

A MODEL LANDLORD

The following cutting from the Melbourne *Herald* of May 8, which has been sent us by a Dunedin subscriber, contains an interesting tribute to a former well-known Catholic citizen, Mr. E. L. O'Connell:

Among the owners of suburban rent houses in Melbourne is one landlord who refuses to be carried on the eternal tides of supply and demand as they affect the rent situation. He is a New Zealander, and has no desire that his name should be published, but the letting system which he has established is so unusual that some details may be given without the usual formalities of an interview.

To begin with, the landlord in question was not always a capitalist. While he was in New Zealand some years ago rents for houses were so high that a public agitation was started. Meetings of citizens were held and a 'Fair Rent League' was formed. So powerful became this body that it was able not only to check the rise in rents in important centres like Christchurch, but to have an influence at election time in getting some of its sympathisers returned to Parliament. One of the ardent members of the league was the landlord here referred to. He remained in New Zealand long enough to make sufficient money to enable him to settle in Victoria to be a property owner. He still clung to his convictions, however, and of late years he has been able to prove his sincerity by standing firmly against the general system of increasing rents which has been so prevalent here. He has built recently a good many houses in a pleasant suburb, fitting them on ideal lines with gas stoves, kitchen dressers and other modern equipment, and has let them all at about 16s a week. This, for a modern five-roomed brick villa close to a railway station in a good suburb near to town, may be

fairly described as a very low rent. Such places are let at £1 to £1.5s a week in other suburbs.

Needless to say the houses are never empty. Agents have gone to the owner and offered him increased rents, and even bonuses, to turn his tenants out, but this he stoutly refuses to do. As a tenant in the past he believed in moderate rent, and as a landlord he asks no more. He has fixed rules in his dealings with tenants. When a man takes a house he is told that the rent will never be raised, but, on the other hand, it will never be reduced. He cannot get a house for a fixed term, but he is assured that he will never put him out so long as he pays the rent.

Experience has proved the landlord to be entirely good as his word. He has carefully calculated the value of his investment, and is satisfied that over a period of years, good seasons and bad, it will yield him a fair return and he asks no more.

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This man in Australia certainly has found a reliable cough cure. He writes:—"I had to pay 1/8 Customs duty before I could get it, so that the bottle cost me 3/6. If it cost a pound a bottle I would take good care not to be without it. Why don't you advertise it in Australia? Baxter's Lung Preserver would beat all the cough remedies sold here."

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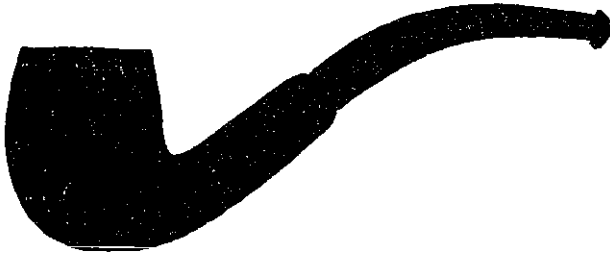
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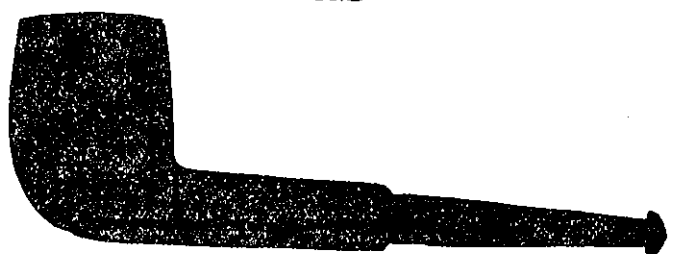
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