

Irish News

SENATOR DOUGLAS AND THE BRITISH NOTE.—FINANCE.—THE NATIONAL GROUP: ITS RELATIONS WITH THE MINISTRY.—PARLIAMENTARY NEWS. A MISSIONARY APPEAL.—CATHOLIC PROGRESS IN BELFAST.—FREEMAN STOPPAGE

The Dublin correspondent of the London *Catholic Times*, writing towards the end of December, says:—

Senator J. G. Douglas, Vice-President of the Senate and President of the League of Nations Society of Ireland, discusses, in a letter to the *Irish Times*, the Imperial Government's objection to the registration of the Treaty at Geneva. The British attitude, he argues, conflicts with the conception of the Empire as a commonwealth of nations, and suggests that the Foreign Office does not realise that mutual confidence and free co-operation, rather than legal bonds and constitutional fictions, are the ties which bind together the self-governing Dominions of the Crown. Both from the international and the British point of view, the Chamberlain Note, he thinks, was ill-advised, since its tone, to speak mildly, conveys an oblique reflection on action taken by the League and seems to be inspired by a spirit of distrust. The Irish people have abided faithfully by the spirit of the Treaty, which forbids them, while Great Britain observes her undertakings, to raise domestic or semi-domestic questions at Geneva. This being an admitted fact, would not the authorities in London have refrained, had they been wise, from broadcasting through Europe their interpretation of the status of this country? Ought they not to have held their hand, at all events, until an Imperial Conference had discussed the bearing of the Covenant on the relations, *inter se*, of the various self-governing units of the Empire?

The latest Exchequer returns justify, to a large extent, the economies recently effected by Mr. Ernest Blythe. During the first eight months of the current financial year revenue exceeded expenditure by £1,500,000, while the deficit for the corresponding period in 1923-24 amounted to £2,000,000. To the very natural indignation of those who prospered on the largesse of the State, financial stability has been restored by drastic "cuts" rather than by increased taxation. That, undoubtedly, is fortunate, since the country—dangerously over-taxed, owing to conditions with which it has been impossible to grapple—could not provide sufficient revenue to meet expenditure on the old scale. In moments of calmness this is admitted even by unfriendly critics of the Government, though they reserve liberty, of course, to rail on public platforms both at its parsimony and its extravagance.

The statement, recently published in a London journal, that a number of Ministerial Deputies are trying to bridge the gulf which divides the Government from the National Group is, I believe, without foundation. In official circles the story is emphatically denied, and Mr. Seamus Hughes,

secretary of the Cumann Na n-Gaedheal, discounts the possibility of another inter-party "crisis." At the coming by-elections—which are of considerable importance—some arrangement, in the nature of an unofficial pact, may be come to between local supporters of various pro-Treaty groups, but any understanding reached will be limited to individual constituencies, since proposals for a Parliamentary coalition do not appeal to any important section of opinion.

Many Deputies have availed of the recess to visit their constituencies. Politically speaking, indeed, Dublin is deserted, even the Senators having left us, practically *en masse*, to spend Christmas in the country. Before the Upper House adjourned, however, nominations were received for the vacancy created by the resignation of Sir Hutcheson Poe, which will be filled when the Oireachtas reassembles towards the end of January. Three candidates have been put forward: Sir Walter Nugent, a well-known member of the Catholic aristocracy; Sir Simon Maddock, a representative of the Southern Imperialists, and Dr. Douglas Hyde, the author of many volumes on literary subjects. The chances are that Sir Walter Nugent will be elected, though Sir Simon Maddock may get many votes. Owing to a Senatorial convention, Dr. Douglas Hyde, being very definitely connected with the Gaelic movement, is unlikely to be chosen as successor to a Senator uninterested in Irish.

In making an appeal on behalf of the East African Mission in the Church of St. Francis Xavier, Dublin, on a recent Sunday, the Right Rev. Dr. Gogarty, the Vicar-Apostolic of Kilimanjaro, said he was very glad to have the opportunity of speaking to the faithful in that sacred edifice, for he had been in a part of the mission field through which St. Francis Xavier himself passed.

He saw the beautiful bay into which St. Francis sailed, and he was delighted to see the Christian cross which had been erected in the vicinity by the Spanish navigator, Vasco de Gama.

His Lordship went on to describe the wanderings of the missionaries and the dangers to which they were exposed in going through the country, but many mission stations had been provided, notwithstanding these difficulties.

At present in the vicariate they had 10,000 Christians, and the faith had gone down deep into their hearts. Natives were being educated and trained for the priesthood, and would be sent back in due course to their tribes. In that way they were following the example of St. Patrick and the other great missionaries of Ireland.

Churches, schools, and hospitals required

to be founded, and they were engaged in the establishment of a seminary. He asked the congregation to help him in the accomplishment of that great work, both by their prayers and by financial assistance. He appealed for the help of the poor as well as the rich, for, said he, it was by the money of the poor that the great institutions of God's Church were kept up.

There were millions and millions of people living without the faith, and for them his hearers should be apostles who would spread and extend the Gospel and the knowledge of God to other people. In doing that they would receive the rewards promised to the Apostles.

Catholics of Belfast recently marked an important step in their progress, when the new parochial hall in the Oldpark district was opened by Most Rev. Dr. MacRory, Bishop of Down and Connor. The occasion was one of great rejoicing, as it marked the crowning effort in a great undertaking. The Sacred Heart parish suffered severely in the pogroms, 17 Catholics being killed, 57 houses burned, and 244 families driven away. It seemed, in the words of the Bishop, in a letter to Rev. John Macaulay, the parish priest, as if the parish was to be wiped-out. It was not, however. An entire new street of houses has been erected by the Belfast White Cross Society, and the hall is one of the most modern in the city, capable of catering for as many as 500 guests.

It was understood by everyone in Dublin last week (says a writer in an exchange dated December 27) that the *Freeman's Journal* was to close down on Friday. On Thursday afternoon the Dublin Gas Consumers' Company sent a representative to the *Freeman* office intimating that unless an outstanding account was at once paid they would shorten the life of the *Freeman* papers by a day and a half. The *Evening Telegraph* was in consequence held up and was not able to come out in time. A member of the staff, in the hope that the negotiations that were going on might result in saving the paper, paid the debt himself and the gas supply was again connected up. There is the utmost sympathy felt for the employees of this old firm, the publications of which served the Irish people loyally for close on 200 years. The suspending of its publication means depriving about 350 people of employment, and this in a city in which there is already such a deplorable lack of employment. There are still negotiations going on between the Receiver and two groups of purchasers. One of these groups is the Irregulars. The other is a business group who are considering running the paper as a business undertaking. I am told that Mr. Joseph McGrath, the leader of the National Party, who lately resigned from the Dail, is interested in this latter group. A very able and experienced journalist told me some time ago that even then it was quite possible to make the *Freeman* pay its way. But money was foolishly wasted. Nothing was ever done to try and bring back the circulation the paper had before the sledges of the Irregulars smashed up the plant in March, 1922.

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