

energetic activity in the matter of Catholic organisation. On the Bible-in-schools side an official is paid—nominally, at least—a high salary for the express work of organising their forces with a view to political action; and, as will be seen from the quotations which we make elsewhere from a Marlborough paper, the methods by which this political action is being engineered are, in some instances at least, by no means honorable and above board. This organisation and action must be met by counter-organisation and counter-action; and in the very near future it will be necessary for the Catholic body to make its position clear, and to speak in the most forceful, effective, and representative manner that shall be possible. To this end it is desirable that the work of completing the organisation of the Catholic Federation should be carried out with the least possible delay. Already in the north organisation is well advanced; and in the Archdiocese and Dioceses of Auckland and Christchurch not only have parish committees been generally established but diocesan councils have also been duly constituted. In Otago, however, there are still one or two parishes where committees have not been appointed, and in other cases the existing committees have not yet elected representatives to the diocesan council. We can only hope that this gentle reminder will help those concerned to realise the desirableness of expediting matters, so that the Federation may be placed on a fixed and definite footing, and a representative, regularly elected Dominion Executive may be established at the earliest possible. When the machinery is ready, and in working order, it will be found that there is ample and urgent work waiting to be done.

REPREHENSIBLE TACTICS

The Marlborough *Express* of May 27 is responsible for the following: 'It is to be hoped that the Government will not allow itself to be cajoled into complying with the request for a referendum on the subject of Bible-reading in the State schools. A card is just now being distributed from house to house, the people being asked to sign it and thereby intimate their desire for the introduction of Bible-reading into the schools and their request for a referendum on the subject. Doubtless a good many will sign because they are in sympathy with the movement, while other signatures will be forthcoming because busy housewives will prefer to sign rather than waste time talking at the door while the dinner spoils or the baby screams itself hoarse. So far, so good. But when it comes to the person who really does not want to sign—what of him or her? Will the canvasser take a refusal, or will he (or she) attempt, by quoting Scripture bearing more or less on the point, to gain a signature by these means? Judging by the experiences of some householders, these very questionable methods are being employed in Blenheim. 'You are crucifying Christ; you are choosing Barabbas'—this is the sort of argument that is being used in order to get cards signed. Now, people who think the question out calmly know that they are neither crucifying Christ nor choosing Barabbas by refusing to sign the cards if they do not desire to sign them; but others, may be, are swayed by the charge of un-Christian behavior, and weakly attach their signatures to what in their hearts they really do not believe in. Thus it will probably happen that a large number of the signatures to the Bible in State Schools League's petition are not the signatures of people in favor of the referendum at all; and the country may thus be put to unnecessary expense in the holding of this referendum. The question naturally arises, in connection with this canvass, Who made the League's canvassers the judges of the public conscience?'

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In the eyes of all honorable and fair-minded people, such tactics stand self-condemned; and this impudent attempt to take charge of the consciences of the electors and to intimidate weak or scrupulous souls, by a sort of religious coercion, into signing a petition with which

they are not in reality in agreement, calls for strong reprobation. Canvassers who induce people to sign an order for goods by means of false representations find themselves within reach of the long arm of the law; and it is to be regretted that canvassers who induce electors, by improper methods or misrepresentation, to sign a petition one effect of which will be to put the country to uncalled-for expense, cannot also be legally brought to account. In the absence of legislation, the one and only effective means left to us to checkmate such tactics is publicity. Whenever any such cases as those exposed by our Marlborough contemporary come within the knowledge or the experience of any of our readers, let public attention at once be drawn to them in the columns of the local papers. If the League agents will not go straight from principle, there is nothing for it but to shame them into it.

Notes

For Our Young Readers

For the benefit of our young readers we have decided to continue our 'Tricks and Illusions' column throughout the winter months. Already the feature has been favorably spoken of; and we are sure that those of our young people—and their elders too—who lay themselves out to attempt the mystifying performances there described will derive no small enjoyment and entertainment from the pastime. The directions are as simple and plain as possible; and the tricks are all entirely feasible. But if any readers experience any particular difficulty in understanding or performing them 'Mahatma' will be glad to hear from such, and will willingly give any further help that may be needed. And in the case of our young people generally who are trying these tricks, it will be an excellent exercise in English composition for them to send a few lines saying what particular tricks have interested them most, and how they have succeeded in their attempts. Letters addressed to 'Mahatma,' *Tablet* Office, Dunedin, will be duly forwarded to our contributor.

A Model Syllabus

We have received a copy of the literary and debating syllabus for the present season of the St. Benedict's Catholic Club, Auckland; and the programme strikes us as being exactly what a Catholic club syllabus ought to be. One feature which particularly pleases us is the prominence given to religious subjects. A society which includes in its subjects of study and discussion 'The Real Presence,' 'The St. Vincent de Paul Society and its Work,' 'The Existence of Hell,' 'Defence of Religious Dogmas,' and 'The Infallibility of the Church,' must be doing invaluable work amongst its members. St. Benedict's is not afraid to tackle difficult subjects. We should have thought the debate 'That War between England and Germany is imminent,' and a discussion on 'The Immortality of the Soul,' would have been a little beyond the average literary society; but St. Benedict's is not an average society. The general subjects of debate are admirably chosen. Altogether the season promises to equal—if not, indeed, to excel—in interest and instructiveness the previous records of the club; and those who know the standard set by St. Benedict's in the past know that that is very high praise indeed.

Bishop Cleary at Wanganui

According to press reports Bishop Cleary had a remarkably fine meeting at Wanganui, the audience numbering anywhere from 1100 to 1300 people, and the proceedings being characterised by the greatest enthusiasm throughout. Apropos of the lecturer's strictures on a now notorious pamphlet issued by the League, the following paragraph, which appeared in the Wanganui *Herald* of the following day, is significant: 'Bishop Cleary speaking last evening, made special references to the pamphlet published by the Bible-in-Schools League, entitled *Methods of Opposi-*

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