

The Bishop of Raphoe on Home Rule.

The Most Rev. Dr. O'Donnell, in a letter read at a Nationalist demonstration in Donegal on Tuesday, addressed by Mr. J. Dillon, M. P., and Mr. Swift MacNeill, M. P., and presided over by Mgr. McFadden, says: "To enable the people to struggle through the coming season large reductions in rent will be required. But that alone will not suffice. Neither will loans of Union seed on the old lines be of much service, however good the intention of Mr. Morley in moving the Local Government Board, and however imperative the need for supplies of potatoes on credit during the spring. The loans of 1880 and 1891 have scourged the poor in some of the most distressed districts in Ireland with double the highest prices for seed that in many instances proved utterly worthless. It becomes necessary once more to call on the Government to provide remunerative employment on projects of public utility where failure of the potato crop has left large numbers of people without the ordinary means of subsistence. Scarcely anything to be done for the destitute can be more painful than this constantly recurring need to parade the poverty of a high-spirited, industrious population. But it can never cease until Irishmen in their own country are charged with the responsibility, and furnished with the means, of developing the resources of Ireland. Once the nation is self-governed, the family of the hardworking small farmer—it is not too much to assume—will be bred and trained to home industries that will pull them through a year in which the potato fails. The artisan or craftsman will be taught to cultivate the beauty and originality of Celtic design, so as to impart an art value to the work of his hands, and there will be some outlet for the educated youth of the country. Only the guardian spirit of a native Parliament can foster the growth of native enterprise, or breathe into the products of Irish labour the magic life of a nation's genius. For us, as a people, Home Rule is an alarmingly urgent question. The next boom of good times in the United States will allure an almost unprecedented number of healthy men and women from the green fields of Ireland into the overcrowded cities of America, unless a fair prospect of earning a livelihood be previously opened up at home through their seeing trusted Irishmen freely at work in promoting the prosperity of their native land. For our representatives in their public capacity Home Rule quickly, by all honourable means is the question of questions. What have we to say to them on that score? Just this, which they well know already—that if they are united cordially in Ireland, in America, and in Westminster, anyone can assign a short term to the time within which native government will be in full operation in our midst, but that if wretched wranglings reappear and continue no one can put a period to the misery of our country. There is a very general opinion that the Nationalist members, should they have a record at their back of acting as one man, can carry Home Rule at a single general election. It will not be so difficult afterwards for the chosen representatives every party, creed, and class to put the country on its feet. Meantime, a good Land Act, fairly administered, is an urgent want."

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