

THE IMMIGRATION POLICY.

ONCE again the immigration authorities are at their wits' end, and the arrival of a couple of passenger-laden vessels has placed them in the same dilemma from which they have so recently escaped. Notwithstanding the experience so forcibly brought home to them as to the necessity of there being always adequate provision for the reception and accommodation of immigrants, no steps seem to have been taken with a view to avert a recurrence of the inconveniences so loudly denounced a short time since. A considerable interval has now elapsed, since the arrival of the *Caroline* and other vessels proved the totally inadequate arrangements made to meet the influx of passengers who arrived about that time, but beyond making an effort to meet the emergencies of that occasion, and providing for the necessities which then arose, nothing has been done, and no care taken to meet the exigencies of the future. The most ardent admirer of immigration must be compelled to admit that the system in operation for carrying out its provisions, if not radically wrong, is capable of much reform. The bad feeling existing between the head of the Government and the Agent-General has made itself apparent in a variety of ways, and has had anything but a beneficial influence on the Colony. Dr. FEATHERSTONE had been instructed by the Commissioner of Immigration to forward a certain number of immigrants, and although the letter of the instruction may have been followed, and the exact number authorised despatched, the inharmonious working of the department, and the injudicious and ill-judged manner of doing so must of necessity have a detrimental effect. Instead of a regular and healthy stream of immigration flowing at such intervals as would allow of the absorption of one batch before the arrival of a second, the prevailing custom has hitherto been to so time the departures of vessels as almost to secure a simultaneous arrival. As a necessary consequence, a vast amount of inconvenience and trouble has been the result, which has unhappily been greatly aggravated through want of forethought or energy in facing the difficulty. Knowing, then, the little care exercised by the agents at home in this respect, it is but natural to suppose some measures would have been taken to counteract—or, at least, to mitigate—its ill effects. The prevailing policy, however, seems to have been to trust to chance, but unfortunately on this, as on a former occasion, the chances have not been fortunate. This method of meeting the difficulty may be very comfortable and philosophical on the part of those who are not called on to share any of the ills or inconveniences arising out of such a treatment of the matter, but it is scarcely fair to those most interested, and not at all creditable to the boasted resources of the Colony. That we should take such pains to turn the tide of emigration to our shores, and yet make so little preparation for the reception of those whom we have induced to cast their lot with ours, and make this Colony their home, must be rather inexplicable, and appear somewhat of an anomaly. The necessity which exists for the compulsory detention of passengers on board a vessel after her arrival in port, is one of the strongest proofs of the inadequacy of the arrangements, and one which calls for immediate reform; for independently altogether of the inconvenience thereby entailed, the status of the colony suffers materially by so ill-conditioned a state of affairs. Although it must be confessed much of the mismanagement which has arisen may be attributed to a want of unanimity between the heads of the department, yet the local authorities are in a great measure culpable, inasmuch as being duly advised of the departure of each vessel, sufficient precaution and foresight should have been exercised to counteract the mistake of the home office.

Another matter in connection with the subject of immigration may be briefly touched on here. In former issues of this journal we advocated the advisability of the Provincial Government employing a portion of the funds at their disposal in the erection of suitable dwellings for the daily increasing population. This, we are glad to say, has to some extent been carried out. Houses have been so erected, which no doubt have proved a great boon in the present dearth of house accommodation, but we regret to say they have been jumbled together in a manner totally regardless of health or comfort. The houses erected on the Anderson's Bay road are such as, had they belonged to a private individual, would have been certain to have called

down reprobation in his devoted head, if he escaped prosecution under the Health Statute. Exposed on all sides, without the slightest fencing, and without ground for yards and dust-bins, the modest sum of sixteen shillings per week has been asked by our paternal Government for each tenement. The argument may be adduced that the Government are justified in taking advantage of the present prosperous state of the Colony in recouping themselves for their outlay, but we think differently, and believe that to thus trade upon the necessities of the unfortunates who are compelled to accede to their terms, be they ever so exorbitant, is neither politic, generous, nor just.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

As will be seen by advertisement in another column, the choir of St. Joseph's Church have kindly acceded to the request made to repeat the programme submitted at their late concert in the Masonic Hall. The object towards which they have now come forward is to aid in the erection of a church in Port Chalmers. The steamer *Golden Age* has been chartered for the conveyance of patrons from Dunedin; and with that attraction, and the additional one of the services of a brass band, which will accompany the steamer on her double trip, we have no fear but the entertainment will secure such an amount of patronage as will be a material aid to the most necessary work which it is desired to assist.

