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(To be read at all Meetings)

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS.

Secretary's Seasonable Message to all Members of our Order.

A Happy Christmas and a better and brighter New Year than we have for some time known to all our Brothers and Sisters of the Order! We are nearing the end of another year, and preparing to face 1928 with that spirit of loyalty, optimism, and co-operation, which has served us in the past. Our Organisation has faced many trials and some tribulation, but it has survived a period of peril without parallel, and has triumphantly stood the "acid test" which was so ruthlessly applied. Let it be our pride and glory to forgive, even if we cannot always forget, and in the spirit of that Christian Charity which we emblazon on our banners, to bury in a blessed oblivion the evil memory of the calumnies that have been hurled against us, and the wrongs we have been forced to endure. This is all the easier for us, for the Ancient Order of Hibernians is the one and only Irish organisation which, tried in the fiery crucible of the last dozen years, has come out vindicated—the only organisation whose far-extending ramifications are coterminous with the world-wide membership of the race of the sea-divided Gael. Old societies that once flourished exceedingly strong have been submerged and are now but a fading memory. Others sprang into being, but to enjoy an ephemeral existence. They were as evanescent as the political excitements that gave them birth. Their disappearance has been as rapid as their uprise. In their orientation were the seeds of their own decay. They lacked the unchanging truth on which Hibernianism is based—that friendship, unity and charity which in our Organisation are as inseparable as the triple leaves that constitute our national emblem. They come; they go; but Hibernianism lives on. The purposes for which the A.O.H. exists are permanent, though the particular channels through which those purposes manifest themselves may vary from time to time as the change of years creates new problems, and develops its own particular needs.

This month will see the election of officers on whom in the new year will devolve the responsibility of guiding and inspiring the various Divisions and County Boards. In many cases old officers will be retained in recognition of old services loyally rendered, and which are accepted as a guarantee of active work in the year that lies before us. In other cases "new blood" will be transfused into the veins of the Organisation, with, we are entitled to hope, rejuvenating and revivifying effects.

The reign of terror has disappeared and men may now, without fear of sinister consequences, call their souls their own. The time is therefore opportune for a new advance in the work of organisation. Fresh recruits must now be ripe for enrolment.

Our Organisation is a safety-valve for the patriotic enthusiasm of youth, so liable to be misled into the ways of violence and secret societies, membership of which entails the severest censures of the Church. Thousands of our young men have within the last ten or twelve years, by reason of their association with the Ancient Order of Hibernians, been saved from disastrous entanglements in the meshes of these subterranean organisations, and from moral and mayhap actual complicity in deeds that have shocked our common humanity. The danger, though no longer so widespread, still exists. Membership of the A.O.H. is one of the surest safeguards against the perils that secret societies involve.

The work of the Order is twofold. Our Organisation stands for fidelity to the Faith, loyalty to the principles of our religion, and defence of its rights. It stands also for freedom for an undivided, unpartitioned Ireland; it inculcates brotherhood; it preaches patriotism; it instils into its members counsels of prudence, moderation, sanity, justice, and fairplay; it advocates friendship towards men of all creeds, but claims that the children of the Old Faith shall hold no second place in the land of St. Patrick; it teaches and affords opportunities for the practice of thrift. The care of the widow and the orphan, left helpless by the death of a breadwinner, who had been an active worker and enrolled amongst its senior members, is, as far as their resources will permit, the object of the special care of local committees. Its halls are centres of social and intellectual enjoyment, where friendships are fostered and fraternity made a living, virile force. Broadly national in its scope it seeks the promotion of all good causes by justifiable means. Unfortunately, many of our kith and kin have still to seek a home across the Atlantic or beneath the Southern Cross. Membership of the A.O.H. is a valuable introduction to the best class of Irishmen in the big industrial centres of America and Australia.

There are, therefore, myriad reasons to build up and broaden our Organisation. What better tribute can be paid to its work than the loyalty and fidelity with which so many thousands have for long years clung to its membership, and felt a sense of national pride and self-respect in the fact that they were Hibernians.

To one and all then, in conclusion, we tender our best wishes for a Happy Christmas and the brightest of bright New Years.

JOHN D. NUGENT,
National Secretary.

IMPORTANT CONFERENCE.

Interesting discussion on the Order's attitude towards Politics.

PROVINCIAL BOARDS SET UP.

A conference of delegates, summoned in compliance with a decision of the A.O.H. Convention in Dundalk, was held in the Central Offices of the Organisation, on Thursday, 17th November. Members of the National Board attended, as well as delegates representing the various counties within the Free State. The conference was presided over by Mr. James Stafford.

Amongst those present were:—Rev. John McCafferty, P.P.; Stranorlar; Bros. M. J. Henry, Derry; J. Currie and James Donnelly, Scotland; W. O'Byrne and J. G. Kennedy, Belfast; Peter Reilly, Dublin; J. Horgan, Cork; C. Ward, Donegal; C. W. Chabrel, Wales; G. Ryder, Division 762, Ballina; J. Jennings, Division 1238, Naas; B. Heavy, Division 680, Athlone; J. Mullins, Division 1303, Longford; P. Hogan, Division 67, Dublin; J. J. Johnson, Division 1235, Limerick; N. McKenna, Division 732, Dublin; John Ayres, Division 334, Dublin; M. O'Donohoe, Tipperary; M. Sheridan, Division 69, Dublin; J. McDonald, Division 854, Waterford; J. Doyle, Arklow; Jas. McNamee, Division 68, Dublin; J. Everard, Division 653, Dublin; J. Coburn, T.D., Louth; P. J. Neary, Louth; J. McKeown, Mullingar; J. Nolan, County President, Dublin; James A. Nugent, County Secretary, Dublin; L. O'Toole, C.E., Arklow; and John D. Nugent, National Secretary.

SECRETARY'S REPORT.

The Secretary submitted a report on the position of the Organisation and explained the circumstances under which the delegates were called together. When the report had been read, the National Secretary asked the views of the conference as to whether it should be discussed as a whole or in sections.

On the motion of Brother Johnston, Division 1235, Limerick, it was unanimously decided to discuss the different sections of the report separately.

Brother Johnston then proposed that the National Officers should act as officers of the Provincial Board.

Brother McKeown, Division 947, Mullingar, seconded the proposal, which was adopted unanimously.

The question of fixing the dates for the holding of the half-yearly meetings of the Board was then considered, and on the motion of Brother Neary, County Secretary for Louth, seconded by Brother Johnston, it was agreed to hold the meetings on the Tuesday following the First Friday in February and October.

NEW DISTRICT BOARDS.

The suggestions in the report for the formation of District Boards was next dealt with. The scheme outlined in the report recommended that Divisions should be grouped into the following District Boards, having regard to the membership in the area, travelling facilities, electoral organisation, and facilities for organising.

The creation of the following District Boards was agreed to without discussion, their membership being in excess of the required number, viz.:—(1) Dublin City Divisions, (2) Central Leinster, consisting of Dublin County, Meath and Wicklow, (3) Cork City and County, (4) Donegal, (5) Louth, and (6) Cavan.

