

The meetings, which are to take place every alternate Thursday evening, will be held in the high school-room, which is also to be used by the Newtown Catholic Club.

The half-yearly meeting of St. Patrick's branch of the H.A.C.B.S. was held on Wednesday evening last there being 66 members present. Bro. J. Stratford, junr. President, occupied the chair, and the whole of the officers, including Rev. Father O'Shea, chaplain, were present. The order paper was long and the business of a most important nature, but members were in working form and very little discussion took place on the various motions proposed, amongst which was the following: 'That in order to secure direct representation and other important conveniences and equalising the distances as near as possible of the northern and southern branches from the District Executive, the District Board Office be removed from Auckland to Wellington.' This was carried unanimously, and also a notice of motion for the District Board meeting to be held at Timaru in 1904. It was also decided to forward certain nominations for district officers who will be prepared to carry on the D. E. duties in the event of the above motion being carried.

The report of the secretary for the past quarter shows the Wellington branch to be the largest in New Zealand, with a satisfactory increase in funds on the previous quarter.

The election of officers for the ensuing half-year resulted as follows:—President, Bro. J. Gosling, vice-president, Bro. O. Krohn; secretary, Bro. P. J. Kelleher; treasurer, Bro. M. Bohan; warden, Bro. J. Sullivan; guardian, Bro. J. Taylor; sick visitors, Bro. P. O'Callaghan, and P. Shannon; auditors, Bros. J. W. Callaghan and J. McGlinchy.

NOTES FROM THE HOUSE

PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT

The House of Representatives commenced business in earnest on Wednesday afternoon, when nearly fifty Bills were introduced and read a first time.

In the evening Mr. Rutherford moved the Address-in-Reply, in the course of which he took the opportunity of fully endorsing the policy of the Government, but took exception to some of their administration, and suggested that under-secretaries should be appointed so that the growing administrative work of the Colony could be properly coped with. Mr. Rutherford has a pleasant bantering style, and his speech, punctuated as it was with many humorous allusions, was highly appreciated by the House.

Mr. Major, in seconding the motion, made an excellent speech. He said he was distinctly in favor of a preferential tariff, and held that so far as Free-trade was concerned it was no longer the keystone of British supremacy. The Americans had announced their intention of dominating the Pacific, and we should take the opportunity to protect ourselves against anything of that kind. The progress of the Colony under the Seddon regime had been phenomenal. Of course, mistakes had been made, but that was only human, and to be expected.

Mr. Massey, as an Opposition member, strongly criticised the policy of the Government, and said that Seddonism did not mean Liberalism, nor did it mean good or honest government, and government was in danger unless country was put before party and unless information was supplied to members in regard to expenditure and finance.

Mr. Hogg defended the system of co-operative works and condemned the freehold tenure, contending that the Government had no right to sell a solitary acre of the land of the Colony under such conditions.

On Thursday afternoon the Address-in-Reply was moved in the Council by the Hon. T. K. Macdonald and seconded by Hon. S. T. George, both of whom were only recently called to the Upper Chamber.

On the same afternoon Mr. J. A. Millar was, on the motion of the Premier, elected Chairman of Committees.

In the evening the debate on the Address-in-Reply was continued in the House, Messrs E. M. Smith, McNab, and O'Meara speaking in support of the Ministerial policy, and Mr. J. Duthie adversely criticising it.

The debate was renewed on Friday evening, the speakers being Messrs Bedford and Taylor and the Hon. W. Hall-Jones. The speeches so far—save those by the mover and seconder of the Address-in-Reply—have been very disappointing, the expected criticism of the policy of the Government being very mild and ineffective.

Mr. James Caldwell, late of Wedderburn and Rough Ridge, has entered into possession of the well-known family hotel, the Gridiron, Princes street, Dunedin. The accommodation at this hotel is of a very high order. The sanitary arrangements have been carried out on the most modern system, whilst the fittings and furnishings are of the best. A special feature of the Gridiron is the first-class luncheon, so convenient for busy business men. The new proprietor hopes by strict attention to business and courtesy to guests to make his house one of the most popular in the city....