THE sixth quarterly meeting of the Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society, Branch No. 73, was held on Monday evening last, the president, Bro. F. J. Bunney, in the chair. There was a large attendance of members. After the minutes of last meeting were read and confirmed, Mr Wm. Brown was duly initiated a full benefit member. The following gentlemen were proposed for members:—Messrs Desmond, Kean, Bellet and Patrick Hayes. Bro. J. M. Hallinan proposed, and Bro. R. Carroll seconded the following resolution:—"That a bye-law be passed in accordance with Law 81, Clause 3, whereby the remaining portion of a member's entrance fee be paid in two equal instalments within two months after initiation: carried. Bro. R. Carroll asked leave to withdraw the motion standing in his name in re concert in aid of funds, in order not to clash with a concert to be given on the 9th of November by the members of St. Joseph's Church Choir; leave granted. Bro. J. J. Connor moved the resolution of which he had given notice at last quarterly meeting, viz.:—"That the Secretary's salary be at the rate of £20 per annum. Bro. R. Carroll seconded the resolution. Bro James Toal moved as an amendment—"That the Secretary's salary be at the rate of £15 per annum;" but after some discussion the motion was carried. Bros. M. Connellan and J. Brennan were elected sick visitors, *vice* Bros. J. J. Connor and F. McGrath, resigned. The president having informed the meeting that up to the present time no one had been appointed to prepare the room for the society's meetings, Bro James Toal kindly volunteered to attend to the room for two months, in order to keep down the expenses of the branch. The following members of the Judicial Committee were appointed to investigate the charge made by Bro. M. O'Donnell against the medical attendant:—Bros. J. Moroney, J. Meenan, Brennan, E. Carroll, M. Connellan, F. O'Donnell, and R. Carroll, together with the president and secretary. During the evening the sum of £25 was received. The meeting, as usual, closed with prayer.

THE handsome premises in course of erection for the Union Bank of Australia, at the corner of Princes and Liverpool streets, have so far progressed as to admit of the business of the bank being removed from High street. Though some time may yet elapse before the building is thoroughly completed, and the outside decorations out of hand, the transactions of the bank were commenced there on Thursday, at which place all business will in future be carried on, an intimation to that effect having been forwarded to all its customers.

AN awfully sudden death from apoplexy occurred at Port Chalmers on Monday. A waterman, named Harland, who had been at his usual avocation during the morning, on going home at dinner time complained of a severe headache, and immediately afterwards was seized with an apoplectic fit. Medical assistance was called in, but the unfortunate man never recovered consciousness, and died in a few hours. We regret to state deceased leaves a widow and helpless family totally unprovided for.

A CORRESPONDENT from Nelson has kindly forwarded us the report of a meeting of Catholics convened by the Rev. Father Garin with the view of establishing a branch of the Hibernian Benefit Association in that city. Mr Charles E. Bunney, late Vice-President of the Dunedin Branch was present, and explained to the meeting the objects and provisions of the Society, and the approval it had received from the clergy of New Zealand and Australia. Mr Bunney spoke at some length of the good which the Association was calculated to effect in uniting Catholics for their mutual benefit and the promotion of morality and religion. As but very little notice had been given of the meeting, it was adjourned for a fortnight for the purpose of communicating with the head Branch in Dunedin, but before separating several names were received from persons willing to join. From the same source we learn with pleasure that Father Garin has started a Total Abstinence Society, and that the efforts of the reverend gentleman for the welfare of his flock in this direction are meeting with most encouraging success.

WE are glad to learn that the subscription set on foot to provide a fund for the benefit of the widow and children of the late Captain Hart has reached the sum of over £1200, with the prospect of being still further supplemented when all the lists have been handed in. That such a large amount should have been collected in such a short