



Current Topics



How Lord Limavaddy Looks After His Own

Last week we received from the Collector of Customs a notification that a parcel of publications about Ireland and some extracts from a London daily newspaper were detained by the Customs Department in accordance with the rules and regulations made by the Government of an Orangeman. The Orangeman takes care that comments on the crimes of the thugs and murderers who aid his Ulster friends shall not be made known to the New Zealand public, but it goes without saying that he, and his fellow slaves to the P.P.A., have no objection to allowing into the country such literature "as only a low blackguard would introduce into a family." That is quite what we should expect.

Lee's Legislative Ability

The occasion finds the man. The greatest crisis in history found Anderson, Nosworthy, Massey, and Lee. How good the latter is may be gathered from a meditation on the circumstances arising out of the scandalous episode of the escape of the Timaru murderer from Seacliff. The man cannot be punished for escaping from an asylum, even though he is not insane. If he had managed to remain at large for two weeks, he could not be brought back (we are informed) without a fresh comittal. The whole situation is another comment on the Minister of Justice whose legislation juries have openly flouted, choosing to follow common sense rather than the whims of the servants of a noisy gang of bigots. We propose that Mr. Lee be sent to represent New Zealand at the Washington Conference. He would be useless there, of course, but we should be well rid of him even for a season. We wonder if it will ever leak out exactly on what principles the Orangeman selected that talented Cabinet of his.

The Northern Elections Again

More light is thrown on the quality of British fair play displayed at and before the Carsonia elections by *Old Ireland* (June 11):

"Even had there been no intimidation the Partition Act itself ensured that a vote truly representative of the views of the population could not be registered. Some months before the elections were held the boundaries of the Constituencies were completely altered. Areas which normally would have returned anti-Partitionist candidates were amalgamated with districts known to be overwhelmingly Partitionist. The county of Tyrone, predominantly Republican, was deprived of any separate representation, although it is the third largest county in 'Northern Ireland,' by being merged into one constituency with the County of Fermanagh, in which the electorate is, in the majority, Unionist. In the same way the strong Nationalist vote in West Belfast, by means of a redistribution of the electoral divisions, was distributed over several constituencies, the result being to deprive the anti-Partitionists of three certain seats. On the day of polling (May 24) the forcible ejection of Sinn Féin agents from several of the booths left the way clear for the wholesale impersonation of anti-Partition voters.

"The 'Northern' elections were, however, a farce. An armed Special Constabulary, recruited from the worst elements of the Orange Party, and bitterly hostile to the Nationalists and Republicans, was placed at the disposal of the Unionist candidates. This Constabulary carried on a campaign of gross intimidation against the opponents of Partition, and created a reign of terror under which a free expression of popular opinion was impossible. English press correspondents who witnessed this election bore testimony to the violence of this intimidation. The regular British troops and constabulary were openly used for the same purpose of terrorising the anti-Partitionist electorate.

Moreover, the Orange mob, which, in defiance of many British proclamations, is permitted and even encouraged to carry arms and use them upon Republicans and Nationalists, were allowed to attack their disarmed opponents without let or hindrance."

Degradation

Referring to the ruling of the Court of Appeal as to probation, Sir John Salmond said at the Auckland Supreme Court, on August 1:

"The decision seems to me to amount to this: That probation is a matter of course, and a matter of right in the case of offences of dishonesty unless they are repeated. In other words every man is entitled to commit one theft or one forgery with safety and remain at liberty. I cannot help thinking that this doctrine is an unsound and dangerous one, the inevitable result of which is the degradation of the standard of honesty in this community."

The sad part of it is that the degradation seems to be so widespread that nobody cares what happens. There is no respect for the legislature of this Dominion among the masses of the people, and that loss of respect is due to the faults of the legislators themselves. Various incidents have weakened the confidence of the people in the justice, prudence, and honor of their rulers or administrators, and the public goes on its way smiling at the simplicity of persons who think the course of justice in New Zealand is straight. For instance, what respect can any Catholic, or any decent-minded man, have for a Minister who publicly prostituted his office at the nod of a gang of bigots? Is it not the fact that people used to laugh derisively at our Chief Justice's pronouncements? Have not juries in several cases shown their utter contempt for the laws made by our present legislators? And is not the opinion of the majority of people with the juries that have done so? A place-hunting, unprincipled set of legislators have brought Government and Legislature into contempt, and there exactly is the foundation of the degradation which is certainly widespread to-day.

Our Sportsmen

Can one expect much from a generation of youths trained by teachers whose conception of what is right is to boycott boys whom their pupils are unable to beat in a fair field? One ought not to wonder at hearing how the crowds used to show their teeth when the Marists in Christchurch were thrashing team after team, when one considers that the crowd has been taught nothing of the high ideals of true sportsmen. What will the Springboks think of us? From several people who were present at the games in Dunedin last week we have heard severe comments on the lack of friendliness shown to the visitors and the evident incapacity of the public for appreciating football for the sake of the game. And what would they say if they knew of the pitiful scheming and the nasty tricks played by public school-teachers whose boys are not able to meet the boys of our one Dunedin Catholic school in fair fight? It is rumored that feeling against the visitors ran higher here than it ought. Possibly the tactless mayor who referred to the expedition of New Zealand's soldiers who went to help England to kill a small nation twenty-two years ago recalled bitter memories of burned homes and stolen family-Bibles. Certainly the comments of anonymous writers and of the forger in the *Otago Daily* were in as bad taste as is possible even for that journal. On the day of the test match many were disgusted by the partisan spirit manifested by the crowd, and we have heard New Zealanders regret that the visitors did not win, as they might have done with a little luck and a little to encourage them instead of much to dishearten them.

Catholic Scholarships

We hope all our readers read carefully a letter from Father Coffey in last week's issue of the *Tablet*, calling attention to the fact that in Dunedin diocese