The proposal that District (7) should consist of Waterford, Kilkenny, Wexford and South Tipperary was passed on the motion of Brother O'Donoghue, Division 817, Tipperary; seconded by Brother McDonnell, Division 854, Waterford.

District (8) it was suggested should be called East Connaught, and should include Westmeath, Longford, Leitrim and Roscommon.

Brother McKeown proposed its adoption, and said one of the purposes of the new District Boards would be to carry out the work of organisation so that new Divisions might be formed.

Brother Mullins, Division 1303, Longford, seconded Brother McKeown's proposal, which was unanimously agreed to.

The proposal that District (9), entitled West Connaught, should include Sligo and Mayo was agreed to, on the motion of Brother Ryder, Division 762, Ballina, Mayo.

In reference to the suggestion that District (10) should consist of Limerick and Kerry. Brother Johnston, Limerick, expressed agreement, but inquired how it was proposed that they in Limerick should get into touch with Kerry. The National Secretary said the simplest way would be for the delegates attending the Provincial Board to attend a conference in Tralee after each Provincial Board Meeting. The proposed formation of District (10) was then agreed to.

The suggested scales of expenses to be allowed to delegates to Provincial Boards, both those who can return home the day of meeting and those who are compelled to remain in Dublin overnight, were adopted.

THE A.O.H. AND POLITICS.

The National Secretary said that one of the difficulties constantly confronting those at the head of the Organisation was the demand for a lead in a policy for Hibernians. This demand mainly came from those who had been enthusiastic supporters of the old policy of support for the constitutional movement under Mr. Dillon and Mr. Redmond. They must, however, recognise that a new situation has arisen in the Free State. Their Organisation had strong friends in many parties in the present Dail, and he thought it would be a mistake to identify themselves with any particular party at present. The position in the Free State was, however, entirely different from that in Northern Ireland. In the Six Counties they had a party fighting for Catholic rights and National unity of which their President was a prominent member. The Northern Government was composed of and supported by the old Orange Ascendancy. Therefore, it was the clear and obvious duty of the A.O.H. in Northern Ireland to support the party which stood for the defence of Catholic interests and the unity of Ireland.

THE POSITION IN SCOTLAND.

In Scotland a large number of Hibernians were supporters of the Labour Party, and as regards representation on Public Boards three-fourths of the Hibernians actively supported the Labour Candidates. Catholics, however, while sympathetic towards Labour found themselves occasionally up against some sinister purpose which found favour in Labour circles, as for instance, the advocacy of birth control, and distribution of

objectionable leaflets and the circulation of objectionable books through the Public Libraries. The suggestion had been put forward that as a protest Hibernians and other Catholics should withdraw from the Labour Party. He (Mr. Nugent) and his colleagues were of opinion that that would not be a judicious or an advisable policy to pursue. They felt that Hibernians inside the Party would wield a more powerful and effective influence than by cutting themselves adrift.

In England and in some places in Scotland a number of Hibernians and their friends were Moderates, and their influence on the Party, they might be sure, would be extended for the protection and advancement of the Catholic ideals of their Organisation.

GOOD WORK IN WALES.

In Wales, as might be seen by a perusal of the exceedingly admirable booklet which the Organisation there had issued, entitled *Hibernianism in Wales: its Past and Future*, the A.O.H. had set itself to supply an antidote to the poisonous propaganda of Communism and Socialism of the non-Catholic type. Their purpose, as expressed with admirable clearness, was to counteract "specious doctrines," which, as pointed out, "appeal to unthinking Catholics, who gradually find themselves involved in a web of false doctrines which ultimately leads to loss of Faith."

Members of the A.O.H. sometimes expressed a difficulty in understanding why their Society supported Labour in Scotland and not in the Free State, or why a distinctive Catholic policy was pursued in the Six Counties and not in the Twenty-six. Might he say in reply to some of the criticisms levelled at those who were guiding the policy of the Order that all their members would do well to observe how the old reactionary Tories and bigoted Ascendancy organisations reversed their open hostility, and, serpent-like, gathered around the flesh-pots of Government in the Free State and have to-day more influence in the control of wealth and of the Government of this portion of Ireland than they had even in the days of the British regime. They made it their special business to permeate the body politic with their influence and with marvellous subtlety to wield their power without the display of that power being made too manifest. With that statement of his views he left the question of policy for the discussion of the Conference and would be glad to hear their views.

WORK FOR HIBERNIANS.

Brother McKeown strongly supported the views put forward by the National Secretary. If Hibernians were going to support candidates at elections they should first discuss the matter at their Division Meetings, and then support those who were Hibernians or were friendly towards the A.O.H., apart from any purely political attachments. It was somewhat on those lines that the old Ascendancy Party was acting, and they all knew that that Party were largely running the country at the present time. He knew many members of the Ascendancy class had a mighty influence with Catholics in the country, and used that influence to achieve their own ends with results detrimental to the interests of Catholics and Catholicity. Catholics were the overwhelming majority in the Free State, and if they were only properly organised in a Society such as the A.O.H., and worked with one accord they could rule the State instead of allowing control to a large extent to slip into the hands of their enemies. He proposed the adoption of the policy outlined in the National Secretary's Report and in the speech which they had just heard.

Brother Heavey, Division 680, Athlone, said he thought Divisions should devote more attention to social questions. He advocated the extension to the Free State of social reforms already in operation in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Politics, he said, had been the curse of the country.

Brother Mullen, Division 1303, Longford, emphatically dissented from Brother Heavey's statement that politics had been a curse in Ireland, and pointed to the marvellous record of splendid reforms, social, political, religious, and agrarian, that had been achieved through and by the political movement led by Parnell, Dillon and Redmond. At the last election he, a farmer, was canvassing for Labour, and with success. He did so because the Labour man was a Hibernian, and showed his interest in the Organisation by discharging the duties of Vice-President of Athlone Division.

Brother Heavey explained that his reference had been intended to apply to the politics of recent years.

Brother Byrne, Division 740, Arklow, said he thought the time was opportune to leave sectional or party politics out of the Order.

A MISUNDERSTOOD WORD.

The National Secretary said he considered that the word politics was misunderstood. It was highly advisable that every citizen should be a politician, for politics properly understood was but citizenship in action; but a proper appreciation of politics was a very different thing from committing or trying to commit their Organisation to the support of sectional politics. It was both the duty and interest of every citizen to exercise his vote and act in whatever way they conceived to be for the best interests of the country. It might be that the duty would become urgent and imperative.

SOCIAL REFORMS TO BE AIMED AT.

As to social reforms it was their intention to start, through their Approved Society, a movement in favour of the provision of pensions for widows and orphans; contributory pensions for workers at the age of sixty-five; the improvement of the Old Age Pensions scheme by raising it to the same level as in the Six Counties; and the abolition of the provisions for penalising thrift, a feature so objectionable and unjust that it had been long since repealed both in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Then again there were questions, such as housing for instance, in connection with which conditions more favourable to the working classes prevailed in the Six Counties than in the Free State. Elections in the Free State had been conducted too much on the lines of sectional politics. Voters voted, not so much for a principle or a policy as for a label. They in the Hibernian Order should view politics and Parties from a more realistic standpoint. They had examples in Louth and in other counties of what could be done.

