

and hoped they would work hard in the classes so as to secure high places in the next examination. He then asked the Very Rev Dr Watters, as a memento of his visit, to give the boys a holiday on the first fine day. Cheers were then given for Sir James Hector and the Very Rev Dr Watters.

The Very Rev Father Devoy, speaking at St Mary of the Angels' on Sunday last on the introduction of the Irish Text book into the public schools of the Colony, said that while their friends who were at the head of this movement were beginning to realise that the present State system of education was a failure because it did not contain any provision for religious instruction for the children, yet they were seeking to introduce into the schools, in this Irish Text-book a very poor sham. It was a book which had fallen into disuse in Ireland many years ago. Though it had in it some very nice, goody-goody lessons, it was a mistake to say that it contained proper religious instruction. Their friends who were so anxious about this matter should have the courage of their opinions; they should give proof of their sincerity by putting their hands in their pockets and doing as Catholics had done—establishing schools of their own. He made these remarks because it had been stated that Catholics had largely signed the petition now circulating in favour of the Text-book. Some Catholics might have signed it; for his part he should be delighted to see religion taught in the schools; but he wished to point out that this Text-book would not give proper religious instruction, and that Catholics should not sign the petition under a misapprehension. People said over and over again that we could find all that was necessary for salvation in the Bible; that one had nothing to do but read that Book and form his own opinion about any passage in it. Catholics, he pointed out, believed the Bible to be a Divine book, but those who interpreted the Bible after their own fashion destroyed its divine character. The Bible, in order to be a law to direct us in the way to salvation, ought to be complete; but it was not complete, as several parts were missing. He went on to say that the Gospels of St Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were not written for many years after the Ascension, and in the meantime the work of the Church had gone on. Our Lord had not left any writing; He had commanded His Apostles to preach, and had told them that he would be with them—meaning that He would be with his Church—till the end of the world.

The many friends of Mr W. Ross, both in Wellington and Christchurch, will be pleased to learn that he has been appointed local manager for the Royal Insurance Company. Mr Ross has been for many years—sixteen I believe—connected with the National Fire Insurance office here, where his urbanity, tact, energy and knowledge of underwriting business have been fully recognised. The appointment, which is a great compliment to the business ability of the recipient, carries with it an amount of responsibility which, I have no doubt, Mr Ross will discharge with credit to himself and benefit to the company. The personal popularity of Mr Ross, together with his connection with many public movements here, should prove most advantageous to the Royal office, which has made a very wise selection in securing his services. Mr Ross will take up his new duties on the 1st April, and his friends, who are many, will wish him all the success in his new sphere which his ability fully deserves.

Mr J. Kearsley, late of the Wellington Biscuit Factory, who has started business in Masterton, was the other day the recipient of a silver snuff box from his former associates.

A pleasant gathering took place one evening last week in the Temperance Hotel, Mauriceville, for the purpose of saying good-bye to Mr P. Gleeson, late manager of the Tikitapu Station. There was a large number of settlers present, the chair being occupied by Mr Gundersen, who said that they had met to honour one of their most estimable neighbours, who was about to leave the district and settle in Featherston. Mr Gleeson had been a member of the Road Board for some years, where he had done much good work for the district. He had always been to the fore when any undertaking for the benefit of the district and the advancement of his neighbours was brought forward, besides which, he was, as an employer of labour, one of the kindest and most considerate in the locality. He (the chairman) had much pleasure in presenting Mr Gleeson with a pair of field glasses as a memento of his connection with the district. Mr Gleeson feelingly replied, and thanked the donors for their valuable present, saying that he required no reminder of the kindness which he had received from his friends there, as he would have, as long as he lived, nothing but the most pleasant recollections of his residence among them. Numerous toasts were proposed during the evening, and the company broke up at a late hour with hearty cheers for Mr Gleeson and many kind wishes for his future welfare.

