

CATHOLIC FEDERATION

WELLINGTON DIOCESAN COUNCIL

The following is the report of the executive committee of the Wellington Diocesan Council of the Catholic Federation for the half-year ended June 30:—

During this period the committee held five meetings, and the attendance of members was as follows:—Right Rev. Mgr. McKenna 2, Rev. Father Daly 2, Mr. B. Ellis 2, Mr. J. Corry 4, Mr. H. A. Parsonage 4, Mr. R. Sievers 4, Mr. F. W. Crombie 2, Mr. R. P. Smyth 3, and the secretary 5.

In February last the Rev. Father J. H. Herring resigned on account of removal from Wellington, and and Mr. R. P. Smith was elected for the remainder of the term.

The committee desires to place on record its profound gratitude to Almighty God that his Grace Archbishop Redwood has returned once more amongst us in good health, and sincerely hopes that his Grace may be granted many years of happiness with his people.

The committee desires to express its deep sorrow at the decease of the Right Rev. Dr. Grimes, Bishop of Christchurch, who had taken an earnest interest in the affairs of the Federation from its inception. A message to that effect was conveyed to the Vicar-General of that diocese on behalf of this council.

The committee desires to record its sincere sympathy with the Right Rev. Dr. Cleary, Bishop of Auckland, in the long-continued and severe illness from which his Lordship is suffering, and trusts that Almighty God, in His mercy, will shortly restore the Bishop to health, and that he may be spared to his people for many years to come.

The committee learns with deep concern that the health of his Grace Archbishop O'Shea has necessitated his departure from the Dominion, and trusts that his mission in quest of renewed health and vigor may be entirely successful.

The committee desires to place on record its sincere appreciation of the dignity conferred upon the Right Rev. Monsignor McKenna, V.G., chairman of the council for the past year, and trusts that the Right Rev. Prelate will return to the Dominion with restored health, and that he may be long spared to enjoy the honor so worthily bestowed upon him.

The membership of the Federation in the archdiocese, based upon the contributions remitted to the Diocesan Council, shows a slight decrease when compared with the similar period of last year. The returns sent in represent 4855 members—including those received too late to be included in the accounts for the period, and one life member enrolled (Mrs. Cornish, Feilding)—as against 4904 for the first half of the year 1914. This may be accounted for to some extent by the departure of many of our members with the Expeditionary Forces now serving abroad, but a glance at the accounts for the period will show that branches that were last year in a sound and healthy condition have fallen away sadly. This is a matter for very grave concern to all who have the welfare of the Federation at heart, and as the financial year is by resolution of the Dominion Council, carried forward to June 30 the parish committees referred to have a full year in which to make good the deficiency in numbers. Committees are earnestly requested to give this matter their immediate and serious attention, for until the Federation has enrolled upon its books a majority of the Catholic population of the Dominion, it cannot hope to accomplish very much in their interests or to receive the consideration that would be accorded to a fully representative body.

During the past half-year, the work of the executive committee has been generally of a routine character. No great question such as that which agitated the public mind at this time last year has been before the people, and the opportunity has thus been given to consider questions in the general interests of the Federation. Some of these matters will be placed before the council

by resolutions to be found on the order paper, and it is hoped that the council will give these questions its serious consideration, and that the result of its deliberations will be beneficial to the Federation, and to the Catholic people as a whole.

At the last meeting of the council the necessity of a building at the Trentham Camp for Catholic purposes was realised, and the council voted the sum of £25 towards its erection. Subsequently, the Dominion Council authorised the erection of a commodious hall for this purpose, and called upon each diocesan council to contribute the sum of £40 towards the cost. Your committee authorised the payment of the balance required, and the whole amount was promptly paid over to the Dominion Council. The Diocesan Council has every reason to be gratified at the manner in which the money has been expended, and the building—although suitable in every other way—is now scarcely large enough to accommodate all the soldiers attending Mass, and further expenditure in this direction may be required in the near future.

The question of expenses of delegates to Diocesan Council meetings was referred to your executive by the last meeting of the council, and the matter has received considerable attention. The committee went exhaustively into the matter, and was regretfully forced to the conclusion that the revenue of the council would be unequal to the strain imposed upon it, if the proposal to refund the fares of the delegates was given effect to. A return was prepared by the secretary, which showed that the cost of bringing three delegates from each of the 29 principal committees outside a radius of 20 miles from the city, would amount to no less than £120 for each meeting; and with two meetings in the year it will easily be seen that a much larger revenue than is now the case would be required. This affords an additional reason for doing everything possible to increase the membership, as it is manifestly impossible for the council to enter into this or any similar scheme for the benefit of the Federation, while hampered by the want of funds. Your executive is of opinion that it is of vital importance that each parish committee should be directly represented at the council meetings, and trusts that the council will give this subject its earnest attention when considering the remits dealing with the question.

The necessity for a hostel for Catholic women arriving at, or employed in, the city, has long been felt, and at the last meeting of the council this question was referred to your executive for consideration. The committee, after giving the question much attention, reluctantly came to the conclusion that it would be unwise, in view of the many claims at present upon the generosity of the public, to ask for subscriptions for this purpose. Since the matter was disposed of, however, information has been received that the project would meet with sympathetic consideration from persons in a position to assist the movement, and your executive recommends that the incoming committee be requested to consider the question.

Your committee feels that this report would be incomplete without some reference to the great war in which the nations of Europe are now engaged. Many of our members are now on active service with the Expeditionary Forces, and the Catholic manhood of this Dominion has furnished its full quota of men. The committee feels honored that two of its members have been accepted for service, and feels sure that the council will join in wishing both gentlemen good health and fortune at the front and safe return to the Dominion. To the relatives of those who have given their lives for their country the committee offers its deepest sympathy. To those who have been wounded, its earnest hope is that they may soon be restored to health; and to all now engaged in this terrible conflict its sincere wish is that the war may be speedily brought to a close, and that our men may return to the Dominion in health and with the honor and glory that their brilliant achievements at the Dardanelles so richly deserve.

The committee desires to thank all the officers and members of parish committees for their services during