people of the North had a monopoly of enterprise and energy. Ireland, as a whole, was almost feverishly anxious to re-create her industries and to foster and develop those she now possessed. It would be inconsistent for an Irish Parliament to do anything to impede that progress. While he was in favor of Home Rule, he had nothing very favorable to say of the present Bill, and he was sure it could not lead to a satisfactory permanent settlement of the question. It did not provide sufficient checks upon legislation, and the measure was not constructed on Federal lines. If the Bill became law it would have to be repealed, because it was an absolute bar to Federalism. Why should they not endeavor to get a settlement by consent? If they accepted the bedrock principle of Devolution, he thought it would be possible, by means of a conference, to arrive at an agreement.

Lord MacDonnell suggested alterations should be made in the financial provisions of the Bill such as would satisfy those members of the House who had no rooted objections to the creation of a subordinate Parliament in Ireland. An urgent necessity existed for a substantial reform in the system of Irish government. Ever since the rejection of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill there had been an admission, sometimes tacit, but always an admission, that everything was not well with the state of government in Ireland. The student of Constitutional history would admit that in every properly-organised State there were four divisions—legislative, judicial, financial, and administrative. What was the condition of Ireland in regard to these four divisions? They all knew Ireland had no legislative division. By recognising the Irish claims to a subordinate Legislature the House would be taking an effective step towards a reform most necessary in the

interests of all parts of the Empire. The judicial division of Irish Government worked efficiently. The financial division had no responsibility, and the administrative division comprised 46 Boards and Departments over which the Government had no effective control whatever. The necessity of a change in the Irish Government had not been recognised until recent times by all parties in the State, but no change which failed to introduce the representative element had the least chance of success. Only allow Irishmen of all classes and creeds to come together, and give them important work to do in the interest of their country and the Empire, and they would be surprised at the splendid work that would be done. The Bill came before them from the House of Commons with an overwhelming majority at its back, and it ought not to be rejected without most careful examination.

Ashburton

(From our own correspondent.)

March 12.

Mr. W. J. Cunningham (president) and Mr. D. McDonnell will represent the Catholic Club at the conference of Federated Catholic Clubs to be held in Christchurch at Easter.

The weekly meetings of the Catholic Young Men's Club continue to be well attended. The programmes submitted are varied and interesting, the borough estimates, as brought down for adoption by Mr. D. McDonnell at the last meeting, being productive of very keen discussion. A vote of thanks was passed to Mr. McDonnell for his work in preparing the estimates.

After months of silent working by a large number of ladies in this parish the results of their labors were manifest on Saturday last when the Mayor opened the Catholic bazaar in the presence of a large gathering of people. Very Rev. Dean O'Donnell was amongst those present at the opening, and the successful manner in which the affair has been carried through speaks well for his management. The attendance nightly has been good, and no doubt the great interest taken in the tug-of-war was mainly responsible for this. The arranging of the different stalls was indeed creditable to those in charge, and from all sides the bazaar was classed as the best from every standpoint that has yet been held in this town. A statement as to the net proceeds is not yet available, but a goodly sum will go to the extinguishing of the debt, as a result of the generous support of the Ashburton public, and the self-sacrificing work of our Catholic townswomen.

The stallholders and their assistants were as follow:

Ladies' Club stall—Mesdames Meeching and Cunningham, Misses McCormick (3), Bradley, Fitzgerald, Nealon, McSherry, O'Connor, Shrimpton, Simpson, Campbell, and White.

Convent stall—Mrs. J. R. Smith, Misses Buckley, Hyland, Moore, O'Kane, Mary Lysaght, Leddy (2), Moriarty (2), Brown, McLeod, and Bradley (2).

Jumble stall—Misses May Quigley and Grace Boyle.

Floral stall—Mesdames Cooper and Welsh, and Misses Sewell, Walsh, Cooper, and Buckley.

Post Office—Miss Murphy.

Refreshment booth—Mesdames Soal and Hannigan, and Misses Soal, Hyland, Madden, and Cunningham (2).

Bran tub—Mr. Charlie Hannigan.

Hibernian stall—Mesdames Madden, Devane, J. O'Grady, Groghan, James McCormack, Buchanan (Christchurch), and Miss A. Nelson.

Sweets stall—Misses Hicks, Harman, Bradley, Hannigan, Barber, and Riordan.

The heart is like a fine instrument, which, if played upon with gentleness and delicacy of feeling, will emit the most beautiful and harmonious music, but if touched with roughness and harshness, only produces discordant sounds.