

the innate justice of our claim for our own free-place pupils must appeal to all justice-loving people. On this education question it seems to me that we will have to set up a constructive policy. In a desire for religious instruction in schools we have much in common with many members of other denominations, and it seems a pity that those who, like ourselves, are desirous of even-handed justice to all will not meet us fairly, and endeavor to arrange a common platform on broad lines which would be honorable alike to all, and meet the necessity of all consciences without doing violence to any. Before sitting down, I would like to point out the great success of the second Pan-Southland Catholic Federation picnic, the attendance this year being greater than that of the first picnic, and, although the weather conditions were unfavorable, the enthusiasm of the people was as great as ever. I would commend gatherings of this kind to other districts. I again offer you all a hearty welcome, and hope your deliberations upon the various matters appearing on the agenda paper will result in much good to the cause we all have at heart.

ARCHBISHOP O'SHEA'S LETTER.

His Grace Archbishop O'Shea, being unavoidably absent, the following communication was read by the president:—

'I am very sorry that my visitation engagements in a remote part of the archdiocese prevent me from being present and addressing you in person. I have before all to congratulate the Dominion Council on the splendid work that the Catholic Federation has accomplished during the past year. The half-yearly report is indeed most gratifying to all of us, and it should convince every Catholic, if there are still any who need convincing, that the Catholic Federation did not come into existence a day too soon. The principal thing accomplished by the Federation was of course the defeat in the last Parliament of the Bible-in-schools plebiscite (or so-called Referendum Bill). Then, by means of its organisation, it helped during the late general election to bring about the return of a large number of candidates who are pledged to oppose the proposals of the Bible-in-Schools League. Though this is very gratifying, as well as encouraging, I do not want you to go away with the idea that all danger from that quarter is past. I would impress this strongly upon you, so that when you return to your own districts you will use your influence and your efforts to disabuse our people of the idea that the Bible-in-schools danger is at an end.

'There is, apart from this question altogether, a great amount of work for the Catholic Federation to do for the cause of Catholicity. Though the organisation must ever be kept from being political in the party political sense, there is yet no reason why it should not use its organisation and its influence to further certain reforms in the political sphere. There can be no doubt that the present method of carrying out our Parliamentary elections is neither fair to minorities, nor truly democratic. As a remedy, what is called proportional representation has been suggested in many quarters, and there can be no question that it is increasing in public favor. As we are a minority of the people, any system of voting that aims at giving minorities more adequate representation should incite our sympathetic interest. And I think it will be to our interest if the Federation can undertake the work of enlightening our people on the merits of the system of proportional representation, so that they may be able to give an intelligent vote on the question. You can go to work quietly and help to hasten what I believe would be a great reform. Under the present system a Member of Parliament is returned by people of all shades of opinion, and to keep his seat he must be an adept in the art of trying to represent all these different opinions, no matter how contradictory and irreconcilable they may be. In other words, he must be a politician whose only principle is often how best not to offend any section amongst his constituents, so as to be able to secure their votes at the next election. I do not wish to further occupy the time of the Council on this matter, but would

impress on you to make a study of the question yourselves, and to induce Catholics to study it. This will provide work for the Federation.

'Allusion is made in the report to the large number of men who have gone with the Expeditionary Forces, and this reminds me that the Federation may be able to help in bringing about that a regular supply of newspapers, weekly for choice, are forwarded to our men. You cannot realise how welcome these would be to those at the front. If they were forwarded to the Catholic chaplains, they would pass them on to the men, and the very fact of the chaplains being the medium of this would strengthen their hold upon the lads. I feel sure that you will be able to help in this matter.

'I wish your meeting and deliberations every success. I hope they will have the effect of improving the status of the Catholic Federation, and of increasing its usefulness. I am sorry that I am not in Wellington to meet you all again, but I trust that your stay will be a very pleasant one. I feel sure that Wellingtonians will show you every hospitality and kindness that is in their power.'

It was resolved on the motion of Very Rev. Dean Darby, seconded by Mr. McLaughlin, that his Grace Archbishop O'Shea be thanked for his address, and that it be recorded in the minutes.

AMENDMENT OF RULES.

The Dominion Executive forwarded the following amendment:—That rule 4 be amended by altering due date of subscription to July 1, and making such subscription cover the period until the 30th June in each year.'

The president, in moving that the proposed amendment be agreed to, stated that the object was to alter the end of the financial year to June 30. At present the annual meeting of the Federation took place in July, while the financial period ended in December.

Mr. McLaughlin seconded the motion.

The Rev. Father Hurley supported the proposal, and stated that difficulty had been experienced in procuring subscriptions during the holiday season.

Mr. Hayward thought it would be a mistake, as the natural end of the year was December, when members would be reminded by that fact that another year's subscription was due.

Very Rev. Dean Power supported the motion for the reasons given by Father Hurley.

The motion was agreed to.

A very long discussion took place on the question of the amendments, of which due notice had been given, proposed to rule 8, in which nearly all the delegates took part, and on the question being put both amendments (Dominion Council and Wellington Diocesan Council) were lost.

An amendment proposed to rule 8 (b) was rejected without debate.

An amendment to rule 9, dealing with the constitution of the Dominion Executive, and which was contingent on the passing of the previous amendments, was held over until the annual meeting, on the motion of Mr. Hayward, seconded by Mr. Lynch.

A remit from Dunedin:—That the Diocesan Councils meet from time to time as they think fit—was struck out without discussion.

HALF-YEARLY REPORT OF EXECUTIVE.

The half-yearly report, which was published in the *N.Z. Tablet* of the 4th inst., was taken as read.

The president moved that the report be adopted. He referred briefly to the chief items of interest in it, and said that the Executive was to be complimented on the great amount of work it had accomplished.

The discussion was continued by Rev. Father Daly and other delegates, and Mr. J. J. L. Burke, chairman of the Dominion Executive replied, supplying information desired.

The report was adopted.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY AND ORGANISER.

Mr. Girling-Butcher reported on the work of the head office for the past six months. He stated he had