

The toast of the 'Chaplain' was eloquently proposed by Bro. M. Mahoney and duly responded to by Father Tubman. Bro. Fitzgerald, the secretary of the branch, made the speech of the evening, in proposing the 'Hibernian Society.' The Memory of Robert Emmet was proposed by Bro. Dennehy, and the 'New Zealand Tablet' was proposed in complimentary terms by Bro. Dumier, and seconded by Bro. Doyle. Bro. Dennehy responded, and after eulogising the work done by the editor, he expressed the hope that the members would back up their hearty appreciation of the toast by practically proving it and becoming subscribers to their Catholic weekly. The Irish Parliamentary Party was proposed by Bro. O'Connor in a neat speech, and 'The Visitors,' coupled with the name of Bro. Nelson (Christchurch), was proposed by Bro. Sheehy. Bro. Nelson, in replying, congratulated the Rev. Father Tubman on having such a grand body of men to preside over, and made very practical remarks regarding the workings of the society, of which he has been a member during the last thirty years. He had much pleasure in proposing the 'Timaru Branch,' which he considered was giving a lead to the Hibernians in New Zealand.

During the evening songs were sung by Bros. MacDonald, Doyle, O'Leary, O'Connor, Mahoney, Murphy, and Nelson (Christchurch). A recitation was given by Mr. M. F. Dennehy, the accompaniments being played by Mr. Doyle. Irish dances—a hornpipe by Bro. O'Sullivan and a jig by Mr. Dennehy, senr—were much appreciated.

(This letter reached us last week after we had gone to press.)

CATHOLICS AND CRIMINAL STATISTICS

INTERVIEW WITH A PRISON CHAPLAIN

(From a correspondent.)

In view of the recent oft' repeated and as often repudiated assertions regarding the alleged preponderance of prisoners in the gaols of the Colony described as Catholics, the following facts of actual experience were tendered to me at first hand by one who for some years has acted in the capacity of prison chaplain in one of the largest and—in the official eye—most important places of punishment and detention in New Zealand. The statistics (said my informant) which are officially compiled, and from which all manner of inaccurate and thoughtless statements are periodically given out by irresponsible persons with a motive to serve, are most misleading. And here my reverend informant went on to endorse in its entirety the leading article which recently appeared in the 'Tablet' on the subject.

There passed through the prison under notice last year 751 persons, of whom 147 were classified as Catholics. And here it is interesting to see how so-called 'Catholic' prisoners are manufactured and to observe the utterly misleading nature of official statistics so far as the particular matter under consideration is concerned. It is a recognised axiom in prison discipline that no matter what religion a person lays claim to on entering, such is officially recorded as a matter of course, and whilst in gaol no person is allowed to change his or her reputed faith. Many whom he found classified as Catholics were, when questioned, discovered to be

Nothing of the Sort;

nor had they ever been. When asked why they had so designated themselves, the reply was nearly always to this effect: 'Well, you know, we supposed the chief gaoler or some of the warders would be Catholics, and as we always thought there was some sort of "freemasonry" existing amongst Catholics, they would not be unduly severe, and would have easier times.' There are at the present time in this gaol about 130 persons. It is a record number, and of these about 25 are reputed Catholics. Of seven or eight of these the chaplain said: 'I am perfectly satisfied not one of them is a co-religionist of ours. They know absolutely nothing of Catholic doctrine; they can furnish no evidence whatever of baptism; they cannot name a parish they ever belonged to; they cannot even attempt to make the Sign of the Cross. These are fair specimens of a large class of the alleged "Catholic" criminals often met with in my experience and in the experience of my predecessors.'

The following few instances will also prove interesting:—One man, when detected in a false statement as to religion, said: 'Well, Father, as a matter of fact, I'm nothing, but my wife is a Catholic, and if I was anything I would be one, and I knew that the priest, if he thought I was a Catholic, would help my wife while I was here.' Another said, when questioned—he mentioned his parish and parish priest, but on enquiry being made it was proved his wife was a Catholic but he himself never was—and moreover his better half only wished his sentence was twelve years instead of as many months. Numerous similar cases could be quoted. Again, a great percentage of Catholic inmates of the gaol are what are known as

'In-and-out's'—

'social derelicts'—usually for drunkenness and disorderly conduct. And here, especially, where statistical inaccuracies occur. A long sentence prisoner, be he Anglican, Presbyterian, or Wesleyan, counts one for every year of

this incarceration, whereas one Catholic who is 'sent up' perhaps once a month for some minor offence counts as twelve separate committals in the statistics for the year. And each one who is wrongly described counts really two against Catholics, because of his failure to be properly classified to his own religion. There is, it is said, one sect whose adherents make it a rule of faith, when sent to prison, to repudiate their religion. They are, in turn, repudiated by their co-religionists, and are generally ascribed to the Anglican Church, of which they are not members. My informant knows of three instances where notorious characters, representing themselves as Catholics, are convicted and sent to prison on an average once a month, thus constituting among them no fewer than

