

The Brooklyn social, which was postponed on account of the death of the Premier, will be held on Tuesday evening next.

On Monday evening, at the usual weekly meeting of the Catholic Young Men's Literary Society, an interesting and instructive paper on 'Comets' was contributed by Mr. Gerald Lee. The paper was illustrated by a number of explanatory diagrams. At its next meeting the society will discuss the question of Home Rule.

Mr. M. F. Bourke, of Napier, has just returned from a visit to Great Britain and America, during which he made special inquiries with respect to the market conditions of New Zealand hemp. He speaks in favorable terms of the system of government grading in vogue in the Colony.

The contractors are making good progress with the new presbytery at St. Anne's, Wellington South. Speaking of the work on Sunday last, the Rev. Father Ainsworth, S.M., explained that it had been decided by the church committee to ask from each member of the congregation a donation of five pounds, the payment of which was to be extended over a period of six months. In this way, he hoped, with the aid of more considerable contributions from his wealthier parishioners, to raise the necessary funds to liquidate the debt incurred. As a result of the last parish social the sum of £34 was realised to meet the expense of recent alterations to the church.

References to the death of Mr. Seddon were made in the several churches on Sunday last. Speaking at the last Mass, the Rev. Father Ainsworth, of Wellington South, made a brief, but very feeling reference to our late Premier, and at the conclusion of the Mass the 'Dead March' was played, during which the whole congregation remained standing. At St. Joseph's the Rev. Father O'Shea also paid a tribute to the worth and justice of the deceased. At St. Mary of the Angels', Boulcott street, Rev. Father Kimbell spoke of Mr. Seddon's career, and of the great good that he had done during his tenure of office. The Rev. Father Holley spoke at greater length concerning the deceased statesman at the Sacred Heart Basilica. He had been a good friend to the Church, on one occasion, when sectarian bitterness and jealousy displayed itself in the House of Representatives. On that occasion the manliness and courage of the late Premier asserted itself, and he declared that he would be no party to any proposal that would inflict injustice upon any member or section of members of the community. He then took up such a position that he carried by a narrow majority an amendment on a Bill which would have brought about the extinction of our Catholic orphanages. They, therefore, desired to express their deep sense of gratitude to him, their heartfelt sorrow at his death, and sincere sympathy with the widow and children in the great loss which they, in common with the people of the Colony, had sustained. The organist (Miss Putnam) played Chopin's 'Marche Funebre' and the Dead March from 'Saul' before the commencement of the Mass.

DIOCESE OF CHRISTCHURCH

(From our own correspondent.)

June 25.

The Rev. Father O'Dwyer arrived from the north last week to assist in the Cathedral parish.

Although the system is still incomplete, the first year's workings of the city electric tramways have resulted in a profit of over £5000, after payment of interest and sinking fund. Over six million passengers have been carried. The second election of a board of management is fixed for this week.

Mr. M. Nolan, of Christchurch, is still using his pen in the interests of the Catholic faith in the Old Land, principally in the columns of the 'Irish Catholic.' In the issue of April 21, just to hand, appears over his name a contribution on the life and labors of Madame de Bonnault d'Houet, foundress of the Order of the Faithful Companions, being the sixteenth chapter; together with an interesting and instructive article descriptive of Maundy Thursday at the Benedictine Monastery at Farnborough, in the South of England.

The triduum in honor of the feast of St. John the Baptist, patronal feast of his Lordship the Bishop and of the diocese, was concluded on Sunday at the Cathedral. Special Masses were celebrated at nine o'clock on Friday and Saturday, and on the evening of these days a sermon was preached by the Rev. Fathers Tymons and Hickson respectively. At the eleven o'clock Mass on Sunday the Rev. Father Price preached a panegyric of the saint. He was again preacher at Vespers, and officiated at Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, attended by the Very Rev. Vicar-General and Rev. Father O'Dwyer.

The annual collection for the diocesan seminary fund was made on Sunday.

During the hour fixed for the funeral of the late Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, the great bell of the Cathedral was tolled. In connection with the same lamented event, on behalf of the Chatham Islanders, Mr. W. Hoban addressed the following letter to the Hon. W. Hall-Jones:—'The inhabitants of the Chatham Islands have no means of hearing of the sad loss sustained by the recent death of our illustrious and honored Premier, the Right Hon. R. J. Seddon. I had the pleasure of meeting the right hon. gentleman on his late visit to the islands, and the enthusiasm displayed by all was a token of the esteem in which he was held by them. He was the first Minister of the Colony to visit their shores, and it was marked, and will be long remembered by the Islanders, as a red-letter day in the history of the islands. Having resided there in the past for many years, and knowing their feelings, I feel quite justified in asking you to convey to Mrs. Seddon and family an expression of the great grief that will be felt when they hear of the national loss, and of the great sympathy which will be felt by the entire population, Pakeha, Maori, and Miori, and further to assure Mrs. Seddon and family that although the population of the islands is small and far away, in no part of the Colony will the sorrow be more sincere.' The following is a copy of a resolution passed at a meeting of St. Patrick's branch of the H.A.C.B. Society—'That the members of St. Patrick's branch, No. 82, of the Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society, Christchurch, desire to add their tribute of regret at the great loss sustained by the Colony through the death of the late Premier, Richard John Seddon, and sincerely sympathise and condole with the widow and children in this their hour of sorrow. May God watch over them, and give them strength to bear up under their sad bereavement.'

At the Cathedral on Sunday evening at Vespers the Rev. Father Price (Hawarden) delivered an instructive discourse on the celibacy of the clergy, giving the Catholic view of the subject. He spoke of the efforts of the late Sovereign Pontiff in his Encyclical to the nations for the reunion of Christendom in one fold under one shepherd, one of the principal obstacles raised being that of the subject under notice. He quoted numerous authorities showing that a celibate priesthood was, besides an absolute moral necessity, reasonable and right and in perfect harmony and in keeping with the Gospel, and in accordance with the teaching of our Blessed Lord and the Apostles. The law of celibacy was purely an ecclesiastical one of discipline which the Church had a right to make. Although a divine institution, it was a human society composed of human beings. Celibacy was a notable ground of Catholic respect for the priesthood, a respect not necessarily for the man but for his sacred office. With no other cares save those of religion and charity, the priests of the Catholic Church were the pioneers in every age of science, learning, and literature. They are found kneeling at the bedside of patients in the hospitals in the midst of raging fever, among the lepers, and among the outcast, in the midst of the vilest surroundings. What could be the feelings of a married man who dare not risk his life on account of those dependent upon him, hampered with family cares, in such emergencies. These were duties clearly not for such. Charity begins at home, and no man has a right to risk his life when it would entail suffering and destitution on those dependent upon him. He gave a harrowing description of the famine in Ireland in 1847, which in three months drove 90,000 persons across the Channel to Liverpool, 25,000 finding no other shelter than cellars, 14,000 of which were being used for such a purpose. The horrors were simply indescribable, and the sacrifice of priests—martyrs to Christian charity who died at their post—totalled ten, from March to December of that year. Here alone was an object-lesson, showing the wisdom of the Church in having a celibate priesthood. To the objections raised by non-Catholics he gave practical answer, together with some useful advice to those of the faith in the way of silencing slander, so frequently spread by the ignorant, thoughtless, and often designing people.

Victoria's railways this year will net £230,000 more than last year. After payment of interest a profit of £350,000 is anticipated.

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