

yesterday, for the purpose of forming a branch of the Catholic Federation. The Very Rev. Dean Burke, V.F., occupied the chair, and Mr. T. Pound was appointed secretary pro tem. The Very Rev. Dean outlined the aims and objects of the Federation, and pointed out that it was essentially a laymen's movement, and one in which the whole congregation could join in assisting the clergy to defend the faith and matters pertaining to our religion, when occasion arose. After several speakers had given their views in favor of the formation of a local branch, it was unanimously decided that the Catholic Federation be established in Invercargill.

The various Catholic societies have been requested to appoint their delegates to the Federation, and another general meeting will be held in the schoolroom on next Sunday week, the 25th inst.

Parishioners (both male and female) need hardly be reminded to be present in great numbers at this meeting, and so launch the Federation in Invercargill under auspicious circumstances.

CONFERENCE IN CHRISTCHURCH.

(From our own correspondent.)

A largely attended and most enthusiastic meeting of diocesan delegates in connection with the New Zealand Catholic Federation, was held in the episcopal residence, Barbadoes street, on last Thursday evening. The following parish committees were directly represented:—Christchurch Cathedral (Mr. J. R. Hayward and Mr. M. Garty), St. Mary's, Christchurch North (Mr. W. Hayward, jun., and Mr. Williamson), Timaru (Rev. Father Smyth, S.M. and Mr. J. M. Dunne), Ashburton (Very Rev. Dean O'Donnell and Mr. H. P. Madden), Rangiora (Very Rev. Dean Hyland), Rakaia-Methven (Rev. Dr. Kennedy and Mr. J. Buckley), Lincoln (Rev. Father O'Connor), Fairlie (Mr. W. Barry and Mr. P. O'Connor), Greymouth (Very Rev. Dean Carew, S.M.). The following parishes of the diocese were represented by proxy:—Waimate, Temuka, Geraldine, Leeston, Akaroa, Lyttelton, Hawarden, Darfield, Ahaura, Kumara, Hokitika, and Ross.

[A full report of the proceeding will appear in our next issue.]

CORRESPONDENCE

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for opinions expressed by our correspondents.]

A NEW ZEALAND CATHOLIC BENEFIT SOCIETY.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—Though the letter on the above subject, which appeared in your last issue from the pen of the Very Rev. Dean Darby was admirably dealt with in your editorial column, I nevertheless, with your kind permission, desire to make a few remarks which I hope will be duly considered by the Very Rev. Dean. In the first place I am sure all Catholics will heartily endorse the sentiments expressed in the first two paragraphs of the letter under notice, but the third paragraph introduces a proposal upon which we will certainly not be so unanimous. Of course Dean Darby is aware of the existence of a 'Catholic Benefit Society' in New Zealand—viz., the H.A.C.B. Society; what then is implied in his question 'Is not the time ripe to establish a New Zealand Catholic Benefit Society?'

Either (1) that this Society is not truly Catholic, or (2) that on account of the word 'Hibernian' occupying first position the Society does not appeal to New Zealand born Catholics.

With reference to the Catholicity of the Society I cannot believe that this is the ground of objection, as your columns have on many occasions borne testimony of good work done in New Zealand by the Society in Catholic matters, whilst the great progress made by the Society in recent years is almost wholly due to the efforts of our missionary and parish priests in all parts of New Zealand. If further proof of the

Catholicity of the Society is required it is only necessary to refer to the fact that should a member cease to be a *practical* Catholic he cannot remain a member of the Society.

I am inclined to the opinion that the word 'Hibernian' is the cause of the objection many of our Catholics have to joining our ranks. This opinion was strengthened some time back on reading in the *Tablet* a suggestion from a Catholic club man that the H.A.C.B. Society should change its name to the 'Catholic Benefit Society.' Speaking as a colonial, I must say it passes my comprehension why young New Zealanders should object to join the Society simply because it clings to the name Hibernian as well as Australasian and Catholic. Whilst members are enjoined at their initiation to ever fondly cherish the memory of Ireland, no attempt is made to obtrude the nationality of the founders of the Society on them, candidates of all nationalities being made equally welcome.

Surely nothing more noble or inspiring could be placed before members than the traditions of Ireland and the heroic sacrifices made for our holy religion by the forefathers of the majority of Catholics in these Southern lands. There is no intention surely on the part of those suggesting a New Zealand Catholic Benefit Society that membership should be confined to New Zealanders. There are many opportunities afforded Catholics of developing a national spirit, and I fail to see the necessity of a purely Catholic national organisation.

Then what will be gained by running the risk of weakening the Catholic Benefit Society already in existence? In my humble opinion it is not a 'Society that will put New Zealand first' that is required but a Society which places Catholicity before all else, and I respectfully submit that the H.A.C.B.S. answers this requirement.

It is therefore sincerely to be hoped for that the sound advice you offer in your editorial note will be followed, viz., that Catholics will throw every atom of energy into bringing the two existing organisations—the H.A.C.B. Society and the N.Z. Catholic Federation—to the highest possible degree of strength. If this advice is acted upon and our clergy give their active assistance—without which no Catholic society will ever become great—I feel sure your anticipation that a great and important future is before these two organisations will soon be fully realised.

Let the answer to the question of the Very Rev. Dean therefore be 'Not yet.' From my twenty years' experience of enlisting the sympathy of Catholics in various Catholic organisations I have no hesitation in saying we cannot at present make a success of a second Catholic Benefit Society in New Zealand.

In conclusion I would like to assure the Very Rev. Dean Darby that his object can be attained by the establishment of a branch of the H.A.C.B. Society in every parish, and the placing in office young New Zealanders who will manage the affairs of the branch in an up-to-date and business-like manner. This is evidenced by the great progress made by the Society in Wellington, where the whole of the thirty-six officers are—I believe without exception—young New Zealanders.

Thanking you for your valuable space, I am, etc.,

J. W. CALLAGHAN.

Wellington, May 10, 1913.

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