Brother Johnston, Limerick, said he would like to have Party politics tabooed. Divisions should concentrate on social reforms and avoid mere sectional politics.

Brother Coburn, T.D., Dundalk, said they could not divorce politics from the Hibernian Organisation. He knew the feeling in several counties where the electors were anxious to support a Party imbued with the principles and upholding the policy—so far as these might be necessarily modified by the change in circumstances—which they had supported for the last twenty-five years.

WHAT WAS DONE IN LOUTH AND CAVAN.

Take the cases of Louth, Monaghan, Donegal and Cavan. There the members of the A.O.H. were thick and thin supporters of the policy advocated by the old Irish Party, and their loyalty was to a candidate who maintained the Ideals of that Party. The Hibernian Organisation would not be what it is to-day in Louth only because it was held together by enthusiasm for the principles which Mr. John Redmond and his colleagues typified, and it would be well if in the future that fact was recognised. People there, Hibernians especially, were only waiting for an

opportunity of showing how willing and ready they are to rally to a Party formed on the lines of the Irish Party. The Hibernians in Louth were numerous and powerful. They had not become influential by being acquiescent during the last seven or eight years. They had not allowed the old spirit to die out as he feared had been the case in the South and West. It was as a representative of that spirit he had fought his election in Louth. Whilst he agreed in the main with the suggestion that Party politics should be excluded, yet he could not ignore the fact that as far as the counties he had mentioned were concerned they would not occupy the position they did to-day in those counties only for their politics. That was why the National Secretary was deluged with calls asking for a lead as to the future policy. There was a large percentage of their people wanting a successor to the old Irish Party. It might perhaps be as well if that question were not decided in a hurry there that day. He knew plenty of members who would never have been in the A.O.H. only for its old political associations, and who now thought they had a mission to work for the unity of Ireland, and to vindicate the policy and principles of the Party to which their life-long allegiance had been given, and to show that there was still some little semblance of political gratitude left in our people.

FATHER McCAFFERTY'S VIEWS.

Father McCafferty, the National Chaplain, said he found himself in full agreement with Mr. Nugent as to the policy which he suggested should be pursued. He believed that each county should decide for itself the Party to be supported. That was what was done by his own county. At the June election they supported a certain candidate and Party and placed that candidate almost at the head of the poll. At the succeeding election they did not put forward any candidate. He should not like to disassociate himself from politics, but whilst he thought they should take an intelligent interest in politics generally, the question of a candidate or Party to be supported should, under present circumstances, be left to the decision of the Divisions in each constituency, after consultation with the Provincial Board.

With regard to Hibernians inaugurating a political party of their own it might be that a Party would come into existence whose policy and principles would generally commend themselves to the great body of the members of their Order. If so, it would then be for their Organisation to decide what their future policy would be.

APATHY HELPS ASCENDANCY.

Brother John J. Horgan, Cork, said he was generally in agreement with what Father McCafferty had said. For Hibernians to initiate a Party would not be judicious at the moment, but County and Provincial Boards could meet in their own districts and give an opinion which might be taken as a lead as to the candidates to be supported. To divorce politics entirely from their Organisation would be a great mistake. It would be an advantage if they had in the Dail sufficient influence to call attention to the manner in which the Departmental Boards were discharging their duties. Public Boards were entitled to information as to the qualifications of the candidates who were receiving appointments from the Appointments or Selection Committees. There were any amount of reasons why they should take an interest in the questions of that kind, for Catholic interests might be seriously affected. It behoved Hibernians and Catholics generally to work in closer co-operation. The business of the country was in the hands of the old Ascendancy Party and that was largely due to Catholic apathy and lack of organisation.

Brother McDonnell, Division 854, Waterford, followed on the same lines. The time had come, he said, when the A.O.H. would have to be reorganised on militant Catholic lines.

Brother McDonnell gave several instances of the sinister influences at work at the present time, all tending to the detriment

of Catholic interests. That was because Catholics were not organised.

ANOTHER VOICE FROM LOUTH.

Brother Neary, Louth County Board, said he was in full accord with the suggestions put forward by the Executive. He did not believe the time had come when they should divorce politics from their Organisation. If they in Louth had separated politics from Hibernianism in the past they would never have been able to hold the Organisation as they had held it. As a result they had their county very well represented, and were able to return a Hibernian always identified with the National spirit of the country. If they proceeded on these lines in every other county the time would not be far distant when they would be able to lay the foundation of an acceptable Party of Nationalists, who would be able to sway the rest of Ireland and give a lead to the Nationalists all over the country. It would not be wise to think of divorcing politics from their Organisation.

Brother Horgan said that in the event of a General Election it might be well to summon the Provincial Board to consider the matter.

The National Secretary said that the Ascendancy Party had got control of Irish capital, but with a proper organisation to fight it it would be unable to maintain the control, because the real wealth of the nation was the food it produced and the people who consumed the food. All the rest was merely exchange. If they had the men who owned and tilled the soil and those who consumed the produce of the soil organised so that they would deal with Catholics the whole Ascendancy combination would collapse. When Germany wanted to Germanize Poland she provided a fund to enable young Germans to purchase land in Poland, so that they might get control of food production. The Poles soon found that they were being pushed out. To meet this menace they started an organisation whose effective methods so nettled the Kaiser that he paid an official visit to Poland, and the German colony proceeded to organise the usual official welcome with bunting and decorations and its usual addresses of loyalty from tuft-hunters, which we so well know in Ireland. The Kaiser enraged at this manifestation declared that Germans they were and Germans they would remain. The Poles, however, strengthened their forces and by unity broke down the German organisation. The Catholics in Germany also started a Centre Party, and they brought Bismarck to his knees. In the days of Balfour's oppressive regime the authorities found that they could not get anyone to take the land. Then the Property Defence Association started a movement to capture the land for the bigoted minority, but the plan fizzled out. Businesses conducted by bigots were also utilised. Young men from the North of Ireland were imported. Most of these were brought up in Proselytising Institutions. They were trained in the grocery, drapery, and other business establishments. They were financed and kept in touch with the markets, and they in many cases ousted their Catholic rivals who adopted happy-go-lucky methods and lacked scientific training. These facts were a warning and a guide. By unity and organisation the Catholics of Ireland, particularly in the Free State, could to-day counter the forces that were always the deadly enemies of Irish Nationalism and Irish Catholicity.

At the conclusion of the National Secretary's speech, the suggestions contained in his report were agreed to.

OTHER QUESTIONS DISCUSSED.

A proposal that all members who have had twenty-five years' membership in good standing and attained the age of seventy years should be exempt from National Levies, and that all information regarding age, occupation and employment (if any) be furnished to the Secretary, so that he could have an actuarial investigation as to feasibility of providing some benefits to submit to next Convention was agreed to.

