

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

On Tuesday evening of next week nearly every citizen of the United States will know whether he is to live under a Republican or Democratic regime for the next four years. The government of the United States is intrusted to three separate authorities—the executive, the legislative, and the judicial. The executive power is vested in the President, who holds office for four years, and is chosen, together with the Vice-President, by electors appointed by the several States of the Union. The President chooses a Cabinet of eight members, each having charge of an administrative department, but none of them having a seat in Congress, which comprises a Senate and a House of Representatives. Senators are appointed, two from each State, by the several State legislatures, and hold office for six years. The Senate has the power of confirming or rejecting treaties with foreign Powers. The House of Representatives is composed of members elected biennially by the citizens of the several States. Usually the electors are all male citizens of 21 years of age and upwards. The representatives for each State are in the proportion of one for 173,000 inhabitants.

No person except a natural-born citizen of the United States is eligible for the office of President, and he must at the same time have attained the age of 35 years. This accounts for the legend that the late George Francis Train, in expectation of an increase in his family, hastened from London to New York so that his prospective heir might have an equal chance with all males born in the country of being one day appointed Chief Magistrate of the land over which floats the Stars and Stripes. There is no rule debarring Catholics from filling the highest office in the country, but no Catholic has ever been a candidate. The highest political position given to an American Catholic was that held by Roger B. Tansy, who was at one time Chief Justice of the United States. The elections for President and Vice-President are held on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November, every leap-year, but the President-elect does not assume office until the following 4th of March.

The average citizen of the United States takes his pleasures sadly, and it is only when he has amassed the necessary amount of dollars, which permits him to rank as a millionaire, that he lays aside business cares for a time and takes a holiday abroad. His tour through Continental Europe is at express speed, and in direct contrast to the leisurely Englishman. After having 'done' the sights, assimilated the contents of guide books, and impaired his digestion by hastily-eaten meals on the line of travel, he hurries back to his beloved business, which has the first place in his thoughts until perhaps the next Presidential election, this being the only event that is allowed to interfere with his money-making pursuits. From July to November every leap-year the country is plunged in a vortex of excitement over the question, whether a middle-aged American citizen of the Republican or Democratic brand shall occupy the White House for the next four years. Other parties, also, nominate candidates, but the contest lies between the two chief political factions. There is a great difference in theory between the Republican and Democratic platforms, especially during an election contest, but the reality is not so apparent to those who view the campaign from a neutral standpoint. The result of the election, however, is of very immediate interest to the party leaders and active politicians on either side, for a change of government means a change of office holders in many instances, and it, therefore, very often resolves itself into a fight on the part of those who are in to stay in, and those who are out to get in. This is, perhaps, one of the worst features of political life in the United States, not that office holders are paid princely salaries. The President, who has to represent the nation at the White House and dispense hospitality to distinguished visitors, receives a salary equal to about half of that paid to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whilst the Vice-President draws just about what we in New Zealand allow our Premier. The members of the Cabinet have each a salary of £1600 a year, not an extravagant amount when we consider that the Ministers in this Colony draw from £1000 to £1600.

The Republican candidate is Mr. Roosevelt, who was elected Vice-President in 1900, but succeeded to the Presidency on the death of Mr. McKinley on September 14, 1901. He is a strong man of broad-minded views, who speaks his mind freely, this latter characteristic attracting many friends and also making many bitter enemies, especially in the South, where his sympathy with the colored people has been keenly resented. In past times the majority of Irish voters and those of Irish descent supported the Democratic candidate, but on this

occasion many of the leading men have cast their lot with the Republicans, whilst the 'Boston Pilot,' an influential paper, has adopted a similar course. Although Mr. Roosevelt's avowed intention to tackle the trust problem has come to little or nothing, still his opinions on the subject have brought him into conflict with many of the leading financiers of the country, whose money and influence are of great weight in such a contest. And, furthermore, they control a large number of newspapers, which are not at all particular as to the methods they employ to damage the reputation of a political opponent. On the other hand Judge Parker, the choice of the Democrats, has no political past to be attacked, and not being much of a speaker, he keeps pretty silent as to the future. It is said that he has the support of many financiers interested in trust and combines, and as he has never shown any marked predilection for the negro race he is sure of a solid vote from the white population of the Southern States. His address on accepting nomination was what might be called colorless. He advocated prudent tariff reforms; trust legislation, if the existing laws dealing with that question were found to be inadequate; and the avoidance of entangling foreign alliances.

The importance of the election to the people of the United States can be gauged by the fact that the President during his term of office has greater executive powers than most European rulers. He is commander of the national forces, and has a veto on all laws passed by Congress, although a bill may become law in spite of his veto, on being afterwards passed by a two-thirds majority of each House of Congress. The administration is conducted under his immediate authority by eight ministers chosen by him, and holding office at his pleasure. The members of the Supreme Court, which has power to interpret the constitution and decide all disputes between the Federal Government and the individual States, are nominated by the President. He is independent of the two Houses in many vital and important matters. Under such circumstances, it is not a matter for surprise that the election creates great interest and excitement, and that for some weeks prior to the polling day the press and the people are almost wholly engrossed in the question as to who will be their Chief Magistrate for the next four years.

Diocesan News

ARCHDIOCESE OF WELLINGTON

(From our own correspondent.)

October 29.

The picnic, which the Catholic Young Men's Society intended to hold on the 9th of November, has had to be abandoned, as no concessions could be obtained from the Railway Department.

Among the students successful at the recent Victoria College terms examinations are the following Catholic young men: Messrs. J. Eccleton, F. P. Kelly, J. Hannan, and H. O'Leary.

A social was held on Wednesday evening in the Victoria Hall for the purpose of providing funds for the purchase of a piano for the school in the parish of Wellington South. A most enjoyable evening was spent. The secretarial duties were ably carried out by Miss M. Murray and Mr. S. Parkinson.

A solemn Requiem Mass for the repose of the soul of the late Brother Mark was celebrated in the Sacred Heart Basilica on Tuesday morning by the Very Rev. Father Keogh, with Very Rev. Father Lewis as deacon, and Rev. Father Soulas as subdeacon. The Rev. Father Lewis said a few words concerning the great loss sustained through the death of Brother Mark.

The Catholic Young Men's tennis court was opened on Saturday last. There was a good attendance of players, and the court was in fine order. Unfortunately during the week, owing to the heavy rains, a large slip occurred in the hill above the court. As a result about thirty tons of earth were deposited. Men are at present engaged in removing the debris, and the court should be ready for play again next week.

The members of the Catholic Young Men's Literary Society devoted Monday evening to recitations and readings from English and Australasian authors. The following members contributed:—Mr. L. Reichel, 'Death of Paul Dombey' (Dickens); Mr. J. Fitzgerald, 'Not Understood' (Bracken); Mr. J. McGowan, 'Paradise and the Peri' (Moore); Mr. Harrington, 'Dr. Samuel Johnson'; Mr. Cronin, 'How we beat the favorite'. The season is to be concluded on November 7, when a