

## Queenstown

(From our own correspondent.)

The annual meeting of St. Joseph's Literary and Debating Society was held in the schoolroom on April 11. There was a fair attendance of members, the president (Mr. M. J. Gavin) being in the chair. The report and balance sheet were read and adopted. The report disclosed that the membership for the year had slightly decreased, and that in the debating department less enthusiasm had been shown than in the previous year. From the promises of support by members, it was hoped that more interest would be taken in the debates during the coming year. Regret was expressed that no member of the club could attend the conference of the Federated Catholic Clubs at Christchurch. It was decided to open the session on April 27 with a social evening, to be held in the Convent schoolroom. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year:— Patron, Rev. Father O'Donnell; president, Mr. J. Shepherd; vice-presidents, Messrs. P. McMullan and T. Kelly; hon. secretary, Mr. J. McNeill; sub-editor, Mr. D. McBride.

There was ideal weather on Easter Saturday, when the annual Queenstown regatta took place. This popular event was this year held on a course marked off in the Queenstown Bay, and proved an unqualified success. Large entries and good racing were the order of the day, some very close finishes being in evidence.

The annual Easter social, under the auspices of a committee of ladies of St. Joseph's congregation, was held on Easter Monday night, and proved a great success, quite 200 people being in attendance. This annual gathering is becoming every year more popular, and reflects great credit on the ladies who constitute the social committee. The funds of the church will probably benefit to the sum of £19 from the takings of this year's gatherings.

## A GERMAN INFORMATION BUREAU

## AN AID TO THE CATHOLIC PRESS

The flood of slanderous charges against the Church which issues from Socialistic, Masonic, and Atheistic press bureaux is rather increasing than abating (says Rev. F. J. Betten, S.J., in America). The *Central-Auskunftsstelle* at Cologne, Germany, makes it its object to assist the press in refuting the accusations based on fictitious convent and priest scandals, Jesuit fables, historical lies and *Los-von-Rom* inventions. Though their number in the German speaking countries has been steadily growing, it is attributed to the activity of this bureau that, on the whole, they are less bitter than they were before its foundation. During the year 1910 the bureau handled in all 1328 cases. Of these, 1087 cases had been reported by newspaper editors, priests, and others; 236 cases were investigated by the bureau without such an appeal; satisfactory information could not be obtained in 215 cases; in 490 cases the charges proved to be lies pure and simple; in about 360 the principal facts had been distorted, while in 350 cases the reports of the anti-Catholic press were found to be, at least, essentially correct.

Of the cases thus handled, 147 referred to secular priests; to religious, 72; to Catholic laymen, 32; to Catholic societies, 48; to proselytism, 38; to the Vatican and the papacy, 115; to statistics, 13; to historical falsehoods, 45; to ecclesiastical conditions, 53; to missions, 9; to Lourdes, 12; to Catholic teaching and practice concerning matrimony, 15; to sacerdotal celibacy, 22; to Jesuits, 12; to superstition, 18; to *Los-von-Rom* stories, 46; to conversions, 8; to Freemasons, 21; to the Centre party and elections, 31; to relics, 75; to convent stories, 93; to schools, 26; to other subjects, about 100.

These figures, while illustrative of the great variety of shapes assumed by untruth in the service of anti-Catholicity, at the same time prove the great importance of this Catholic Information Bureau. If it did not exist, we should have to create it at once, is the general feeling. It is consulted by authors preparing learned or popular books, by members of the legislatures, by directors of political and social societies; above all, by newspaper editors. The information it gives is not only sent to the questioner, but published in a kind of periodical, the *C. I. Mitteilungen*, which goes to the editorial rooms of all the greater Catholic newspapers and, be it said to their honor, to a number of non-Catholic organs as well. It is printed on one side only, so as to allow a free use of the editorial scissors. Thus is insured a prompt and general denial of calumnies or rectification of misstatements.

A peculiar feature of the Cologne institution is the Bureau for Legal Protection which is attached to it. This department gives advice and assistance for the prosecution of slanderers, if this is deemed advisable, and takes care that those papers which printed the defamation give due publicity to the rectification.

The proper task of the *Central-Auskunftsstelle* is the investigation of facts, pretended and real, and the foregoing remarks show what a beehive of activity there must be in its offices. Its threads are spun over the whole globe. No matter in what country the scene of some scandal is placed—Italy, Spain, South America, or China—every means will be tried to procure reliable information. The chanceries of the Bishops most willingly furnish the desired items, and the bureau keeps in close touch with the Vatican.