Another proposal to provide a special certificate of membership was also agreed to.

Brother Coburn drew attention to the question of providing for the widows and orphans of the members of the Organisation. In Louth their work in this direction was one of the best assets they had in extending their influence. The question was one that should be brought forcibly before members of their Order not only in the Free State but also in Great Britain and Wales.

The National Secretary said that this had been also one of the active purposes of their Organisation in Dublin. He was sure that if every District Board took the matter up with energy it could do something in the same direction.

A suggestion in regard to a subscription to the Western Disaster Fund was left to the consideration of the Divisions themselves.

Brother O'Toole, Arklow, expressed the view that steps should be taken to revive old Divisions that had dropped out.

The National Secretary said it was their intention to get out pamphlets useful for organising.

The Conference then concluded.

NORTHERN IRELAND.

PROVINCIAL BOARD ESTABLISHED AT A CONFERENCE IN BELFAST.

A Conference was held in accordance with the decision of the last Convention for the formation of a Provincial Board for Northern Ireland. Mr. Joseph Devlin, National President, presiding. Also present, Messrs. Patrick McKenna, County President, Armagh; M. J. Henry, J.P., County President, Derry; H. K. McAleer, M.C.C., County President, Tyrone; Luke Devlin, County President, Antrim; J. Denvir, County President, Down; J. Collins, P.L.G., County President, Belfast; J. G. Kennedy, Belfast; J. Diffin, B.L., Belfast; R. Doherty, Derry; William O'Byrne, Belfast; and John D. Nugent, National Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting having been read the representatives of the various County Boards made reports on the condition of the Order in their counties.

A letter from the County President of Fermanagh, resigning his position, having been read it was decided to refer the organising of the county to the National Secretary in consultation with the County President of Tyrone.

The National Secretary submitted a report on the present position of the Order in Northern Ireland, recommendations made by the Biennial Convention, rules, constitution of Provincial Board, dates of meetings constitution and election of officers.

The constitution of the Provincial Board was considered, and after a general discussion the National Officers were strongly urged and subsequently agreed to act for the ensuing twelve months as officers of the Provincial Board.

After discussion, it was recommended that the meetings be held on the Thursday after the First Friday in February, July and October.

Arrangements were made that in future the travelling expenses of Provincial Board representatives attending Provincial Board Meetings should be defrayed out of the portion of National Levies allocated for Provincial organising.

Matters of a general nature having been discussed the meeting adjourned.

The National Board at a subsequent meeting considered the recommendation as to the dates for the Northern Ireland Meetings, and decided that two meetings in the year would be sufficient, viz.:—on the Thursday after the First Friday in February and October, but with the provision that a special meeting be called at any time with the consent of the National officers, or a majority of the members of the Provincial Board.

THE ORDER IN WALES.

TREATY SETTLEMENT OPENS UP NEW FIELDS OF ACTIVITY.

The vigorous growth of Hibernianism in Wales and the great possibilities that lie before the Organisation are effectively illustrated in a handsome illustrated booklet just issued, entitled: *Hibernianism in Wales: its Past and its Future*. A full-page half-tone etching of the Head Office in Cardiff and a portrait of the Provincial Director (Alderman F. H. Turnbull, K.C., S.G.), together with half-page etchings of Mr. A. P. Quinn, F.I.S.A., A.L.A.A. (Hon. Treasurer), and Mr. C. W. Chabrel, A.F.I. (Provincial Secretary) serve as frontispieces.

In brief compass the writer of the pamphlet sets out lucidly the aims of the Organisation, summarises its work in the past, adumbrates new forms of its activities and sketches the manifold ways in which the A.O.H. in Wales caters for the benefit of Irish Catholics in the Principality. It is now some fifteen years since the Society was reorganised in Wales. Fortune favoured the new development. A man of high character, immense influence, and boundless enthusiasm coupled with a sound judgment and business instincts became just then interested in the Organisation—Alderman Turnbull. It was no ephemeral interest he displayed in the building up of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Wales. From that day to this he has been "guide, philosopher and friend," and to-day, as Provincial Director, he is, if possible, more deeply interested than ever in all that concerns the Order.

When Mr. J. D. Nugent, as Secretary for the A.O.H., took up the work of rebuilding the A.O.H. in Wales the Society was almost in *articulo mortis*; there was less than four pounds in the exchequer; there were serious liabilities to the surviving members for death and sickness claims. Mr. Nugent recognising and appreciating the position of those who had still struggled to carry on under adverse circumstances, allowed them to continue members of the rejuvenated A.O.H. on specially favoured terms.

It is a comparatively short time since the A.O.H. was thus started on a new career of progress and prosperity, and the wonderful strides made in the interval are the best proof that those who control the Organisation are alive to their responsibilities, and keenly alert to avail of every opportunity of increasing its utility. The setting up of a National Government for twenty-six counties in Ireland and the acceptance of the Treaty and all that it implies, have naturally created an entirely new position as affecting the former political activities of the Order in Great Britain.

"While there is," observes the writer of the pamphlet, "no longer a necessity to be organised for the cause of Ireland, there is an increasingly urgent need for Catholics to be organised and united for political as well as social purposes. The Education question is by no means settled; indeed, this serious problem is more acute than ever. The many injustices under which Catholics labour must be remedied, and the struggle to secure equality of treatment of our fellow-citizens will necessarily be an arduous one."

Thus it will be seen that what promises to be a new and fruitful field of activity opens up for the Ancient Order in Wales. Our Irish Catholic people there are faced with special difficulties, menaced by new dangers, beset by insidious propaganda hostile to our religion and threatening the whole fabric of Christian civilisation. In the A.O.H. they will find an Organisation to champion their interests, to defend their rights, to preserve their Irish birthright of the Faith and to promote their social and material welfare. These are wholly desirable and beneficent purposes. Those in control of the Organisation in Wales may be relied on to make the Hibernian Organisation a virile and effective instrument in cementing the bonds of Irish unity and advancing those great interests which our Organisation was founded to champion and defend.

NATIONAL BOARD A.O.H.

Arrangements for future meetings of National and Provincial Boards.

A meeting of the National Board was held on Wednesday, 16th November, at the Central Offices, 1 Mountjoy Square, Dublin, Mr. James Stafford presiding. Also present, Rev. John McCafferty, P.P., Stranorlar, County Donegal, Chancellor of the Diocese of Raphoe; J. E. Blewitt, M.D., J.P., Belfast; James G. Kennedy, Belfast; M. J. Henry, J.P., Derry; P. Reilly, J.P., Dublin; J. Horgan, Cork; John Currie and James Donnelly, Provincial Directors for Scotland; and John D. Nugent, National Secretary.

Letters regretting inability to attend were received from Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P.; Councillor F. H. Turnbull, Wales; J. J. Scannell, Dublin; P. J. Duffy, J.P., England; and H. K. McAleer, Co. C., Tyrone.

The Secretary read the report and statement of accounts, which were passed unanimously on the motion of Brother Reilly, seconded by Brother Kennedy.