NEW ZEALAND: GENERAL

In addition to the excellent budget of reading matter for which it is always noted, the July number of the 'Triad' is splendidly illustrated, among the pictures being a very fine photograph of Mark Hambourg, the distinguished pianist.

An exchange reports that a farmer at St. Andrews states that he has just threshed his crop, and it yielded 70½ bushels of wheat to the acre. The oats, of which there were 18 acres, yielded 1900 bushels, or 105½ bushels per acre.

It is announced (says the 'Wairarapa Age') by Mr. A. R. Bunney, solicitor, Masterton, that he has admitted Mr. B. J. Dolan into partnership and that the business in future will be carried on under the style of 'Bunney and Dolan.' Mr. Bunney, the senior partner of the new firm, has now practised in Masterton for the last 27 years. Mr. Dolan has been a resident of Masterton for about 10 years past, having been for the first six years of that period head master of St. Patrick's School, Masterton, and for the last four managing clerk to Mr. Bunney.

In anticipation of the forthcoming tour of Miss Ada Crossley in the colonies The John Church Co. have forwarded us through their London office songs published by the firm, and some of which it is expected the distinguished vocalist will sing during her tour. These include 'The sweetest flower that blows' by Charles B. Hawley; 'Four leaf clover,' words by Ellen Higginson, music by Charles Willeby; 'Flower fetters' and 'Summer rain,' words and music by Charles Willeby; 'Mighty like a rose,' words by Frank L. Stanton, music by Ethelbert Nevin; etc. All these compositions are set for high and low voices, and have been sung at various times by some of the most noted vocalists in England and America, a sufficient guarantee of their excellence. They are tuneful and simple in style, and not beyond the capabilities of the average amateur, and should become very popular.

The Seal of Confession

Our exchanges by the last English mail (says the Tasmanian 'Monitor') contain some interesting particulars relative to a Canadian priest's refusal to break the seal of the confessional. From these papers we learn that a strange legal argument has been caused at Montreal by the refusal of a village priest to tell what a man, accused of murder, had told him under the seal of confession. The prisoner is a wealthy farmer of the historical village of St. Eustache—historical because the abortive French-Canadian struggle for freedom from England's rule began there in 1837. His name is Belanger. He was accused of the murder of his brother-in-law, named Seguin, another wealthy farmer, and after being arrested admitted to Chief K. P. M'Cashill, of the Provincial Detective Force, that he had committed the murder because the dead man had dishonored his twenty-year old daughter. After he had been in confinement for some days, however, he sent for the cure of the village, the Rev. H. Cousineau, and told him in the presence of his son that he desired to retract the remarks he had made about his daughter, as they were not true, and as he had simply made them because it was suggested to him that if he could make people believe such a story he would go free. He asked the priest to tell someone who would be able to communicate with the newspapers of the retraction he had made. After that he asked his son to leave him alone with the priest. During the preliminary investigation the priest was willing to tell word for word what the accused has said about his daughter, but refused to tell the remainder, which he claimed had been told him under the seal of confession, and after the lawyer for the Crown had threatened Father Cousineau with prison for contempt of court the magistrate upheld the priest.

There is talk of carrying the question to a higher court. St. Eustache, which is situated in Deux Montagnes County, in the archdiocese of Montreal, is a place of much more importance than the word 'village' as used in Canada would convey to Tasmanians. Compared with our centres of population St. Eustache would be a large town. Father Cousineau, the cure, is assisted by another priest. Schools with about 400 pupils are conducted by the religious of St. Viateur and the Sisters of Notre Dame. The Crown Prosecutor in the murder trial threatened to take the priest's refusal to break the seal of the confessional to a higher court, but that will be a futile course. At every risk to himself Father Cousineau must and will preserve that sacred confidence placed in him by the accused man as inviolate. The seal of the confessional has never been broken, and before to-day priests have been done to death and put in chains and cast into prison for refusing to obey orders which no human power can enforce.

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