86 Catholic 'Criminals'

a year. Another, who is more a lunatic than criminal, provides another twelve, whilst there are always a number of foreign seafaring Catholic men swelling the number who are in for slight offences, some of which are unpunishable and go unnoticed in their own country. The very worst Catholic offender at the present time in the large gaol referred to is there for an offence committed whilst maddened with drink. He attributed drink and poverty primarily as the cause of all the trouble Catholics find themselves in. Your cool-headed Englishman or Scotchman gets drunk and slinks off home quietly, if somewhat helplessly, whilst the hot-headed Celt commonly sets out in search of trouble, which he invariably finds, often at the cost of his hard-earned money and his liberty. The inmates of our prisons are increasing enormously. This increase is clearly attributable to the present Godless system of education. A great percentage of Catholics in our prisons, as my informant positively knows and declares, were

Tutored in the State Schools;

many of them are still comparatively young; and few, if any, of those it has been his duty to deal with, know much or anything of their religion, which therefore cannot be blamed for their plight. Catholic prisoners are, however, recognised as the most amenable to discipline, and, when once in gaol, are not often known to repeat prison offences. He (the chaplain) defies anyone, whether layman or clergyman of whatever denomination, to point to a single instance in which a Catholic prisoner has falsely described himself as an adherent of another creed. As a regular thing, our people are not often proved guilty of the

Grave Offences

against society. The four worst prisoners at the present time in the prison referred to are Protestants. As pointed out in your leading article of July 2, the Irish penal code, the land laws, the destruction of the Irish manufacturing industries, and the systematic confiscation and impoverishment of the people in the land of their origin, have combined to leave among the Catholic population in New Zealand an altogether undue proportion of the poorer and poorest portion of its people. All that (said my reverend informant) is quite caused chiefly by their poverty and their place in the social scale (if they were blessed with a more generous measure of the world's goods, crime, properly so called, would be almost as unknown among them as it is in Ireland. As it is, statistics furnish no reason whatever for supposing that, even in the matter of petty offences, or misdemeanors, they stand at a disadvantage as compared with the same class among other creeds. And when it comes to the grosser and more serious forms of crime, Catholics have, by comparison with all others, a singularly clean record.

In the most obstinate cases of coughs and colds TUSSICURA can be relied upon to afford immediate and permanent relief.—***

KOZIE TEA CASH BONUSES. Results of first distribution closed 21st May, 1903:—

1st Bonus, £10, cash, goes to Convent of Mercy, Hokitika; 2nd, £5, Mrs. W. Simpson Jun., Arno; 3rd, £3, Miss Fitzgerald, Waimihini; 4th, £2, Mrs. W. Lockhart, Milton; 5th, £1, Mrs. A. Hewitson Jun., Milton; 6th, 10s, Miss McMurtrie, Milton; 7th, 10s, Miss G. Paulm, Opoho; 8th, 10s, Miss M. Hunter, Caversham; 9th, 10s, Mrs. Gunn, Chatto Creek; 10th, 5s, Miss Ida Mills, Dunback; 11th, 5s, Miss Myrtle Curtis, Westport; 12th, 5s, Miss M. Hay, Invercargill; 13th, 5s, Mr. A. Singer, Hokitika; 14th, 5s, Miss E. Shipman, Balfour; 15th, 5s, Mr. Regie Harper, Poverty Bay; 16th, 5s, Mr. J. Feely, Timaru; 17th, 5s, Mrs. Johnstone, Nelson. The next distribution closes on the 30th November, and coupons must be sent in not later than 7th December. Remember the first three bonuses are £5 each, and the tea is the best and most economical in the world, retailed at 1s 6d, 1s 9d, and 2s per lb. Golden Tipped Kozie, a specially fine high grown tea, at 2s 6d, is superb. Notice change in the distribution of bonuses.—So as to give all a good chance of securing a substantial cash bonus, we have decided to withdraw the first and second bonuses of £10 and £5 and to substitute three bonuses of £5 each to go to the consumers sending in coupons representing the three largest quantities of Kozie Tea. The other bonuses will remain unchanged. We have checked the coupons returned to Messrs. W. Scouler and Co. for first Kozie Tea distribution of cash bonuses, and certify that the above is a correct list of the winners.—(Signed) Barr, Leary, and Co., Auditors, Dunedin, June 10th, 1903.—***