On the question of future meetings of the National Board it was decided, in view of the establishment of the various Provincial Boards, that such frequent meetings of the National Board would not be necessary, but that one annual meeting should be held in the month of July; that an Executive, consisting of the National Officers and the members of the Board resident in Dublin, be empowered to act on behalf of the Board should necessity arise; and that a special meeting of the Board may be called at any time by the National Secretary.

Reports of the proceedings of the Biennial Conventions of the National Health Insurance Sections of Northern Ireland and Great Britain and of the Free State were submitted.

The constitution of the Ulster Provincial Board, as adopted at the meeting held in Belfast, was agreed to; also the recommendation of the Secretary regarding the Free State Provincial Board.

The Board agreed that half-yearly meetings of the Free State and the Northern Ireland Provincial Boards would be sufficient.

The question of a separate Provincial Board for Wales was considered, and referred to the Secretary to deal with. Arrangements regarding the formation of a Provincial Board for England were left to the Secretary to carry out at as early a date as possible.

AT MR. DEVLIN'S CALL.

Over £600 raised for victims of disaster on the West Coast of Ireland.

As the result of an "American Tea" given by Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P., at his new residence, Ardriagh, Antrim Road, Belfast, a sum of over £600 has been raised for the relief of the victims of the fishing disaster on the West Coast of Ireland. Representatives of all sections attended in response to Mr. Devlin's appeal in the cause of Charity. The Lord Mayor of Belfast and the Lady Mayoress attended, as did also the Speaker of the Northern Ireland House of Commons, the Right Honourable Hugh O'Neill, and the Minister of Finance, the Right Honourable H. M. Pollock. A delightful musical entertainment was provided by well-known artistes, and brief, but eloquent and sympathetic, speeches were delivered by Mr. Devlin, the Speaker, the Minister of Finance, and Sir Robert Baird.

The success of the function was a tribute at once to the generosity of the people of Northern Ireland, and to the unique popularity of the senior Member for West Belfast.

"THE PATRIOT CARDINAL"

Disappointed and hurt by people's ingratitude to Irish Party.

In the course of an eloquent panegyric on the late Cardinal O'Donnell, preached on the occasion of the Month's Mind, in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, on November 23, the Most Rev. Dr. MacRory, Bishop of Down and Connor, referred to the intense love of country which distinguished the great Primate.

"Nothing," said His Lordship, "showed better the place which His Eminence held, even at an early period, in the minds and hearts of his countrymen than the fact that more than thirty years ago he presided at the Convention of the Irish Race held in Dublin, with a view to making peace between the discordant elements in the Irish political world of the time.

"At the 1917 Convention he was one of the representatives of the Irish Bishops. Like the other Convention to which he had referred, this, too, had failed in its object. Perhaps it was never meant to succeed, but only to mark time. At any rate, the Bishop of Raphoe was one of its ablest and most prominent members, and foremost among those who stood for Ireland's full control of her own taxation. Following the failure of the Convention, and the threat of conscription, came the overwhelming defeat of the Irish Party in the 1918 General Election.

"From that time onward he might be said to have taken no part in politics. But I have reason to believe," added His Lordship, "that he remained till his death in sympathy with the aims and methods of the Irish Party. The rejection of the Party by the country disappointed and hurt him, but he was too broadminded—too much of a statesman—to show any pettiness or seek to stand in the way of the attainment of the new ideals."

NATIONAL BOARD'S TRIBUTE TO MEMORY OF GREAT PRELATE AND PATRIOT.

At a meeting of the Board of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, held on Wednesday, November 16th, at the offices, 1 Mountjoy Square, Dublin, the Vice-President (Mr. James Stafford), in the chair, On the motion of the Very Rev. John McCafferty, P.P., Stranorlar, County Donegal, Chancellor of the Diocese of Raphoe; seconded by Mr. John J. Horgan, Cork, the following resolution was passed in silence:—

"That we, the members of the National Board of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, at this, our first meeting since the deeply-lamented death of Cardinal O'Donnell, Archbishop of Armagh, and Primate of all Ireland, desire to place on record our sense of the irreparable loss which Ireland and the Irish race have sustained. A great churchman, a far-seeing statesman, a devoted patriot, his splendid gifts and exalted personality were a priceless asset to the nation. We join with the millions of our people in all parts of the world in mourning for his demise and in paying tribute to his noble memory."

THE DEAN AND THE GAEL.

A LAW TO OSTRACISE THE "LOW-GRADE IRISH."

In Dean Inge's anxiety to trace his descent from Apes, Anthropoids and Chimpanzees, there is no reason why Irishmen, especially Irish Catholics, should be in the slightest degree interested. Everyone to his taste, as the girl said when she kissed her cow. He is a Minister of the Gospel, a high ecclesiastic in the Church of England, one of the "intellectuals" who are finding out that our ideas of God must be modified to suit the teachings of Darwin and the principles of the neo-Malthusians. He wants the Ten Commandments scrapped, and a new "Scientific" Decalogue established in their place. To satisfy the Dean a "new morality" based on Eugenics must replace the old morality of the Christian Faith. Not on the Rock of Peter, but on the shifting sands of speculative faddists, whose theories are ever in a state of flux, is Dean Inge's ideal Church and science-directed religion to be based. Well that is purely Dean Inge's affair, and the business of those who are finding the Church of England dissolving into mutually repellent factions.

DECLARATION OF AN ANTI-IRISH WAR.

But the setting up of a new God, a new religion, and a new morality is not enough to exhaust the energies of the gloomy Dean. He has pronounced an Anathema against the Irish race. Their adherence to Christian beliefs, to Catholic dogmas, to the teachings of the Ten Commandments, to the practice of the old morality are in direct conflict with his materialistic visions. His teachings will tend to that race suicide in Great Britain, which so seriously imperilled France in her conflict with the prolific Germans, and may again bring about a fresh menace to the future of the French nation.

But if British industry is to survive, the disappearing Britisher must be replaced by the progressive Irishman. The Rev. Duncan Cameron, ex-Moderator of Glasgow Presbytery, envisages a "Scotland ceasing to be Scottish within the next fifty years." Therefore, it is that Dean Inge fulminates against "the unrestricted influx of low-grade Irish into Liverpool, Glasgow and the West of Scotland generally." To make easy the way for the new Paganism, Dean Inge calls for an Irish Exclusion Act to keep the Irish out of Great Britain. He may find it a proposition that will baffle even the ingenuity of Inge, but meantime it is idle to disguise from ourselves the fact that his anti-Irish tirade has let loose the dogs of bigotry, who are out on a fresh anti-Irish and anti-Catholic campaign.

A CHALLENGE TO BE MET.

This is a direct challenge to the Irish race, and it is a challenge that must be met. Dean Inge has, no doubt, calculated on our weakness to-day as the aftermath of bitter political dissensions. He thinks the time is opportune to launch anew a campaign of bigotry and hate. At this crisis the Ancient Order of Hibernians is the one and the only Organisation in existence which can claim in the words of our National President, "never to have thrown a chip upon the fires of faction." Might not a clarion call then appropriately be sounded by the A.O.H. in the cause of the Irish race, and in defence of the menaced interests of our Faith? It would be a call free from any political tinge, and untainted by any sectional associations.

