

DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND.

(From our own correspondent.)

February 8.

Three of the district officers of the H.A.C.B. Society, Brother John Patterson, D.P., Brother D. O'Sullivan, D.V., and Brother W. Kane, D. Treas., at the invitation of the Thames Branch, paid an official visit last week. They subsequently visited Paeroa, and the district officers said they thought that it was possible to form a branch there.

The Catholic schools of the city opened last Monday. The attendances were good, but not what they ought to be. Upon this subject the Very Rev. Dean O'Reilly spoke very strongly last Sunday. In St. Benedict's parish the Rev. Father Gillan is ever on the war-path hunting up the stay-aways from our schools. It is a pity that our good priests should be put in such a position through the gross negligence of Catholics.

At a meeting of the Auckland Branch of the H.A.C.B. Society, held last evening, Brother Stead was elected President, Brother J. A. Callaghan vice-president, Brother W. Kane secretary, Brother D. Flynn treasurer, Brother McKenna warden, Brothers J. J. O'Brien and James Smith auditors, Brother P. O'Kane assistant secretary. A unanimous vote of congratulation was accorded to Brother Maurice Lavery upon his success in passing the recent Matriculation examination. Brother Lavery thanked the members.

The request by the Catholic body of Auckland to the Board of Education to have their schools examined by the Board's inspectors came up for discussion again yesterday. Two protests were handed in against it—one from the Executive of the Grand Orange Lodge of New Zealand, and the other from the Kamo School Committee, a little hamlet away in the back blocks in the North. On the motion of the chairman (Mr. Hobbs) it was decided to send the following reply to the Kamo Committee and the Grand Orange Lodge:—“Without committing the Board to a decision on the question of granting or refusing the application now under consideration, I am directed to remind you that the inspection of such private schools is distinctly contemplated and provided for by the Education Act, 1877, under which the present system of public primary education, free, secular, and compulsory, exists. Section 98 of the Act enables the teachers or managers of “any private school” desiring such inspection to apply to the Board to authorise the same; and declares that such inspection, when authorised, shall be conducted in like manner as the inspection of public schools. The question at issue is not that of the recognition of a particular religious denomination nor does it involve any danger or injury to the public school system in operation throughout the Colony. The application is made by the managers of 20 private schools, having an aggregate number of about 1800 scholars. The secular instruction of those scholars is now carried on by private enterprise and without cost to the State. The managers ask under the express terms of the Act for the public inspection of their schools, whereby the secular instruction given therein may be tested by a competent outside authority, and the scholars may be placed on the same footing as the scholars of the State schools in regard to qualifying for positions in the public service and other departments of employment by the passing of certain standards of education prescribed under the Act. The inspection of such private schools is undertaken by nearly all the Boards throughout the Colony, and if it should be determined to grant the application the Board would assure you

that nothing would be authorised which would be repugnant to the spirit of the Act or inimical to the interests of free and secular education.” The Board secretary unearthed a two-years-old motion adverse to the inspection of our schools; it, therefore, was necessary to give notice of motion to rescind that. This was done and the question will be decided at next meeting.

[This letter arrived too late for insertion in our last issue.]

February 15.

Our city just now looks like a semi-garrison town from the number and variety of military uniforms to be seen in the streets. War and how to wipe out the Boers, is the one question considered.

The Rev. Father O'Shaughnessy, of Goulburn, arrived here on Sunday evening from Sydney. He is on a holiday tour and goes back to the south.

Rev. Fathers Mulvihill (Gisborne) and Ryan (Dunedin) arrived in Auckland at the end of last week. They have gone to the springs at Te Aroha. The Rev. Father T. McKenna, of Pahiatus, is also here on a visit.

The intended public meeting to inaugurate the Convalescent Home under the guidance of the Sisters of Mercy, has been postponed for a time in consequence of the war-fever predominating the public mind at present. It was felt by the committee that the time for enlisting public sympathy was inopportune. In this the committee was wise.

The *Herald*, *Star*, and *Observer* have each in their editorial columns urged the Auckland Education Board to grant the request of the Catholic body to have their schools examined by the Board's inspectors. The majority is that way of thinking, and at next meeting of the Board the question will most assuredly be decided in our favour. It is late in the day, but better late than never.

St. Patrick's Day Celebration Committee meets every week. It was decided at the last meeting that the committee should themselves run the four stalls, representing St. Patrick's, St. Benedict's, Ponsoby, and Parnell, on the Domain Cricket Ground. The National Concert will this year be held on the eve of the festival, and in the Opera House. The Rev. Father Brodie has sent a donation of £5 which he stipulates shall be apportioned to a thoroughly Irish event on the sports programme.

The concert in St. Benedict's Hall last Friday evening in aid of the cemetery improvement fund was a decided success. The vocal and instrumental items were of a very high order of merit, and the performers were greeted with loud applause, and in every instance had to submit to an encore. There were present the Very Rev. Dean O'Reilly, the Very Rev. Father Lighthouse, Very Rev. Dr. Egan, Rev. Fathers Kehoe, Mulvihill, Purton, Brodie, Ryan, Darby, Gillan, and Kamp. Dr. Egan and Father Kehoe assisted in the orchestra. To the Rev. Father Darby is due the greatest praise for his successful promotion and carrying out of the programme. He was untiring in his efforts and scored a decided success.

His Lordship the Right Rev. Dr. Lenihan wrote from Dublin under date January 11. He arrived in the Irish capital on the day previous, and intended to visit several places in Ireland, and expected to see his Eminence Cardinal Logue, his Grace Archbishop Croke, his Grace Archbishop Walsh, and the Bishops of Wexford and Derry. Concerning his return to New Zealand his Lordship says:—“I hope to leave early in March, provided there is a suitable boat calling at Melbourne and going round by the Bluff to pay my respects to my brother Bishops. I hope the St. Patrick's Day Celebration will be a success. Every good wish for it.” We may therefore expect our dear Bi-hop in the latter end of April or early in May.

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