

pendence on the part of the Agent-General had been couched in language that should not have been adopted towards the Government. While some members would blame the Agent-General, it should be remembered that he had had very great difficulties to contend against, and besides had suffered from very severe illness. He hoped members would not travel out of the subject before them to discuss the fulfilment by the Agent-General of his duties. The Government were quite content to take upon themselves all the responsibility in the matter. The system of the nomination of immigrants the Government were desirous of pushing and extending, while at the same time the Agent-General would have to examine nominated immigrants as to their fitness. The Government were also intending to publish a pamphlet, in the preparation of which the assistance of the various Superintendents would be invited. The pamphlet would be circulated throughout the United Kingdom. Regarding the shipping arrangements, the Government were aware of the loss the Colony had sustained by reason of the existence of a monopoly. They were glad a local company had been started, and hoped it would succeed. The Government, however, were as much averse to a local as to a home monopoly, and would endeavor to foster a wholesome competition. Ministers felt that an advantage would be gained by first-class ships being laid on the line, so that those coming out might convey to their friends at home good impressions, not only of the Colony, but of the passage out. The Government felt that they should have the sole control of the immigration arrangements at home, the Provinces contenting themselves with seeing to the immigrants on their arrival.

Mr Reeves said the occupation clauses of the Bill were such as would materially interfere with the proper working of the scheme. He would address himself to the general subject of immigration. It was matter of surprise to him that a discussion on the subject had been delayed so long. The true reason why the question had been shirked was because it was not the interest of the Government to raise it, while upon it the remnants of the Opposition were divided. The instructions sent home to the Agent-General had not been acted upon. The Agent-General was not the right man in the right place. He did not possess the qualities necessary for the post. Undoubtedly he had high integrity, but not the other necessary qualities. His own despatches (from which Mr Reeves quoted at length) proved this. His utter disregard of the clear instructions sent home showed an utter want of method and business ability. His want of subordination was equally clear. In spite of the latitude given him, and the deference shown him, he had displayed an utter disregard of his instructions. He had received the most definite instructions, but for many months took no action in these matters. His lack of business ability was shown in his shipping arrangements. Instead of breaking up the monopoly (as with the business in hand he could easily have done), he had confirmed it. Enumerating the Agent-General's blunders, and referring to the short supply of immigrants, Mr Reeves said a want of judgment to discern the difficulty of his work had been conspicuous, and it had led him to go in opposition to the wishes and advice of valuable subordinate agents, and consequently his own anticipations of the result of his labors had not been fulfilled. The conclusion he (Mr Reeves) had arrived at was that the Agent-General should be recalled from a position to which he should never have been appointed, and that the business portion of his duties should be performed by a second officer. While blaming the Agent-General, he could not pass over the responsibility of the Government Minister for Immigration, who seemed to be totally devoid of all fixed ideas on the question. At one moment, for instance, he suggested giving free passages, and at the next he expressed different opinions. The House had received the announcement that the Colony would undertake the conduct of immigration, with pleasure; but the Government had allowed the work to slip through their fingers. The errors of the Agent-General had been the cause of Otago taking up the work again, and of Canterbury following suit. The system of free nominated immigration was most desirable. The Colony required the greatest accessions to its population. He believed that free immigration would have to be adopted. If this were done, it would be well to give the friends of those already in the Colony the preference. The experience of Canterbury as to nominated immigration showed the value of the system. The adoption of this, and the giving of some assistance to emigrants before their embarkation, would turn the tide of immigrants to this Colony.

A discussion arose as to whether the debate should be adjourned, it having travelled beyond the limits of the Bill, and members being unprepared to discuss the question of the Agent-General's administration. The debate was adjourned.

There was quite a scene in the House on the 17th. Mr Stafford and Mr Fitzherbert spoke most strongly, insisting on the production of the suppressed despatch to Dr Featherston. The Government used all sorts of excuses, and tried by every means to prevent having to produce it, even saying that the Governor objected to that being done. Mr Fitzherbert denied the right of the Governor to refuse the production of a paper which in no way affected Imperial matters. Mr Vogel threatened to divide the House on the matter; but the feeling of the House was so evidently against him that he did not divide it. The despatch, which bears the Hon Mr Pollen's signature, was very strongly worded. It was laid on the table.

The Immigration question is regarded as the principal one of the session, and a test of the Government's stability.

RUNHOLDING INFLUENCE.

In the Legislative Council the Otago Waste Lands Bill was thrown out by 25 to 3, the Council objecting to the system of deferred payments for land. Capt. Fraser, who introduced the Bill, said he knew it would not pass, as runholding capitalists were so influential in the Council, and would use all means to prevent the poor man from obtaining land.

The Pope, in a speech on May 26, declared that he ever prayed for France, but that he would now pray with greater confidence, for the election of McMahon to the head of that country was a guarantee of order and justice to civilization, which was menaced on all sides.

HIBERNIAN AUSTRALASIAN CATHOLIC BENEFIT SOCIETY.

OPENING OF THE CHRISTCHURCH BRANCH.

