

Federation was out to assist any organisation in any other work for the benefit of the general community. With the new responsibilities forced upon it, Father Coffey expressed the hope that new life would be instilled into the Federation movement throughout the diocese, and that no parish would be without a branch. Much has been done already for our Catholic schools by the Federation, but much more could and would be done were the means available.

His Lordship Dr. Whyte (who was very enthusiastically received) said:—
Gentlemen,

As I have been a reader of the *N.Z. Tablet* for the past five years, I am acquainted with much of the good work achieved by the Catholic Federation throughout the Dominion. Your present activities, I am glad to see, are concentrated upon educational problems that have been created for Catholics by a most misguided and deplorable step taken by the present Parliament. The men responsible for the hardship recently imposed upon talented Catholic children have forfeited the respect of every true lover of New Zealand's national welfare. How they could have been chloroformed into adopting a policy so retrogressive and obscurantist, it is impossible to explain without casting a slur upon their intelligence or their independence. Our boys and girls who have won scholarships in competitive examinations cannot enjoy those scholarships in the Catholic schools nor under their Catholic teachers! The Christian Brothers, for example, may be good enough to train their pupils to defeat State school pupils in public competitions, but they are not good enough to carry their pupils through the higher grades! Or, do our Members of Parliament maintain that all our brainy youths must be educated alike and be marked with the same educational brand and be turned out of high schools as much like one another as biscuits out of the same tin? It is greatly to be deplored that the Government took this retrograde step. They took it, however, not that they loved education, but that they hated Rome.

Whoever prevents children of character and talent from developing to the full the gifts with which they are endowed is an enemy to his country. If Catholic boys and girls are to be penalised by a government elected to protect them, the representatives of the people fail in their most obvious duty. The claims of conscience and the claims of country should compel our members to wipe out the injury they have recently done to their own sense of duty and to the well-being of New Zealand; and this they can do by reversing their foolish decision in regard to scholarships.

If our schools and our teachers are unable to cater for the keener intellectual appetites of their scholarship winners, subsequent examinations will disclose their unfitness for the task. And if it be shown that advanced Catholic pupils suffer any intellectual loss at religious schools, the Government can then, and only then, reasonably and fairly sanction the policy that at present stands condemned.

A wise Government should at all times, and particularly in times of peril, utilise the best brains in the community. In spite of the optimism that has been preached to us, this country is at present a land of pessimists. He would be no true patriot who would reject the help of Catholic brains to drag it out of the mire. One is not accustomed to refuse proffered assistance in a difficult situation until one examines the disc of the volunteer who offers to help.

If a country is to prosper or deserves to prosper, it must use all its resources, intellectual as well as others. To discourage our Catholic boys in their educational career amounts to a desire to carry on the higher affairs of this country without our co-operation. A country deserves to be envied that can dispense with the assistance of such a considerable number of its people!

If the Government blindly persists in its policy of excluding our Catholic pupils from the benefits of higher education, it is cheering to know that the Catholic Federation will step in and take a hand. You have already determined to take charge of the successful pupils—and you have already taken charge of some—and to give them at their own secondary schools the advanced course that our

legislators thought should be reserved for the State schools. If the Catholic Federation never did anything but that, it would richly deserve the respect and support of Catholics and of every patriotic non-Catholic in this country.

New Zealand could profitably study the attitude of European countries to education. In Holland, for example, where the Catholics are about one-fourth of the population, facilities are given for Catholic education that fully satisfy the demands of religion and arouse no cry of Rome's domination. The spirit of fair play in that country is so strong that even a Catholic prelate could be invited to take supreme control of the Government. Progress is the natural result of such a large-minded and big-hearted policy. The commercial superiority of Germany could scarcely have been achieved had she cut up the roads by which any of her boys or girls could obtain access to high schools.

I trust that every parish in this diocese will throw itself heart and soul into the present objective of the Federation. You have a well-defined, sharply-cut, heaven-sent purpose in view. Every parishioner should enter heartily into the movement and contribute to its success. With that Celtic love for learning, our people in every part of the diocese will rejoice to see the best educational opportunities given to our promising boys and girls. If our religious teachers are the competent teachers that I think them to be and if they are able to educate their primary school pupils to win scholarships, they will be able also to give them such a secondary education as will fit them for a still higher course. To me it has often seemed a tragedy that boys and girls who received their earlier education at our schools should later on go to State schools and win applause for their masters and mistresses, while most of the credit should be given to the pale-faced Sisters of the convent school.

High schools and universities should be open to the worthy poor as well as to the rich. Talents and character ought to be the sole qualifications for admittance. The Church has been the patron of learning through all the centuries of the Christian era. Upwards of twenty Popes were taken from humble positions in life. Sometimes a poor shepherd boy showed the way through difficult country to a friar who could see in the alert manner of the lad material for a learned priest, more than one such boy finishing their careers as the successors of St. Peter. Some of the world's greatest artists have owed their celebrity to generous patrons who held the ladder for them and enabled them to rise from their obscurity.

Our Catholic people will gladly fall in with the Federation in its laudable scheme of not allowing our talented children to suffer from the educational disadvantages that their parents' faith imposes upon them. If the children refuse the gilded bait so artfully laid for them by their paid misrepresentatives, the Catholics will see to it that an education be given them quite as advanced as the education their conscience forbids them to accept.

Our national anthem, "God Defend New Zealand," which ought to be sung in every school throughout the Dominion, expresses sentiments which I now commend to the attention of those legislators who remember that Catholics have duties to perform but who forget that they have rights to maintain—

From dissension, envy, hate
And corruption guard our State.
Make our country good and great.
God defend New Zealand.

The annual report was read as follows:—

Your executive has pleasure in presenting to delegates the annual report and financial statement for year ended June 30, 1921.

Membership.—The membership returns of branches in this diocese show that the membership for the year is quite up to the average of past years. This in itself is gratifying to all concerned and goes to show that the people of Otago and Southland are alive to and interested in the affairs of the Federation. Your executive would like to remind delegates of the necessity of forwarding completed returns before the close of the financial year.

Scholarships.—The chief activity of your executive has