

cast. It is proposed to stage the play in a thoroughly up-to-date style in the near future, in aid of several deserving objects connected with the Church.

The great Early History Carnival, which was continued for 12 nights, terminated on Saturday last. Throughout the season the carnival was well patronised. On the evening of Queen's Birthday especially there was scarcely standing room in the spacious Opera House. Business at the various stalls has been so good that there was very little left in the way of stock. The art union in connection with the carnival will be drawn to-night (Monday).

General satisfaction is felt at the reports of the successful missionary labours, in Westland, of his Lordship the Bishop and his energetic co-worker, the Rev. Father Grogan, S.M., and the generous response to their appeal for funds for the new cathedral. His Lordship is expected to return to this city towards the end of June, and afterwards will continue the visitation of the Canterbury portion of the diocese.

TIMARU.

(From our own correspondent.)

May 29.

A representative meeting of the ladies of the parish was held in the Sisters' schoolroom, on Sunday last, the object of which was to make arrangements for a bazaar to be held about the end of the year.

The usual weekly meeting of the Timaru Aloysian Club was held on Tuesday last, the 23rd inst., under the presidency of Rev. Father McDonnell, the programme for the evening being a debate, 'Republicanism v. Monarchy.' Some good speaking took place on both sides. At the conclusion a vote was taken, the result being a tie.

A four days' bazaar was opened in the St. Andrew's Library hall, on May the 21st, the object being to raise funds for the erection of a church in that district. The want of a church has long been felt by the people of St. Andrew's, and it is thought the time has now arrived for an effort to be made towards meeting the growing needs of that district. A site for the proposed new church has already been secured. The hall, which had been tastefully decorated for the occasion, presented a very charming and inviting appearance with its stalls laden with useful and ornamental articles. The affair was a great success.

RAILWAY MONOPOLIES.

HOW THEY STRANGLE INDUSTRIES

STEAM by land and sea has given an immense impetus to commerce during the past quarter of a century. The development and improvement of the fleets of steam-driven vessels have put the producers of the most remote countries nearly on an equality with those residing near the great markets of the world. Competition on the ocean highways has kept down freight charges to reasonable limits. In this respect railway companies are on a different footing from those corporations who act as carriers at sea. The former have practically a monopoly of the carrying trade in the districts through which their lines run, the latter have a free highway and may compete, or be competed with, as the case may be, by any similar company. It would be little benefit to the settlers in remote parts of, say, this Colony, to have a low rate of freight prevailing from our ports to London or elsewhere, if they did not have the necessary facilities for getting their produce at a reasonable rate to the nearest seaport. Thanks to the foresight of the early settlers of this and the other colonies, the railways are, in the main, the property of the State, and are worked not so much for making a percentage on cost of construction, as for the development of the country. Now and again the residents of certain districts protest against the anomalies to be found in the classification of goods by the railway authorities, but when the protest is well grounded, agitation or gentle pressure is sufficient to remove, or, at least, ameliorate the evil. We admit that the management of our railways is not perfect, that sometimes sufficient encouragement is not given to a struggling industry, an illustration of which was given in a matter which came up before a recent meeting of the Westport Harbour Board. A deputation appeared before the Board for the purpose of urging that the charges of haulage on the railway from the Cardiff coal mine should be reduced, otherwise it would have to be closed. It was pointed out that this was a matter of great importance to the 500 or 600 people, who would have to sacrifice their homes and clear out. The men already worked for 3d per ton less than miners elsewhere, to allow the company to pay the heavy charges. Last year 119 men were at work in the mine, and last week there were thirty-seven, and only ten of those profitably engaged at work getting coal. There were now forty men idle. The company would open out in a new and promising place if they got encouragement from the Railway Department. After discussion, it was decided to recommend the Government to reduce the rates as a tentative measure for one year by one penny per ton from Denniston, threepence from Granity, and sixpence from Mokihinui, involving a loss to the harbour revenue of £3500. The relief to the companies on the basis of the output for last year would be: Denniston, one penny per ton (£750), Granity, threepence (£1250 on 100,000 tons output); Cardiff and Mokihinui, sixpence (£1500 on 60,000 tons). Had our railways been in the hands of private companies, with a monopoly of the carrying trade, and perhaps interested in some other mine, the request would go unheeded, but the Government cannot do this, and there is little doubt that, if the grievance is a genuine one, relief of some kind will be given.

RAILWAY MONOPOLY IN AMERICA.

