

HIBERNIAN AUSTRALASIAN CATHOLIC BENEFIT SOCIETY.

It is our pleasing duty to record the inauguration of another branch in New Zealand of the above society.

On Monday, the 12th October, St. Mary's Branch, Invercargill, was formally opened by Bro. Fred. J. Bunney, Past-President of St. Joseph's Branch, No. 73, the delegate appointed by the Executive Directory, Melbourne. The room in which the ceremony took place was tastefully decorated with flags, evergreens, and emblems appropriate to the event.

The Rev. J. Carden opened the proceedings with prayer, and then Mr Bunney read the following address:—

"Brethren, we are assembled on this occasion for the performance of an interesting and important duty—the formal opening of a new branch of the H.A.C.B. Society. It is by such means the benefits of the society will become widely spread throughout Australasia, and its principles more fully understood. The object of our society, in the first place, is, by mutual co-operation, to provide against those casualties of life which all are subject to, and to advance in the paths of virtue, wisdom, and happiness, by promoting the social, moral, and intellectual condition of its members. He who would become a Brother of this new branch must prove his moral fitness by submitting his character to the scrutiny of those with whom he wishes to associate; and if that character will not bear so strict a test, he is at once rejected, nor can any branch neglect that solemn duty of testing the character of its candidates without sinking into degradation and endangering its own existence. In opening this branch another link in the social chain of the society is about to be added, and those who become members of it will take upon themselves a share of the responsibility connected with it. The ruling power of the society—its Executive Directory—in sanctioning the establishment of this branch, does so on the express condition that the principle of subjection to the supreme power of the society shall be always recognised, and that no deviation from its laws and regulations at any time shall take place. The government of our association being elective, a participation in its management is open to all; but power without responsibility will not be permitted, or office without integrity and ability tolerated. These principles are no less enforced in its individual branches than in its supreme government. Now, my brethren, having called your attention to the high objects and aspirations of the society, I have only to say—Remember and keep the instructions and promises of your initiation, and may you ever be favored with the blessings expressed through its motto of Faith, Hope, and Charity."

The delegate then read the dispensation, and declared as follows:—

"By authority of the dispensation now read, and in virtue of my prerogative, I do hereby declare this (St. Mary's) branch of the H.A.C.B. Society duly opened and legally established for the carrying out of all the objects and purposes of the said society now in operation, or hereafter to be adopted."

The candidates were then initiated full benefit members, and proceeded to elect their officers. Bro. J. Maher was elected President; Bro. Wm. Hishon, Vice-President; Bro. Andrew M'Menanin, Secretary; Bro. J. Flannagan, Warden; Bro. M. Walsh, Guardian; Bros. O'Gallagher, O'Martin, Brown, Sick Visitors; and Bros. J. M'Menanin, W. Hishon, and J. Keveney, Trustees. The newly-elected officers were then duly installed into their various offices by the delegate. It having been resolved, on the motion of Bro. T. Connell, that the general rules used by other branches of the society should be adopted by the St. Mary's branch, Bro. Bunney declared the new branch duly and formally instituted, and wished the officers and brethren "God speed." The ceremony was then terminated with a prayer by the Rev. J. Carden.

An ample and elegant supper, catered by Mr D. Kingsland, was then spread upon the table, to which most of the gentlemen present conducted their lady friends from the adjoining apartment. The chair was occupied by the Rev. J. Carden, supported on the right by Mr. Bunney, on the left by Bro. J. Maher, the newly-elected President; and the vice-chair by his Worship the Mayor (T. Pratt, Esq.), supported on the right by Dr. Yorath, on the left by Messrs. Stone and Muir. Altogether, about seventy persons sat down to the banquet. Mrs. Wallworth presided at the piano. The Rev. Chairman read a letter from John R. Cuthbertson, Esq., M.H.R., regretting that a prior engagement prevented that gentleman from being present, but expressing his sympathy with the movement, and heartily wishing a prosperous career to the H.A.C.B. Society of Invercargill. The usual loyal and patriotic toasts were duly proposed and responded to. The toast of the evening—"The Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society, coupled with the name of Delegate Bro. Fred. J. Bunney"—was proposed in a neat and appropriate speech by the Rev. J. Carden, and most cordially honored by the assemblage.

Mr. Bunney begged to return his most heartfelt thanks for the kind manner in which they had received the toast. He had also to express his gratitude to them for their kind reception, and for the warm hospitality that he had met with since his arrival amongst them. He congratulated them on the establishment of a branch of the H.A.C.B. Society in Invercargill, and he truly hoped and prayed that it might gradually grow and prosper. He was glad to say that the society was spreading very rapidly, both in Victoria and New Zealand. There were now seventeen branches in New Zealand—viz., at Auckland, Grahamstown, Otahuhu, Onahunga, in the Province of Auckland; Napier, in the Province of Hawke's Bay; Greymouth, Charleston, Brighton, Greenstone, Ross, Waimea, and Hokitika, on the West Coast; at Christchurch, in the Province of Canterbury; at Oamaru, Naseby, Dunedin, and Invercargill, in the Province of Otago. A dispensation had been granted for the opening of a branch in Wellington, and arrangements were now pending for the establishment of a branch at Nelson. All the branches in New Zealand are under the control of the Executive Directory, Melbourne. In consequence of the branches being so scattered, it had been found somewhat difficult