Doctrinal questions are not treated in the ordinary run of business, but form a kind of side line. A regular periodical is published, the *Apologetische Rundschau*, which purposes to foster a deeper knowledge of the truths of religion among the educated classes and to defend the Faith against so-called scientific attacks. The subscription price is less than a dollar a year, surprisingly low, if one remembers that this monthly was started with a view to assist in securing a steady revenue for the whole enterprise.

The bureau does an immense amount of good, but its present organisation is only considered a phase for future development. The *Central-Auskunftsstelle*, writes *Germania*, 'is a news bureau, so far the first and only Catholic one. Should it not be possible to expand it into a concern like the Reuter, the Wolff, or the Havas agency?' This is, indeed, the goal which Rev. Carl Kaufmann, the director of the bureau, has had in view for years. To work up to this, he added to the various rectifications of errors and slanders other authoritative information about events of a religious nature or other happenings that might prove of interest for Catholic readers. Mr. Funder, editor-in-chief of the Vienna *Reichspost*, said in the Catholic Congress at Innsbruck: 'We need reliable reports of every nature. Like a gigantic kaleidoscope, a newspaper reflects the entire world, and, like a mirror, it is liable to distort the shape of events. It is the current news that every one looks for in his paper. The news is the soul of a newspaper, and reliable news on Catholic matters is the soul of the Catholic paper. Unfortunately, most of the news in our papers is furnished by firms that are in the hands of enemies of the Church. What we need is an independent Catholic news agency.'

'Yes,' answered a Jewish paper, 'that is all well and good; but the Catholics lack two things which are indispensably necessary for such an undertaking; namely, intellect and money.' As to the first requisite, we trust we are as well supplied as any other class of mortals. In any case, we have one great advantage over them in religious matters: an infallible authority keeps us from wasting time and trouble on useless cavilling. And as for money, it is true that our millionaires are not very conspicuous; but the modest contributions of the less favored which keep a *Volksverein* and a strong Catholic press afloat are capable of greater achievements.

This idea, thus forcibly expressed by our German brethren, is indeed not exclusively German. The need is felt everywhere, and is felt the more keenly the greater the efforts made to develop an influential Catholic press. It is an international need, and should be met by international co-operation. How much could be effected by a combination of the Catholic Truth Societies and similar organisations, it is hard to tell. But would not the Catholic papers of all countries and languages gladly lend, not only their moral aid, but also their financial support.

## BLACKROCK COLLEGE, DUBLIN

## GOLDEN JUBILEE MEMORIAL

We have been requested to publish the following circular letter:—

Committee Rooms, Gresham Hotel, Dublin,  
January, 1911.

The Golden Jubilee of Blackrock College will be solemnly celebrated next June. It is proposed by the friends and admirers of the college to signalise the occasion by the erection of a Memorial Hall, which will supply a long felt want to the College equipment, and, at the same time, perpetuate the memory of the Golden Jubilee and of all those who take part in it. There is no need to emphasise the claims of Blackrock, first of all, on her own past men, and, further, on all who take an interest in Irish educational work. She has taken no small part in the progress and achievements of Irish Catholics during the past fifty years; she has contributed in no inconsiderable manner to put Irish Catholic names in prominence in every field of both Secondary and University education; she has supplied leaders and workers to every walk of life at home, and she has burst open for many an Irish youth the gates of the most coveted alien preserves. All this she has done at immense sacrifice and through the untiring, broad-minded zeal of the community of devoted men to whom she owes her foundation and the direction of her movements on the rough road of forward educational progress. It is fitting, then, that not only her own sons but all who bless sterling work done for faith and country should gather round Blackrock on the occasion of her Golden Jubilee, and present her with a substantial memorial of their gratitude and esteem. Lists of subscriptions will be published from time to time between now and next June, and a permanent record of all subscriptions will be set up in the proposed Memorial Hall.

The undersigned committee have been duly appointed to receive subscriptions for this purpose. They appeal confidently to all past Blackrockians, as well as to all those who have ever been brought into touch with the goodly fruits of the work accomplished by the college, to contribute generously to the Memorial fund.

James O'Connor, K.C. (chairman); James Hickey, P.P., and E. P. McLoughlin, M.D. (hon. secretaries); John P. Butler, J.P., J. M. Farrelly, and P. Hayden, C.C. (hon. treasurers).