The bath question having been settled—we are going to have them just as the winter is coming on—the tram difficulty has just cropped up in the nick of time, for, unless the newspapers and public had not some real or imaginary grievance to agitate about, they would feel very sad. At one time, and not very long ago, we imagined the tram service was all that could be desired, but an unfortunate accident having occurred the other day, by which three men got their legs injured, the public have suddenly discovered that

it is altogether behind the age for such a progressive and important city as the capital of New Zealand. We want a car every five minutes, and only the regulation number carried thereon; also an extra number of loop lines, and even some are agitating for double lines. Unfortunately, the original founders of Wellington did not look very far ahead, consequently they laid out the main thoroughfare so narrow and irregular that even now the traffic on special occasions is very often blocked. So long as people will persist on getting on to the cars whilst in motion, and which have already a full complement of passengers, he may expect to hear of accidents occurring. Of course we shall have an immediate enforcement of the by-laws relating to the traffic by the City Council officers, whilst the present mild panic exists, and "Paterfamilias," "Viator," and the ubiquitous "Citizen" will fill in the long evenings by writing long letters to the papers, suggesting various and impracticable rules for the regulation of the traffic, but after a while the excitement will die a natural death, especially if some more engrossing subject is discovered by the fickle and captious public. The present tram line runs the whole length of the city—about 3½ miles—and the fare is the modest sum of three halfpence. This is cheapness with a vengeance, and although some cynical people may add the word "naughty," it is evident they have not had much experience of such modes of travelling outside of Wellington, or else they would not be so ready to condemn our local system.

A meeting of the local branch of the Irish National Federation was held on Tuesday evening, when Mr Haggin (vice-president) occupied the chair. Several new members were proposed, and it was decided to make the monthly meeting more attractive in future by having addresses, recitations, and readings. It was reported that the net proceeds of the Hon E. Blake's meeting in the Opera House, was £15 5s 9d. A copy of a letter sent to the Dublin *Freeman's Journal*, about Mr Blake's visit to Wellington, was read and approved of. The following is the text of the letter:—Dear Sir,—The Hon Edward Blake has taken his departure, after a residence of about six weeks amongst us. As you are aware, the hon gentleman came out to this Colony as umpire in the great Midland Railway arbitration case. The arbitrators, Sir Charles Lilley (Queensland), and Sir Bruce Burnside (Tasmania), found, at the opening of the proceedings, that, through some technical point, they could not adjudicate, and left the whole responsibility on the shoulders of the Hon Mr Blake, who at once proceeded, with such methodical dispatch, that (including the examination of a large number of witnesses) the great case was finished, and the award given, in less than four weeks, to the pleasure and astonishment, I might say, of the community at large. During its procedure the genius and exceptional abilities of our countryman shone forth from time to time, his wit and humour, and the masterful manner in which he dealt with every difficult point, were the general topics of conversation, and such was the confidence displayed in Mr Blake as a jurist, that the leading lawyers on both sides in their concluding remarks expressed themselves as satisfied with the coming decision whatever it might be. This splendid reputation received its crowning stone when Mr Blake, on the eve of his departure, wound up by delivering a great speech on the Home Rule movement in the Opera House, which stamped him as one of the most distinguished men who has yet visited the colonies. As secretary of the local branch of the Irish National Federation, I at once made the hon gentleman's acquaintance on his arrival, and, to my great pleasure, found myself quite at home with him; so much so, that I ventured to ask him (as instructed) to deliver an address on the Home Rule question, which he consented to do on my convincing him of the good it would certainly produce. The address was delivered to a large and appreciative audience, notwithstanding the bad weather that prevailed. His Worship the Mayor occupied the chair, and the Premier of the Colony was amongst those on the platform. The latter declared the speech to be the best he had ever listened to. A large number of those present were English, Scotch, and Colonial, of the wealthier class of our city, who availed themselves of the opportunity of hearing an oration from one who had already won golden opinions as an expert in railway arbitration matters. The audience were held spell-bound for nearly two hours. The powerful and convincing arguments, so admirably arranged, and couched in beautiful language went straight home to the hearts of those present. In dealing with the religious question he was especially effective. In sledge-hammer fashion he knocked to smithereens the usual stock arguments, and convinced them as far as possible, that his Catholic fellow-countrymen could not at least be charged with the sin of religious intolerance. It has done a large amount of good, made many converts, and cleared the atmosphere of many prejudices. Those who looked on Home Rule and its leaders with distrust, say to themselves, that the cause that possesses such advocates must be good, and must soon prevail. It was a great oratorical treat, and pronounced by competent judges to be not alone the best statement of the Irish Question delivered here, but the best speech delivered in the colonies on any subject. It has justified our humble efforts in the past, and made them easier for the future. I am, etc., WILLIAM P. HEALY, hon secretary Irish National Federation, Wellington, New Zealand.—P.S. A sterling son of Tipperary is appointed to represent us at the great convention.