

The chairman explained that though an agenda paper had been drawn up, no order or business had been fixed, as several remits had been received only the previous day. It remained for the delegates to decide as to the procedure. Personally he thought they should take the points of the constitution seriatim, and if any delegate had a remit to move on any particular point it could be discussed when they were dealing with that matter, and the amendment, if carried, could be inserted as part of the constitution.

Rev. Father Coffey submitted that it would be as well for future meetings at which they expected representatives of the Federation from other parts of the Dominion, to be arranged for some other day than Sunday. It was, he pointed out, almost impossible for many priests to be present on that day. Indeed, had it not been for the importance of the present meeting he would not have been able to attend. Of course he recognised that the Federation was primarily a laymen's movement, and while he quite agreed that they should have the first say in the matter, if any of the dioceses chose to elect a priest on the executive it was very necessary that they should attend, and that was almost an impossibility if the meetings were held on Sunday. It was very inconvenient for a clergyman to get away on that day, as it was liable to upset the work of the parish. Continuing, he wished to move the resolution suggested by the chairman that the meeting take the constitution drawn up by the provisional Executive, and ask the secretary to draw their attention to any remit which he had received upon any question as they reached it. This was seconded by Father Edge and carried.

CONSTITUTION.

Clause 1: The name of the organisation shall be 'The New Zealand Catholic Federation.'—Carried.

Clause 2: The objects of the Federation shall be: (a) The expression of a consolidated Catholic opinion on social and public questions affecting Catholic interests. (b) The promotion and extension of Catholic education. (c) The dissemination of Catholic literature. (d) The mutual support and advancement of Catholic societies.—Carried.

Mr. Poppelwell submitted that it would be as well to add a general clause as follows: (e) 'The promotion and control of such other matters of Catholic interest in the Dominion as might from time to time arise.'—Carried.

Explanation of Objects.

It was agreed that the first paragraph stand as printed. In regard to the second paragraph, 'It is not a political party organisation, and does not seek to influence the political views of its members, nor to touch politics except where politics touch religion,' Mr. Casey (Auckland) said that this question had been discussed in Auckland, and Bishop Cleary had expressed the opinion that if this paragraph were interpreted as it had been it would do the Federation an immense amount of harm. It was his intention to make a protest against the interpretation which had been placed upon it by the provisional Executive. He desired to obtain a ruling from the Dominion Council as to how far this paragraph was going to limit the members of the Federation as to politics. Taking the liberal interpretation of the words, he submitted that there was nothing in them to debar any member of the Federation from taking part in politics. Under the circumstances he would take the responsibility of withdrawing the remit from Auckland on the subject, but he would like the Council to give an official opinion of its ideas, or an explanation of its action in connection with this paragraph.

The chairman admitted that perhaps the circular letter which was sent to the various committees on this point was rather more drastic than was intended, and it had subsequently been left to the Dominion Executive. It was now left to the various Diocesan Councils to interpret the clause in the way they thought best. The circular had been withdrawn in consequence of a general expression of opinion that it went too far. It was quite obvious that they did not desire to make the Federation a political association,

and it must be left to the discretion of each Diocesan Council as to what action it should take in the matter.

Rev. Father Edge pointed out that if this rule was retained office-bearers of the Federation, who might also be members of public bodies, should resign their public positions or leave the Federation; that was the only reason why the Auckland branch looked for the abolition of this clause and sent its remit. He would like it to be made clear that office-bearers and members of the Federation might become members of any public body.

Mr. Callaghan desired to make a definite statement that this clause 2 by no means debarred any member of Parliament or a public body from becoming a member of the Federation, or of a committee or of that Executive. He had opposed the interpretation of this clause when it had come under his notice, and he had been told that Auckland approved of the circular on the point, but he was very pleased to hear that that was not so. He moved that 'Clause 2 in no way debars members of Parliament or local bodies, or even candidates, from taking part in the Federation or acting on any of its committees.'

Mr. Hayward seconded the motion. This point (he said) had been discussed by the Diocesan Council in Christchurch, and it was one of the matters which he had been instructed to bring up that day. The Diocesan Council in Christchurch held that a man capable of filling a public position should not be debarred in any way from becoming a member or officer of the Federation.

Rev. Father Coffey said that this matter had also been brought up in Dunedin, where there were members of Borough Councils who considered, from the report which went out, that they could not become members of the Federation. He thought the Dunedin remit on this point should be worked in in connection with this clause, 'that while this Council hopes that it will have no occasion to take an active part in politics, it is of opinion that all branches of the Federation should be given a free hand to take such a part should it be deemed necessary for the safeguarding of Catholic interests.' There should, he contended, be a distinct clause to the effect that we consider that every Catholic may hold office or be a member of the Federation whether he holds a political appointment or not. He would move that the words 'not to touch politics' be struck out, and that a clause be inserted before Clause 2 that 'every Catholic man and woman in the Dominion is entitled to be a member of the Federation.'

Mr. Poppelwell drew attention to the words in the clause to the effect that the Federation 'does not seek to influence the political views of its members.' This, he contended, was an absurdity, and the words should be struck out.

Clause 2 was accordingly amended by deleting the above words.

On the motion of Mr. Callaghan, seconded by Mr. Hayward, it was agreed that 'Clause 2 in no way debars any member of Parliament or of any public body from becoming a member of the Federation, or holding any office of the Federation, or any of its committees.'—Carried. (This was to be regarded as an explanation by the Executive, and not to be part of the constitution.)

It was agreed without discussion that the remaining portion of the clause stand, as printed.

3. Qualification for Membership.

All Catholics, male and female, shall be eligible for membership in the Federation.

Mr. Poppelwell raised the point as to at what particular age members of the Federation should be entitled to exercise the vote. On the motion of Mr. Poppelwell, seconded by Mr. Shiel, it was decided that the following words be inserted at the end of Clause 3: 'but only the members over 16 years of age shall be entitled to vote on Federation matters.'

Clause 4—Subscriptions.

After a short discussion on clause 4 it was decided, on the motion of Mr. Casey, seconded by Mr. McLaughlin, to defer the consideration of this clause so as to

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