IT IS UP TO HIBERNIANS.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians has spread its ramifications into every big industrial centre in Great Britain. Its influence extends to the United States, to Canada and to South Africa. The Hibernians in America and Australia are governed by

their own Executives, but they are united in objects and in Constitution to the Organisation at home. In South Africa there are some branches which were started by the home Organisation and keep in constant communication with it.

Our Organisation is neither pro-British nor anti-British, but when it is assailed, as it is now being assailed, by clerical agnostics like Dean Inge and clerical bigots like the Rev. Duncan Cameron, it may be necessary to call for a closer combination for self-defence. It is not easy to secure exact statistics of the prominent positions which the so-called "low-grade Irish" occupy in the public, commercial, industrial, intellectual and social life of Great Britain, but we do know that there is scarcely a Borough Council or Local Government Board in which you will not find Irishmen making valuable contributions of their brains and energies to great public interests.

WHERE THE IRISH HAVE "MADE GOOD."

Many of the Borough Councils throughout England have had from time to time Mayors, Chairmen of Committees, and capable officials who were either Irishmen by birth or the sons of the "low-grade Irish," against whom Dean Inge would launch his ukase of national ostracism. The same "low-grade Irishmen" have given to the service of the Empire many of the most brilliant nation builders, whose genius has founded and cemented and adorned the mighty fabric of Dominion greatness. Some of them branded as felons in their own land, have risen to the very highest positions in the Colonies, been honoured by the Sovereign under whose name they had been treated as Dean Inge would treat us all. His threats need have no terrors, if we but unite, and we do not see any organisation so fitted for the purpose of defending both Faith and Fatherland as the A.O.H.

SOCIAL REFORMS.

HOW NORTHERN IRELAND SETS A HEADLINE FOR THE FREE STATE.

For the widows and orphans in the Free State absolutely no provision is made. Their condition is often deplorable beyond the power of words to express. The wages of the ordinary worker with a family, even when in constant employment, is seldom so large as to leave any margin to lay by as provision for the proverbial rainy day. The Act passed by the Northern Parliament is by no means as generous or as comprehensive as might be desired, but it is a good beginning, and well begun is half done. The exact purpose of the Act is to make provision for pensions for widows, orphans, and persons between the ages of sixty-five and seventy—not all widows and orphans, it may be pointed out. That will come later. A law that provides for one deserving section of those who are bereaved and left without their breadwinners, whilst another section, no less helpless and no less deserving, are abandoned to their fate, sets up an unfair distinction that sooner or later must disappear. The pensions for widows and orphans under the Act stand on a different basis from those provided for old people of the age of seventy and upwards. They are contributory pensions. They embody the principle of insurance, and they only apply to beneficiaries between the ages of sixty-five and seventy.

The Act provides that the widow of a man insured under the National Health Insurance Act shall, on compliance with certain statutory provisions, be entitled to a pension of ten shillings a week, with an additional allowance in respect of children at the rate of five shillings a week for the eldest or only child, and three shillings a week for each other child.

What is known as the "Orphan's Pension" is a pension at the rate of seven shillings and sixpence a week for each of the orphan children of either an insured man or an insured widow.

The Old Age Pension under this Act is a pension at the rate of ten shillings a week to an insured man or an insured woman who has attained the age of sixty-five, but not the age of seventy, and to the wife of an insured man where such wife has attained the age of sixty-five, but not the age of seventy. Thus it will be seen that an insured workman and his wife may each be drawing ten shillings a week pension at the same time within the specified age limits.

The age limit up to which pensions are payable to children is fourteen, but this is extended to sixteen years where the child remains under full time instruction in a day school.

In order to prevent what is regarded as fraudulent in its nature, namely, the marriage of elderly men to women simply in order that such women should become entitled to a widow's pension special provisions are set out in the Act.

The widow of an insured man who had attained the age of sixty at the date of the marriage will not be entitled to a widow's pension unless either there is or has been one or more children of the marriage, or that at least three years have elapsed since the marriage at the time of the husband's death, or that immediately before the marriage she was in receipt of a widow's pension. If a widow remarries before attaining the age of seventy, naturally, her "widow's pension" comes to an end.

It has already been stated that certain statutory conditions are laid down which must be complied with in order to obtain widows' pensions, and orphans' pensions. These pensions are payable when:—

(a) 104 weeks have elapsed and 104 contributions have been paid in respect of the insured person since the date of his entry into insurance; and

(b) Where 208 weeks or more have elapsed and the number of contributions paid or deemed to have been paid for the three years prior to his death or the date on which contributions ceased to be payable by or in respect of him by reason of his age represents an average of 26 contributions in respect of each of the three years.

In regard to contributory Old Age Pensions it is necessary:—

(a) That the person should have been continuously insured for at least five years prior to attaining the age of sixty-five.

(b) That 104 contributions had been paid.

(c) That the number of contributions paid for the three contribution years prior to attaining the age of sixty-five represents not less than 39 contributions in respect of each of those three years.

For the purpose of making provision for the cost of pensions, the rates of contributions under the Insurance Act are, of course, increased, the employer paying the same as the employee in the case of men. Women employees pay a little less than men, but the employers' contribution remains unchanged.

In Great Britain, under the Finance Act of 1925, all contributors to the new insurance scheme, male and female, over sixty-five years of age, will receive from January 2nd, 1928, ten shillings per week irrespective of means or test.

OUR SUPPLEMENT.

With this issue is published a supplement containing reports of the Biennial General Meetings of the A.O.H. National Health Insurance Sections for the Free State, for Northern Ireland, and for Scotland, England and Wales.

JOHN DILLON.

By "OMEGA."

[THIRD ARTICLE].

JOHN REDMOND's election as Chairman of the re-united Irish Party in 1899 was described in the Press at the time as having been unanimous. While this description was literally true it did not convey the whole truth. The proceedings at Party meetings were supposed to be private, and, as a rule, privacy was strictly observed, but Mr. William O'Brien, in later years, in his desire to score a point off Dillon at any cost disclosed the fact that he had opposed Redmond's election. In the circumstances it can be no breach of confidence to give a true narrative of the incident.

It is a fact that Dillon and a number of other anti-Parnellites, while agreeing that the new Chairman should be a Parnellite, were opposed to Redmond's selection. They were mostly men prominent in the land fight who did not consider Redmond sufficiently strong in his championship of the tenant's cause, having particularly in mind a speech delivered by him some time previously on the subject. Dillon led the opposition at the Party meeting, but, realising that the majority was against him, and being most anxious to avoid a continuance of dissension, he expressed his willingness to waive his objection, provided Redmond would undertake to consult the Party before committing it on any question of major policy. Redmond promptly assented to this, and Dillon withdrew his opposition. But not so some of his colleagues, who declared they would not have a Redmond leadership at any price. Thereupon Dillon went amongst them, individually, and begged them to desist from this attitude, insisting that Redmond had given a satisfactory guarantee, and emphasising how disastrous it would be were there to be any further dissensions in the National ranks. His appeals prevailed and, as a consequence, Redmond's election in the words of the official report supplied to the Press, was "unanimous."