Not alone do the great railway companies of the United States place a heavy handicap on the farming community in the central States by imposing excessive charges, but they, in a great measure, control the prices which the farmers get for their produce. The big railway magnate is, very often the partner in some company purchasing largely in the districts through which the railroad passes. If the farmers decline to sell at prices arranged by the monopolists they are without an outlet for their produce, as the railways may decline to transport it to the nearest seaport, or if they do so it may be at rates so excessive as to leave no margin of profit to the producers. There are people in this Colony who imagine that if the railways were in the hands of private companies they would be managed more economically and at the same time more in the interests of the settlers. A slight acquaintance with the state of affairs which prevails in the United States, and in older countries too, would convince them of their mistake.

RAILWAY MANAGEMENT IN IRELAND.

In Ireland the railroads are owned by corporations, some of whom control the trade of a whole province, with the result that many industries have been kept at a stand-still, or have gone back during recent years, in consequence of the excessive rates charged for the carriage of goods. In Denmark and other countries of the Continent, paternal Governments are doing everything to improve the quality of the article produced, and the railway authorities knowing that increased production means increased prosperity, do their part by improving their rolling stock, especially that devoted to the carriage of perishable goods, and by lowering their rates to a reasonable standard. The Irish railway companies have not kept pace with the times, except in the payment of substantial dividends. Their rolling stock is obsolete in many instances, being the same for the past quarter of a century, whilst their charges for goods have been such as to place the Irish farmer and merchant at a decided disadvantage when competing in the English markets with their more favoured neighbours across the channel. Mr. Field, M.P., drew the attention of the House of Commons some time ago to this state of affairs, and showed how Irish industry of every kind was being killed by the selfishness of the railway companies. Mr. Field is a cattle dealer in a large way, and as his business takes him, not alone to all parts of Ireland, but also to England and Scotland, he is competent to speak on railway matters. So strong was the case against the railway companies of Ireland that the *Financial News* took the matter up, and in a series of articles showed how the companies were steadily ruining Ireland, and keeping the Irish producer out of the English markets. The *News* declares this to be 'undoubtedly a genuine Irish grievance,' and the *London Times*, in view of the fact that there is one highly paid railway director in Ireland for every ten miles of railroad, remarks: 'We are not opposed to any method of dealing with the Irish railways, whether involving State possession or State management.'

LOCAL INDUSTRIES RUINED.

The *Financial News* then institutes comparisons between the charges on the Irish and English railways. It says—'The average fares in Ireland are 80 per cent. higher than in England, and, as the necessary effect of these prohibitive rates, while each inhabitant of England makes on an average 23 railway journeys yearly, and the average for Scotland is 14, in Ireland it is only four. In some admirable papers, which have been republished from the *Fortnightly Review*, the late Mr. Charles Waring, the eminent railway contractor, was able to demonstrate that the cultivation of Irish flax had been almost destroyed by the excessive railway charges, and that Belfast linen manufacturers are able to import flax from points east of Ghent (in Belgium) by way of Hull (England) at lower rates than for the short haul of 80 miles from Donegal. Mr. Waring also wrote "All efforts to revive the woollen industries in Ireland have been frustrated by high rates." The railways have killed the milling industry. Witnesses say that you may count silent mills in Ireland by the thousand. The freights turn the scale against the home producer. A parcel which travels 600 miles in England for 6d costs (double the sum) 1s for 30 miles in Ireland.'

It then goes on to say that if the companies had condescended to destroy the trade of the country they could not have succeeded more effectually, and points out certain exorbitant charges in support of this statement. Here is how the railway management has affected the bacon trade.—Within the last 10 years Denmark has opened and developed the bacon trade with England, and is already a rival of Ireland; but the pig meat costs less to convey from Denmark to London than from almost any part of Ireland. Nor is this all. The railways, while discouraging the production and sale of Irish pigs and bacon, encourage the introduction of American bacon into Ireland. Coals are, in fact, conveyed to Newcastle from 3000 miles across the sea at lower rates than the native fuel. A ton of American bacon carried an hour's journey by rail from Belfast to Bangor costs 10s; a ton of Irish bacon taken from Duncannon to Belfast costs 15s 10d. A Scotch curer, formerly buying Irish pigs, was compelled by the frequent delays in transit to secure another market. He found that he could obtain what he required from Denmark at a considerably lower charge for freight and in almost as quick time, and his custom was lost to Ireland.

THE FISHING TRADE HAMPLED.

It is then shown that thousands of fishermen are living in want on the coast of Galway, Donegal, etc., as owing to the railway charges added to the want of the necessary facilities for the conveyance of fish, they are unable to take advantage of the English markets. 'Thousands of men,' proceeds the same authority, 'on whom tens of thousands depend for bread—viz. bread is a luxury to these people—and born within reach of the spray of the Western Ocean, are ready for the fisheries, the granite quarries, and the cultivation of the almost virgin soils still within a day's journey of the