

CATHOLIC FEDERATION

WELLINGTON.

(From our own correspondent.)

The provisional Dominion Executive met last Tuesday, when a considerable amount of routine business was transacted. The first meeting of the permanent Dominion Executive was fixed for 2 p.m. on Sunday, July 27, at St. Patrick's Hall. Interesting reports were received from Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia. Now that the organisation is complete, parish committees should endeavor to increase the membership. It should be the aim of every committee to enrol every Catholic man, woman, and child in the Federation. Organisation is the necessity of the age, and if Catholics desire that justice be meted out to them, they must organise. Secretaries are particularly requested to make themselves conversant with the constitution, aims, and objects of the Federation. The fact that the Government has announced that the referendum question will not be discussed this session should not deter us from using every endeavor to obtain the signatures of every adult Catholic in the Dominion to the petitions now in circulation. We must therefore not slacken our pace, but push on with renewed vigor, and be ready for any emergency that may arise.

DUNEDIN DIOCESAN COUNCIL.

The inaugural meeting of the Dunedin Diocesan Council of the Catholic Federation was held in the Bishop's Palace, Dunedin, on Monday evening when about twenty delegates, including proxies, were present. The following is a list of delegates and proxies:—Dunedin, Rev. Father Coffey and Mr. J. A. Scott, M.A.; South Dunedin, Rev. Father Delany and Mr. A. C. Shiell; Invercargill, Very Rev. Dean Burke, V.F., and Mr. F. G. O'Beirne; Gore, Mr. Poppelwell; Mosgiel, Mr. Quelch; Lawrence, Messrs. Kelleher and H. Hart; Palmerston South, Rev. Father Lynch and Mr. J. Crisp; Queenstown, Rev. Father O'Donnell; Port Chalmers, Mrs. Dr. O'Neill and Miss Callan (proxies); Oamaru, Messrs. E. W. Spain and T. J. Hussey (proxies); Wrey's Bush, Messrs. J. O'Neill and Gallien (proxies).

His Lordship the Bishop, in opening the business of the meeting, extended a very hearty welcome to the delegates, and expressed his pleasure at seeing such a representative attendance. He hoped the meeting would be very successful, and trusted they would labor zealously together in pushing on the work of the Federation.

On the motion of Mr. J. A. Scott, Rev. Father Coffey, Adm., was appointed chairman.

Rev. Father Coffey, Adm., explained why it was the inaugural meeting of the Diocesan Council had been called at so short a notice. The provisional Dominion Executive had summoned a meeting of delegates for the early part of this month, but on being informed that the Dunedin Council had not been inaugurated, they agreed to postpone the meeting to July 27, so as to allow the Dunedin Council to meet, and hence it was necessary not to lose any time in falling into line with the other dioceses which had already elected councils. The first business would be the election of officers, consisting of president, two vice-presidents, treasurer, secretary, and three representatives to the Dominion Executive.

The election was then proceeded with, and resulted as follows:—President, Rev. Father Coffey, Adm.; vice-presidents, Very Rev. Dean Burke, V.F., and Mr. D. Poppelwell; secretary, Miss Callan; treasurer, Mr. T. J. Hussey; delegates to the Dominion Executive—Rev. Father Coffey, Messrs. A. C. Shiell (South Dunedin), and D. Poppelwell.

The Rev. Father Coffey said that one of the first remits which the delegates to the Dominion Executive would want a direction from the council on was that dealing with immigration, which had been brought before the Wellington Executive by the St. Vincent de Paul Society. The Government had subsidised insti-

tutions belonging to certain denominations in Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland for the reception of immigrants from the Home Country until such time as they could find employment. The Dominion Executive asked that the St. Vincent de Paul Society be granted the same privileges and assistance in dealing with Catholic immigrants as were given to other bodies.

Mr. Poppelwell said that Catholics should be placed on the same footing as other denominations in regard to the reception of immigrants. They were only claiming the same rights as other people.

Mr. Scott pointed out that the denominations who were subsidised had hostels where the immigrants could be accommodated, and this was alleged by the Government as the ground for giving them assistance.

Rev. Father Coffey said he had no doubt but arrangements could be made with the different convents to get a home for the girls until such time as they got a place.

The next question dealt with was the relation of the Federation to politics. It had been suggested that politicians or persons connected with politics should be debarred from membership or office in the Federation. Rev. Father Coffey, in bringing this question before the council, said that this proposal was considered by many committees to be too stringent. In England the members of the Federation took a very active part in political affairs. There was a general opinion in New Zealand that this proposal should not be adopted, as there was no reason if a man was a good Catholic that he should be debarred from taking an active interest in the Federation, although he was connected with politics.

Mr. Poppelwell said that while he hoped that there might be no occasion for the Federation to take part in political affairs, still he desired that it should have a free hand in dealing with the matter. The occasion might arise when, if the Federation was bound by that rule, its usefulness would be greatly impaired. He held that the Federation should be given a free hand in local and general politics.

This was supported by Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Scott said that there were two distinct points involved in the question under discussion: First, the relation of the Federation to politics in general; and secondly, the question of the admission or exclusion of politicians and political candidates. In regard to the first, the constitution already provided that where questions of religion or of Catholic principle were at stake the Federation was free to take such political action as might be deemed necessary. This provision had always been interpreted to include such questions as divorce, Bible-in-Schools, the education question, scholarships, suppression of impure literature, etc., and practically covered all that could reasonably be asked for. With regard to the second point he entirely agreed with Mr. Poppelwell and the other speakers, and moved: 'That this meeting has no sympathy with the proposal to exclude members of Parliament or of local bodies or parliamentary or municipal candidates from membership or office in the Federation.' The Federation would be quite able to protect itself against the ambitious individual who entered it merely to make use of it.

The motion was carried unanimously.

The next remit considered was the method of electing parish committees. Father Coffey said that many priests objected to have the responsibility of appointing a certain proportion of the members of the local committees placed upon them. He invited some of the clergy present to give their views.

Rev. Father Delany said that the present method of election placed the priest in a very awkward position. He preferred that the committee should be elected directly by the people.

Very Rev. Dean Burke pointed out that the rule was obviously framed with the object of keeping out undesirable persons. In Invercargill he selected the names of 18 of the most desirable persons, and asked the people to elect a committee of six from these. It was most necessary to keep out undesirable persons, as this was the rock on which the Federation might split.

Wm. R. Kells

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