We give the following report of the opening of the branch of this Society at Christchurch, and for the greater portion of which we are indebted to the 'Press' of Sept. 9:—

The ceremony of opening a branch of the above in Christchurch took place yesterday in St. Patrick's Hall, Barbadoes street, at 3 p.m. Mr Robert Carroll, a delegate from the Dunedin Lodge, attended to conduct the ceremony, and a goodly number of intending members were also present. The branch having been duly opened, 40 new members were initiated out of 58 names submitted to the secretary, the remaining 18 coming forward for initiation next lodge night. The Lodge, which is the 82nd one of the Society opened, was constituted, and the following officers were then appointed, on a ballot, to the Christchurch branch of the H.A.C.B.S., viz.:—President, Mr James Taafe; vice-president, Mr Constantine Walsh; treasurer, Mr D. McGuinness; secretary, Mr E. O'Connor; warden, Mr Martin Donohue; guardian, Mr Patrick Pope.

At the conclusion of the business a hearty vote of thanks was passed to Mr Robert Carroll, the Dunedin delegate, on the motion of Mr E. O'CONNOR, seconded by Mr D. MCGUINNESS.

Mr CARROLL in returning thanks, stated that he had received the utmost kindness since his arrival in Christchurch. He was quite satisfied that the members could not have made a better selection of officers, especially in placing Mr Taafe in the position of president, a position which he (Mr Carroll) felt sure Mr Taafe would fill with ability, he having had a good experience as a member of another benefit society, and besides was well deserving of the presidency.

In the evening the members of the society and their friends, to the number of about one hundred, met in the St. Patrick's Hall to celebrate the formation of the society in the orthodox way common to all Britons and Irishmen, viz., a dinner.

The hall was nicely decorated with flags, &c., kindly lent by Messrs Jones and Tippett of the railway department, and the tables also were prettily furnished with pot plants, &c. The catering for the dinner was in the hands of Mr Ringwood, of the Provincial Larder, and the wines were supplied by Mr D. McGuinness, of Mill's Hotel, and both gentlemen acquitted themselves admirably. The chair was occupied by the Rev. Father Ecuyer, P.P., supported on his right by Mr Taafe, President of the Christchurch Branch of the H.A.C.B.S., and Dr Campbell, medical officer, and on the left by the Rev. Father Chervier, P.P., and Mr Robt. Carroll (delegate from Dunedin.) The vice-chairs were occupied by the Rev. Father Le Forrester, O.C., and Mr M. Duncan. Grace was said and thanks returned by the Rev. Father Ecuyer.

On the removal of the cloth, Mr TAAFE rose to propose the first toast, "Our Holy Father Pope Pius IX."

The toast was drunk with the utmost enthusiasm. The Rev. Father ECUYER responded. In the course of his remarks he mentioned that the present Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX. was the only occupant of the chair of St. Peter who had occupied the position for over twenty-five years, Pius IX. having been Pope for twenty-seven years.

Mr TAAFE then rose to give "the health of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria." [Cheers.] As loyal subjects it was their duty and pleasure alike to honor the Queen and Royal Family. [Cheers.]

The toast was drunk with the greatest enthusiasm. Mr TAAFE then proposed the health of "His Honor the Superintendent and the Executive Council," which was drunk amid cheers. Song—"The Exile of Erin," Mr Pope.

Mr CARROLL then proposed the health of "Kindred Benefit Societies," viz., the Foresters, Oddfellows, and Hibernian Societies. The toast was also duly responded to.

Mr TAAFE responded on behalf of the Kindred Societies in a pithy speech.

Song—"The Hary that Once," Mr O'Connor. Dr. CAMPBELL then gave the toast of "Prosperity to the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society. He remarked it spoke volumes for the Catholics of these colonies that they were able to establish so many branches (82). He wished them a hearty success, and that God's blessing would be with them.

The toast was received with cheers, Mr F. Weber, playing "St Patrick's Day."

Mr O'CONNOR responded on behalf of the Christchurch branch. He stated that he had received a telegram from Mr F. J. Bunny, secretary of the Dunedin branch, asking to be kindly remembered to the brethren assembled. He (Mr O'Connor) considered that the members were under obligation to Mr Bunny, for the large amount of information he had given them necessary for the opening of the branch.

Mr CARROLL, in replying on behalf of Mr Bunny, said that this was the fourth branch of the society opened in New Zealand during the last six months. When he (Mr Carroll) arrived in Dunedin from Melbourne some seven months ago, he found a few gentlemen endeavoring to open a branch. They had since succeeded in so doing, and the branch was progressing favorably. Mr Bunny deserved a great deal of credit for having worked so hard to open the Dunedin branch, and also for giving instructions for the opening of other branches throughout the colony. There was one thing he could not help referring to, that was the great prosperity that had attended the society since it had been founded. Little did those few gentlemen by whom it was first established think that in so short a space of time so many branches with so large a membership would have been formed, and great must be their gratification at its success. He considered that every branch owed these gentlemen a debt of gratitude, and the only way in which they could repay them was by being obedient to, and carrying out strictly, those rules laid down for their use and benefit. By so doing, and working in harmony as brothers, every branch would live and flourish. He would now conclude by wishing