A CONTRAST IN CHARACTER.

There was an interesting sequel to the meeting. In the House of Commons Dining Room immediately afterwards, Redmond went to the table at which Dillon was lunching and expressed the hope that, now that he was elected to the Chair, he could rely upon Dillon's cordial support. Dillon replied that he would give him a fair chance, which he thought was all that could be expected of him. Redmond confessed his disappointment at this, whereupon Dillon added more encouragingly, "You need have no fear that I shall play the — upon you," mentioning the name of a prominent colleague of whose vagaries both of them had had painful experience. Though still somewhat downcast, Redmond recognised the sincerity of Dillon's attitude, and left him with the remark that it was, at least, something to have got the assurance he did.

How much such an assurance, coming from a man of Dillon's character, was worth, as compared with the profuse professions of loyalty from some of those who had placed him in the Chair Redmond was soon to learn. Within six weeks Mr. O'Brien was secretly engaged in his famous plot to "smash Redmondism," because of a speech which the new Chairman had made in reference to Queen Victoria's announcement that the Irish soldiers would in future be permitted to wear the Shamrock on St. Patrick's Day. It was part of Mr. O'Brien's design that Dillon should start the smashing campaign; but Dillon flatly declined the task, and so registered another black mark against himself in Mr. O'Brien's recording book. Not many months later Mr. Healy, who had also been a warm supporter of Redmond's election, was in open revolt against him, just as he had revolted in turn against Parnell, McCarthy, and Dillon during the preceding ten years. But the man who had promised Redmond a "fair chance" proved true to his

word. It is not too much to say that it was the steadfast support which Dillon extended to his Chief at this time which, more than any other personal factor, succeeded in consolidating the new leadership.

HEALY-O'BRIEN DUEL.

The very fact that Dillon was prepared to work loyally with Redmond was enough of itself to send Mr. Healy once more on the warpath against them both. Whether or not that was the real cause—it was certainly hard to discover any other of substance—he was, as I have said, soon again at his old tricks, and Mr. O'Brien, who meanwhile had thought better of his determination to "smash Redmondism," was now equally hot in his determination to smash Healyism. It was a rare fight between the two gladiators, in which each reached the high-water mark of political Billingsgate. But the odds against Mr. Healy were too heavy, for, in addition to Mr. O'Brien, he was faced by Redmond, Dillon, Davitt, T. P. O'Connor, Devlin, Blake, with the result his following was annihilated in the General Election of September, 1900, and at a Convention of the United Irish League, held immediately afterwards, he was himself expelled from the movement on the motion of Mr. O'Brien.

In the year or two that followed, Redmond and Dillon drew much closer together, though it was Mr. O'Brien who at this time exercised the greatest influence in Redmond's counsels. During the election, Mr. Healy had tried to separate Mr. O'Brien and Redmond by professing to reveal in the columns of his organ the *Daily Nation*, the details of the "smash Redmondism" incident; but his knowledge of the facts was inaccurate, and Mr. O'Brien was enabled to ride off with a disingenuous denial in the *Freeman* of the following day. Strangely enough, Redmond himself appears never to have known the true circumstances. A few years later he told Dillon that he had reason to suspect there was some truth in Mr. Healy's accusations; but Dillon, who had in his possession documentary proof of the charge, refrained from enlightening him further. When asked by a friend the reason for this self-denying reticence, Dillon's reply was, "I always had a hope that O'Brien and ourselves would come together again, and I did not wish to make things more difficult than they were."

THE LAND CONFERENCE.

At the end of 1902 came the Land Conference, from which sprung such bitter controversy. With the exception of the three who were members of the Conference—Messrs. Redmond, O'Brien and Harrington—all the leading figures of the movement were against the terms of the report as being too generous to the landlords. Into the details of the controversy I do not propose to enter. To do so would require much space and an expert knowledge to which I make no claim. The facts, are however, worth noting. That the landlords believed they had made a very excellent bargain is indisputable. For proof of this one need seek no further than a private letter written at the time by Mr. Wyndham (then Chief Secretary) to Mr. Balfour (Prime Minister) from Lord Londonderry's Ulster residence at Mountstewart, where he was a member of a landlord house-party in the early days of January 1903—a week or so after the report of the Land Conference was issued "The Conference and the Report," wrote Wyndham to his Chief, "have been a great success, not only in essence but—and in Ireland this is equally important—in effect also on public opinion of all kinds. Notably the Landowners' Convention have blessed the Report. Londonderry, Barrymore and Erne, all here, are pleased—very pleased—though inclined to attribute the result (more) to the folly of the Nationalists than to the wits of Dunraven." The other noteworthy fact is that in the course of a few years the finance of the Act of 1903 broke down hopelessly and that, but for the amending Acts which

have been passed since, land purchase would have ceased completely.

HARMONY IMPAIRED.

Dillon was out of Ireland when the dispute started. He had gone with Redmond and Davitt to America, and had been detained there by a serious illness. But his views on the new issue could never have been in doubt. He had always believed that the more the fight against landlordism could be intensified the more complete in the end would be the victory of the tenants. This had been his attitude in relation to the Land Act of 1881, and his views had altered in no degree in the years that had elapsed. It was not surprising, therefore, that on his return to Ireland he ranged himself with Davitt and Sexton and the other critics of the Conference scheme. It was a most difficult situation, and for a year the harmony of the Party was impaired by many discords. Redmond's modifying influence at this time was invaluable, and it succeeded in averting an open rupture until after the Land Act of 1903 had been passed. Personally he and Harrington stood with Mr. O'Brien for the Conference policy; but, consistent with this attitude, they showed the fullest anxiety to meet the wishes of such proved champions of the tenants as Davitt, Dillon, Sexton, and many others of those associated with them. Had Mr. O'Brien himself shown a similar consideration things would have shaped themselves far differently than they did. But it had now become with him a case of "Aut Cæsar, aut nihil"—either Cæsar or nothing. Relying on the feverish desire of the tenants to get possession of the land at any cost, he was intolerant of any criticism of the scheme, and, as soon as the Act was law, he summoned the Directory of the United Irish League and, ignoring Dillon and Davitt, got that body to endorse proposals of his own for the working of the new measure, which, in their opinion would have placed the tenants at a still greater disadvantage in dealing with the landlords. Knowing how carefully the stage had been prepared to secure the Directory's approval of these proposals neither Dillon nor Davitt attended the meeting and the victory of Mr. O'Brien was seemingly complete.

THE SWINFORD SPEECH.

