

Current Topics

The Christian Brothers' Concert

Those Dunedin Brothers' boys are hard to beat at whatever they take in hand. On the athletic campus they have proved their prowess time and again, as the Public School teachers well wot. All Dunedin knows what "hot stuff" they used to be before they scared the State Schools from playing against them. In the class-room they constantly give evidence that they can work as well as they can play. Probably the concert they gave on the evening of November 16, at His Majesty's Theatre, was the most successful of its kind ever given in the southern capital. "It would be hard to imagine a more pleasing amateur juvenile performance than that presented to a packed house by the boys of the Christian Brothers' School," was the generous tribute of the *Otago Daily Times*, and the boys deserved it. The various parts of the programme earned prolonged applause. The singing, the elocution, the acting were eloquent of the zest with which the young performers co-operated with their devoted teachers to produce a well-balanced and high-class entertainment that did credit to the whole school. All were worthy of high praise, and K. Toomey and J. Hall were particularly brilliant.

Our Exhibition

In beautiful weather, with flags flying and bands playing, the Dunedin Exhibition opened on November 17. Some forty-five thousand visitors passed through the gates, and everyone who went to Logan Park was eloquent in praise of what had been accomplished. It was a big undertaking, but Dunedin people can do big things, and their courage was already rewarded by the fine promise of the opening day. The Governor-General spoke well, and his voice carried wonderfully. Mr. Coates may not be an orator but he has the knack of saying the right thing and of striking the proper note. We heard several people refer in complimentary language to his speeches both at the opening and at the banquet on the following evening. The latter function was a happy gathering. Two Bishops graced the board. Sir Joseph Ward was there, looking like his old self, after his victory over the forces of bigotry in Invercargill. Good fellowship and bonhomie marked the event, and the evening passed pleasantly for all. Visitors are already in the city in large numbers, and, given a spell of dry weather, all roads will lead to Dunedin during the coming months. Certain parts of the Dominion have been asleep and their pavilions are no credit to them. However, the example of Dunedin may stimulate them to play their part well later on. The success of the great venture seems already assured, and a headline has been set which will have a good effect on future exhibitions in New Zealand.

The Irish Republicans

It was reported by the Irish press, early in October, that informal negotiations had taken place between representatives of the Dail and of the Republicans, with the object of securing an agreement that would enable the latter to take their seats as Teachtaí. Dr. Mannix is mentioned as the intermediary responsible for the movement. A couple of weeks ago we told our readers that we had found in Ireland many Republican

who had come to recognise that such a step was the best thing not only for Ireland but also for their own party. Hence, we should not be astonished to find that this report is well founded. In the meantime, we must wait and see.

Irish in the Schools

Although, as a natural result of all the trouble, enthusiasm has waned among the masses, the Government is not losing sight of the Irish language, and Dr. MacNeill is uncompromising in his attitude. He is determined that the children shall learn in the schools the tongue of their ancestors, and the clamor of West-Britons and their pseudo-nationalist imitators is making him all the firmer. Like the Editor of the *Leader*, like Davis, like Pearse, he holds that the native language is the inspiration of the national spirit, and, as Minister for Education, he is going to have it taught in all the schools under his control. More power to him!

Protestant Bishop Refutes Slanders

Addressing the annual meeting of the Ferns Diocesan Synod, in the last week of September, Dr. Day, Bishop of Ossory, Ferns and Leighlin said:—

"Before he closed he would just say they had reason to be thankful that the country was now peaceful and quiet under firm Government, and that men were able to get on with their business without interference. He believed there were people in England who still thought that Ireland was in a state of unrest. In a recent report of an English Religious Society, he saw it stated the other day that the South and West of Ireland was still disturbed and that outrages were frequent. He did not know where the writer of that report got his information. He had been grievously misled.

"It seems to me," concluded his Lordship, "and I am in touch with people all over the South of Ireland, that in all this disturbed and restless world, there are few quieter corners than that in which you and I live, and our duty is plain—not to hold aloof from the life of the country as if we belonged to different castes from the rest of our fellow-countrymen, but to throw ourselves wholeheartedly and enthusiastically into the life and work of the country, making the best of things as we find them, co-operating with men of all creeds and classes for the welfare of Ireland and the service of our fellow-men."

Free State Finances

Since we wrote in rather despondent tone about the financial outlook in Ireland matters have improved considerably. There has been a splendid harvest which will mean general prosperity for the farmers. And the official figures published at the end of September are said to disclose a more satisfactory position than was anticipated. The revenue for the first half of the financial year was £12,389,296, and the expenditure was £12,043,161.

With the best half of the financial year, from the revenue point of view, to come, half the estimated revenue has been obtained, whilst the expenditure amounts to about half the estimated "normal" expenditure for the year to be met out of revenue. Total receipts into the Exchequer up to September 30 (including the balance in the Exchequer on April 1, of £1,681,192) are

£14,490,988, or £2,556,379 less than last year's total of £17,047,367, which however, included a balance of £3,394,512 in the Exchequer on April 1, 1924. Although the total expenditure this year is slightly higher than last year, total issues at £12,575,361 are £228,839 less than last year's figure of £12,804,200. This is mainly accounted for by the fact that amongst the other issues last year was £814,000 for the payment of Irish Free State Bills. The balance in the Exchequer now is £1,915,627, as compared with £1,243,167 a year ago. The total revenue at £12,389,296 is £395,059 less than last year's figure of £12,784,355.

The biggest falling off is the Customs and Excise duties. The abolition of the tea duty and the reduction in sugar duty would probably account for much of this. That the income tax collection is still being swelled by the collection of arrears is clear from the fact that the total for the half-year is even greater than last year's abnormal figure. Other receipts include £30,000 repayment of temporary advances under the Unemployment Insurance Acts (last year £10,000). Money raised by the creation of debt includes £100,000 for capital expenditure issues under the Telegraph Acts (last year, nil), and £290,500 from Savings Certificates (last year, £171,500).

On the outlay side, total expenditure at £12,043,161 shows an increase of £294,761 on last year's figures of £11,748,400.

Other issues include £100,000, under the Shannon Electricity Act, 1925; £94,000 under the Unemployment Insurance Acts (last year, £104,000); and £100,000 to meet capital expenditure under the Telegraphs Act. Saving Certificates paid off figure at £49,200 (last year, £47,800), and ways and means advances repaid to public departments are £189,000, as against £90,000.

Ne Sutor Ultra Crepidam

"Let the cobbler stick to his last" is an old saying and a wise one. It has recently been said in America, by a man who is appalled by the results of secular schools, to the Federal Churches which are busy about many things. There are certain ministers of religion who rely on their weird tales about Rome to fill their tabernacles. In the same way, it has been said, we know not with what truth, that many Protestant divines took up the Prohibition campaign when they found that what they had to say on religion failed to fill their churches. If that be true, the following letter is a blunt hint that it might be better for all if they left not undone many things that are undone within their own professional sphere:—

Mr. F. Ernest Johnson,
Dept. of Research and Education,
Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America,

105 E. 22nd St., New York City.

San Francisco, Calif.,

October 13, 1925.

Dear Mr. Johnson:

The Prohibition Situation.

Though I am not in accord with the policy of any Religious Organisation taking any part in political affairs, I wish to compliment you upon the fairness of the presentation you have made of the prohibition situation in your recent booklet.

No doubt, all of the six publications you advertise on the back cover of your prohibition booklet are of great interest and importance, but none of the subjects you name—