to form them into District Boards. To form a District Board, five branches at least must unite for that purpose; therefore it may be many years yet ere District Boards can be formed in New Zealand. When the movement was first mooted in Dunedin, he (Mr. Bunney) found it very up-hill work, owing to a prejudice that had sprung up against it. Despite every persuasion, people would persistently maintain that it was a party society, ushered into life for the mere purpose of serving a political end, and they sternly set their backs against it, because they thought that it was calculated to do more harm than good. He could assure the ladies and gentlemen present that it was quite the reverse to a party society. No; it had been established for the grand purpose of making its members practical Catholics—for the grand purpose of forming a golden link of fellowship and love between Catholic and Catholic, as well as for the wise purpose of providing against accidents and sickness, to which we were all more or less liable in this world. Persons even now assert—and many of them were Catholics, too—that the H.A.C.B. Society had already done harm. They say that since the establishment of the society (he was speaking now of Dunedin), that Orange Lodges had sprung suddenly into existence. Now, as for Orange Lodges, they need have no fear of them; all they had to do was to give them plenty of rope, and stick firm to their principles. Again, in reference to the insinuation that the society was a party one, and established only to serve a political purpose, he begged here to state most emphatically that it was most unjust and untrue; and more, that the charge would not be brought against it, if only a little calm reflection were made. In the first instance, persons from every nation under the sun were admitted as members, provided always that they were practical Catholics, and, of course, in a sound state of health; and then, again, the rules are registered under the Friendly Societies' Statute of Victoria, New South Wales, and New Zealand. They received a severe scrutiny from the Revising Barristers and Registrar-Generals of the places named, and passing satisfactorily through that ordeal, surely they might with confidence come to the conclusion that the society was not fettered with anything of a party or political nature. To further strengthen what he now asserted, he would quote a paragraph from the preface to the general rules:—"It may be necessary to call the attention of non-members of the society to the facts that it is a benefit one, thoroughly under the immediate sanction of the Church; is non-political, having nothing of a secret nature about it, neither signs nor passwords being used; and that its meetings are open to the Press." He (Mr. Bunney) thought they would now agree with him that the society, a branch of which he had inaugurated that evening in Invercargill, was purely a Catholic Benefit Society, and that its one great aim was to ultimately make its members true servants of the great nation of nations—the loyal subjects of the great empire of empires; in other words, ladies and gentlemen, to make them worthy members of the great kingdom of heaven. In Dunedin they had set an example to all the other branches; they had taken advantage of a provision in the laws, and had organised a juvenile contingent in connection with their branch. He had no hesitation in saying that in the course of a few years the contingent would prove itself to be the mainstay of the society. Boys would reap great benefit from the contingent, because it is the intention of the promoters to institute debating and other classes, and also to establish a good library for the use of the contingent, so that by those means the Catholic lads of the next generation would be raised considerably in the moral, social, and intellectual scale, and, therefore, he maintained that the public at large would be benefitted by the contingent. He feared he was wearying them, so he would conclude by again congratulating them on the establishment of a branch of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society, and trusted that many would join it. He could not sit down, however, without returning his sincere thanks to their good and worthy pastor, the Rev. Mr. Carden, for the great assistance he had rendered to him in the foundation of the branch. He might, with a safe conscience, say that had it not been for Father Carden, the branch would never have been formed, and he had no doubt that they would willingly join with him in expressing a deep sense of their gratitude to Father Carden for the great interest he had taken in the matter. He trusted that the 12th October would for the future be commemorated with great rejoicings by the Catholics of Invercargill, for he thought the inauguration of such an institution as the H.A.C.B. Society ought to be looked upon as a memorable event. (Applause).

The next toast, "Our Pastor," was responded to in a pleasing manner by the Rev. J. Carden.

In replying to the "Mayor and Corporation," Mr. Pratt expressed the great pleasure he felt in being present. His entire sympathies were with the movement. He wished to make one suggestion: many of the new arrivals were Catholics, and if the society could so arrange as to make them provisional members, he was convinced that the Colony would reap a great benefit therefrom.

A number of other toasts, interspersed with music, vocal and instrumental, followed, and a most enjoyable evening broke up at a late hour.

CATGUT.—Catgut is probably so named (if we may reason from many parallel cases) because it has no connection at all with the harmless necessary animal so directly alluded to. It is prepared from the intestines of the sheep or goat, and the manufacture is chiefly confined to Italy. The entrails are scraped, steeped in water until the outer membranes are softened so as to be readily removed, when they are again scraped. They are again steeped in a weak solution of potash in water for a varying period, when they are drawn through perforated plates, thoroughly cleaned and disinfected with the fumes of burning sulphur, and then dried.

A man who had been bitten by a wild cat, has since been subject to curious freaks of madness.

The first steamer that appeared on the Pacific, and built more than thirty years ago, is to be converted into a tow boat. She is perfectly sound.