Faced with the *fait accompli* there appeared to be nothing his opponents could do to prevent the tenants from rushing into numerous bargains. Dillon, it is known, seriously contemplated retiring from the field, and even leaving Ireland, but, before doing so, he decided to utter one further warning to the country. This he did in a speech at Swinford, which Mr. O'Brien has since made famous as "the Swinford Revolt." That it was at variance from the policy laid down by the Directory Dillon, so far as I am aware, never denied, but he was determined the tenants should know his views before they committed themselves to an acceptance of Mr. O'Brien's plan. The result was dramatic. Mr. O'Brien's fury became uncontrollable and, having appealed in vain to Redmond to discipline Dillon, he announced his complete and irrevocable retirement from public life. His excuse for this step was his anxiety to avoid another split, but of that there was never any serious fear. Had Dillon resigned, as in all probability he would have done after the Swinford speech had not Mr. O'Brien anticipated him, his would have been a real retirement, and not the sham retirement which Mr. O'Brien's was soon shown to be.

I have gone at some length into the history of this episode, for it has been the subject of Mr. O'Brien's chief charge against Dillon, and even some of Dillon's own friends have sometimes questioned whether it would not have been better to have accepted the Directory's decision in silence, and have left those responsible for it to abide the consequences of their action. It should be remembered in this connection that Dillon's chief

concern was for the tenants. Hatred of landlordism was in his marrow and it was intolerable to him that the class which had kept the Irish people in bondage for centuries should be allowed to get away—chuckling in triumph as they went—with not only an undue share of the tenant's money, but with a huge donation from the public purse as well. It was never his intention to create a split. The record of his efforts to heal the former split was sufficient proof of that. If a split did arise its cause was not the Swinford speech but Mr. O'Brien's irrepressible rage when Redmond refused to obey his orders to denounce Dillon. Had he carried out his expressed intention to—in his own words—"give the conspirators a free hand" one might have made allowance for his petulance; but within a fortnight of his "complete withdrawal" he was bombarding the newspapers with recitals of his grievances—"forty columns of silence" was Michael Davitt's contemptuous description of the performance—and his friends were moving heaven and earth to have him brought back.

FRUITFUL YEARS.

It is needless to pursue the later controversy in detail. Thenceforward, except for a brief interval when he re-joined the Party only to break loose from it again, Mr. O'Brien was to be reckoned its most implacable and most formidable enemy; even Mr. Healy, the "disgrace to humanity" of three years before, with whom he now found it polite to join forces, having to take second place to him in this respect. Rid of these two headstrong, if brilliant, personalities, the Irish Party went on its way, growing month by month in unity, vigour and prestige. At no period since the Parnell divorce action did it reach so high a level of efficiency as in the succeeding ten years. From the first Redmond had shown himself to be a superb parliamentary leader, and under his guidance, strengthened by the constant counsels and hearty co-operation of Messrs. Dillon, Devlin and T. P. O'Connor, it went from success to success at Westminster. At home in Ireland the movement was equally all-conquering. Under the inspiring and skilful hand of Mr. Devlin the United Irish League reached a position of numerical strength and authority never approached by any previous National organisation. In actual legislative achievement no other period in our history was nearly so fruitful. Amending Land Acts, Labourers Acts, the University Act, a Town Tenants Act, the Old Age Pensions Act, the Insurance Act, followed each other in rapid succession, the record culminating in the great Home Rule Act passed in September, 1914, after three years of desperate struggle.

A SPLENDID PARTNERSHIP.

During all this time Dillon was as Redmond's right hand. Never did lieutenant give to leader more faithful or valuable support. To say that the views of the two men were always in agreement would be to do injustice to both. Their minds were cast in vastly different moulds, and each exercised his independent judgment; but they appreciated each other the more for this, and whichever of their views prevailed, either as between themselves, or as the result of a Party meeting, was always cheerfully accepted by the other. Unity of action in the cause of Ireland was for both the supreme consideration. In such matters Redmond was an ideal chairman. If ever a Party meeting took a view different from his own—which was the rarest of occurrences—he never showed the slightest annoyance. Not only that, but I remember that on, at least, one occasion, when he secured a rather small majority on a matter to which he attached great importance, he declined to give effect to the decision because he recognised that the minority also felt strongly on the subject, and he suspected that some of those who supported him probably did so out of feelings of personal regard for himself.

On matters which were of minor importance, or which had

to be decided hurriedly, Redmond almost invariably consulted Dillon, when possible, and their exchanges of opinion were always of the frankest kind. But if they failed to agree, Redmond's view, 'as being that of the responsible leader, always prevailed, just as Parnell's had done in earlier days. Dillon's loyalty in that respect was beyond all reproach. He never hesitated to give his advice, but he "played the game" most scrupulously. If in conversation you questioned him upon some point on which he felt he had not Redmond's authority to speak you waited in vain for a reply. "You must ask the Chairman that," was all that he would say; and whatever the Chairman said went without question.

THE WAR YEARS.

It would be idle to pretend that in the War years points of difference did not arise with greater frequency and in more serious form; but they were always differences as to tactics, and in no way interrupted the friendly relations of the two men. Broadly speaking, Dillon's view, after the formation of the first Coalition in May 1915, was that the policy of the Government should be opposed with greater vigour, while Redmond held that to do this would be to destroy any chance which Ireland had of gaining any return for the services she had rendered, and was still rendering, to the cause of the Allies. There was much to be said for either view, but, as we know, it was Redmond's which, in the main was followed. Dillon loyally, if not always very cheerfully, falling into line. On one occasion only could it be said that a breach threatened, namely, when, after the 1916 Rebellion, Lloyd George initiated his negotiations for bringing the Home Rule Act into operation, subject to the exclusion of the Six Counties, until the end of the War. Redmond favoured the attempt, but Dillon, greatly distrusting Lloyd George, at first refused to be a party to it. So strongly did he feel on the subject that many of his colleagues feared his resignation, but eventually their persuasion and his loyalty to Party unity carried the day, and he took full part in the negotiations. He disapproved also of the Lloyd George Convention of 1917 and, despite strong appeals from Redmond and others, he declined to be one of the Party's representatives on that body. There were some minor incidents of a similar kind but, at most, serious disagreements were but isolated exceptions in a long period of close collaboration and cordial comradeship between these two great and noble Irishmen. Well it were for Ireland if at all epochs of her history her leaders had shown the same loyalty to each other and to the cause in whose advancement they were engaged.

FINIS.

Dillon felt Redmond's death most keenly, and few who were present in Wexford on that sad day in March, 1918, when he dead leader was laid to rest with his ancestors will readily forget the stricken figure of his chief lieutenant as he stood at the graveside, and, with tears coursing down his pallid cheeks, paid a last eloquent tribute to the man with whom he had laboured so long and so fruitfully for Ireland. And now Dillon, too, has gone to his reward. He lived to see most of what he wrought for accomplished, though some of the fruits of his labours had been garnered by other hands. Of that he never complained, for no man looked more philosophically on the vicissitudes of political life; but he was often given to think sadly of the malign fate which had dismembered the Ireland, to whose service he had devoted his life. It was his hope that he might yet be spared to help in undoing that crime against the nation, for old as he had grown, his heart was ever young and full of courage. But it was not to be. The task remains for other hands; but side by side with those who attempt it, will assuredly, march the spirit of pure-souled and dauntless John Dillon. *R.I.P.*