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In order to insure insertion in the following issue, the copy for above advertisements must reach the office by noon on Tuesdays.

FEATURES OF THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

Leader—The Irish Situation, p. 25. Notes—Custom and Costume; Sound Advice; *Holy Romans*, pp. 26-27. Topics—Lord Limavaddy Looks After His Own; The Northern Elections; Professor Pringle on Bigots, pp. 14-15. The American Commission's Report, p. 7. Sydney Honors Bishop Dwyer, p. 17. Catholic Federation, p. 19. Mary Aikenhead, p. 30. War on Irish Women, p. 39.

MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIII. TO THE N.Z. TABLET.

Pergant Directores et Scriptores New Zealand Tablet, Apostolica Benedictione confortati, Religionis et Justitiae causam promovere per vias Veritatis et Pacis.

Die 4 Aprilis, 1900.

LEO XIII., P.M.

TRANSLATION.—Fortified by the Apostolic Blessing, let the Directors and Writers of the New Zealand Tablet continue to promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.

April 4, 1900.

LEO XIII., Pope.



THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 1921.

THE IRISH SITUATION



UNTIL we read the letter written to de Valera by General Smuts, which was published in our papers on Monday morning, we were in the dark as to the nature of the proposals made by Lloyd George for consideration by the Irish people. From that letter it was clear that a bigger offer than had ever before been made to any Irish party since the time of Grattan was now made by the British Government. It was also clear that the offer was not made to an united Ireland but to twenty-six counties, and that Sir James Craig still refused to meet de Valera, with a pig-headed obstinacy which straightway put him in the wrong with reasonable people. And lastly, the Boer statesman confessed sadly that all his efforts to bring the Ulsterman to reason were in vain, and he advised de Valera to accept the offer which was of more than England had given the Boers when they laid down their arms two decades ago now. Beyond what we learned from the letter, we were told that de Valera's letter to Lloyd George was interpreted as a rejection of the terms proposed by the British, and we were left reflecting on the unreliability of cablegrams and on the likelihood that our lack of optimism concerning the settlement was only too well founded.

Another day brought a summary of the Government's offer to Ireland. After a flowery preamble that meant little or nothing in reality while purporting to mean that Ireland was to be offered as much freedom as any of the Dominions, conditions were laid down that made it quite clear that Ireland would if she accepted still be a subject nation, dragooned by the armies and patrolled by the fleets of Great Britain. Ireland was expected to recognise England's paramount

interest and to be content to become a manoeuvring ground for British armies and air forces, while her harbors were to be used at will by British warships. Moreover, while there was not one word said about England's debt to Ireland—a debt which a British Royal Commission declared to amount to hundreds of millions—Ireland was asked to pay her alleged debt to England and to bear a share in the cost of a war which had nothing whatever to do with Ireland. It was also laid down that Ireland's right to impose such restrictions on her imports as might be needful for the support of new industries was to be a matter to be determined according to British interests, and in this way Ireland's one weapon against the murderous Orangemen was to be broken. Lastly, there was an appeal to the example of the Dominions which, it was falsely alleged, had flourished on a basis analogous to that now proposed for Ireland's acceptance. Then came de Valera's reply. He rightly described the British document as confused and self-contradictory, inasmuch as it professed in words what it denied in fact—Ireland's right to true nationhood. It proposed restrictions which meant that Ireland should be content to assume a servile position under England; it made England's dominant and selfish interests and not Ireland's moral rights the basis of the settlement on the lines suggested by the British Government. The tacit or open assertion of England's right to interfere with Irish affairs for the sake of England's interests was written across the whole proposal, and the just and ethically sound principle that as a nation Ireland must have the right to determine for herself her own affairs was quietly ignored from first to last. England was to maintain a mutilated Ireland. The principle laid down at the Commission of the League of Nations to the effect that (as in the case of Aaland) a minority has no right to cut itself off from a majority in a nation was set aside, and, contrary to common sense and true democratic principles, the bigots in Ulster were to be permitted to go on persecuting the Catholic minority in the North-east counties. There was only one course open for de Valera. He could not accept such proposals and he knew it would be useless to put them before the Irish people. He asserted once again, consistent as he always has been, that the Irish people must determine their own affairs without outside aggression, and that the Irish nation is one and indivisible and must be recognised as such. He denied the parity between Ireland and the Dominions. They came into the commonwealth of their own accord and without outside interference, while Ireland was offered the alternatives of coming in or having her people exterminated. The right of self-determination, for which Britain alleged the war was fought, had no place in such an offer. Therefore de Valera rejected it. With regard to the advice of General Smuts, it may be said that however well-meant it was we must not forget that the Irish people are the best judges of their own business. It must also be remembered that England imposed her terms on the Boers as on a beaten foe, whereas the Irish people do not acknowledge by any means that they are beaten: de Valera's present attitude is proof positive that they know they are far from beaten. After three years of war against England South Africa laid down her arms and accepted defeat; after seven hundred years of war with the same enemy Ireland to-day says to England: We will treat with you when you recognise that we are a free and independent nation, but not till then.

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Does this mean that the truce is at an end and that the Black-and-Tans shall be let loose on the Irish women and children again? It is too soon to speak with certainty, but it is our opinion that the end of the conference is not yet. De Valera has left the door open. The points of difference at present are England's assertion of her right to impose restrictions on Irish Customs, to use Ireland at will for naval and military manoeuvres, and to maintain the division arbitrarily set up in Ulster by British politicians. De Valera holds out a promise that naval and military matters shall be adjusted satisfactorily by treaty, not

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