

He regretted that the Catholic Cathedral had not been ready for opening while they were present. He wished the Society every success, and said he had asked the priests to help in any way they could. He hoped that the feeling between the Society and the clergy of New Zealand would be such that there would be union and good will, which would tend to the betterment of the Society and the workers who might join it. The executive had worked hard in Auckland, and marvellous success had attended their efforts.

Bro. M. T. Dennehy (Timaru) was elected to the position of minute secretary.

**Executive Report.**—The executive officers in their report said that it was a matter for mutual congratulation that the Society had made such progress. They were pleased to report a general increase in the funds. The financial fund was in credit £322 4s, after paying funeral claims amounting to £160. The general fund was in credit £40, and the guarantee fund £30 9s 2d. Of the funeral fund £6225 was lent on first-class freehold security, as also was £200 of the guarantee fund. There was an increase of membership in branches with few exceptions. This was particularly noticeable in Dunedin and Wellington, while Auckland and Christchurch and others were experiencing a more normal influx. The report was received and adopted, as also was the balance-sheet. The auditors reported everything satisfactory, and considered the general account in a very healthy condition. They recommended that a properly-equipped office and an adequate safe should be secured, as at present their securities, etc., were not protected against fire. It was stated that there were some 30 branches contributing to the guarantee fund.

**Balance Sheets.**—Bro. O'Connor, St. Joseph's branch, Dunedin, moved, 'That branch secretaries, subject to the approval of their respective trustees, prepare half-yearly balance-sheets in lieu of quarterly, and that all rules affected by the alteration be amended to conform with such alteration.' The Wellington delegate seconded. It was urged that by the amendment suggested the secretaries would have more time for other duties. The district secretary, Bro. Kane, said that the alteration would disorganise the system of the Society. He urged Bro. O'Connor to withdraw the motion, as it would not be in the interests of the Society to have half-yearly balance-sheets. Several delegates spoke against the alteration, and the mover withdrew the motion.

**Appointment of Deputies.**—The following motion was moved by a delegate from St. Joseph's branch, Dunedin: 'That a deputy be appointed from the South Island for the purpose of visiting the outlying districts when requested by the district executive to do so, with the view to establishing and opening branches, and discharging any other functions to be decided on at the District Board meeting.' The mover said that the South Island people felt that it was a disgrace that in many of the districts of the South Island there was no branch formed. It would mean an enthusiasm developed in the extreme South that would do an immense amount of good to the whole of the South Island. If such an officer were appointed it would give an impetus to the cause. The president (Bro. Nerheny) pointed out that the promoters of the motion wanted a man appointed by one body, and to receive his instructions from another. Such an arrangement would cause friction. Brother O'Connor seconded the motion. The Hon. W. Beehan moved an amendment deleting the words 'South Island,' and substituting the words 'whole Colony,' and deleting all words after the word 'functions.' Bro. J. J. Marlow (Dunedin) said it was the best possible proof of confidence in the executive that it was proposed that the deputy should act at the request of the district executive. Bro. J. Duggan (Oamaru) said he presumed that the deputy would be paid by the District Board. If a deputy were appointed, he said, let him operate not in a special locality, but throughout the Colony. Bro. G. J. Sellars (Christchurch) opposed the amendment, and supported the motion. In the northern district pounds had been spent in advancing the society. He did not say that was wrong, but what he did say was that they should have a man in the south to further the interests of the society. They had no animosity for the north, but it was impossible for the executive in Auckland to do the necessary establishing of branches in the south. Bro. F. J. Doolan (Milton), in supporting the motion, said that from three years past up till June last, the southern branches had contributed to the management fund £311 against £226 by the northern branches, while the southern branches had 1272 members against 974 members for the north. Several other delegates spoke, and Bro. J. J. Marlow made an effective reply. He agreed to strike out the words 'district board meeting,' and thus place the power in the hands of the district executive. This

met with the approval of the mover and seconder of the amendment, which was withdrawn. The motion was further amended on the motion of Bro. J. Cullan (Wellington), so that a deputy should be appointed by the executives for Otago, Wellington, and Canterbury, and any other centres where they should think fit. After having been discussed for over four hours, the motion, as amended, was carried amidst acclamation.

The proceedings were then adjourned until next morning.

#### SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS.

The business was continued on Thursday morning, Bro. P. J. Nerheny (district president) being in the chair. Some discussion was evoked when Bro. J. W. Callaghan (Wellington) moved the following motion:—'That it is expedient in the best interests of the society, and for the better representation of branches at the District Board meetings, that the District Board office be removed from Auckland to Wellington.' The president said that the motion was similar to one that came up at Timaru three years ago, and that he had taken the precaution of obtaining legal advice as to whether he would be acting irregularly if he accepted the motion, and he had been advised that he would not. Bro. Callaghan said that the resolution, in his opinion, was the most important that would come before the meeting. He urged the delegates to support the motion, contending amongst other things that expenses would be cut down by the change. They would in Wellington be able to get a representative board-meeting once a year. He hoped the discussion would be a fair one. Miss Butcher (Milton), who was received with loud applause, seconded the motion, her reason being, she said, that Wellington was more central, and the executive would there be in better touch with the business. Bro. R. Casey (Auckland) strongly opposed the motion. He did not think it would be wise to sacrifice the present sound financial management for the chances of improvement in Wellington. The result during the board's term in Auckland had shown faithful, arduous, and persevering labors by the executive. Bro. S. O'Brien (Wellington) favored the motion. Bro. P. G. Duggan (Oamaru) opposed the proposition, which he described as a radical one; inasmuch as it aimed a blow at the root and well-being of the whole society. Being one of the oldest members of the society, he traced the progress for the past twenty years, during which time the board's office had been in Auckland, and pointed out the inadvisableness of making the change. Bro. B. Nolan (Wellington) said that the expenses were too heavy with the District Board in Auckland. Bro. J. Corbett (Auckland) opposed the motion, and pointed out that the implicit confidence placed in the present executive was shown by the fact that the same officers had filled the positions for some fifteen years. Bro. Sheahan (district treasurer) said that the arguments in favor of the motion were geographical, but no society could exist on geography. They had said that board meetings could be held annually in Wellington, which he thought would be a mistake, for with annual meetings enthusiasm would soon be lacking. He opposed the change being made also on the ground that Wellington was not a good place to invest friendly society money in, especially the Hibernian Society's money, as the values rose and fell in an uncertain manner. The management fund was economically managed, and he challenged anyone to dispute it. The district secretary was doing work that he (the speaker) would not do for £150, and also doing invaluable work that was not costing the society a penny. Bro. O'Gorman (Westport) supported the motion on the ground that they would get direct representation in Wellington, as also would many other branches, and do away with the necessity for proxies. Father Holbrook opposed the motion, considering that 'a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush,' and also saying that it did not say much for their business capacity to send all their finances to Wellington on a mere 'perhaps.' Bro. G. J. Sellars (Christchurch) said that if the change were made to Wellington the interests of the society would be safeguarded and husbanded in Wellington equally as well as in Auckland. He intended to throw in his lot with those in favor of the change.

At this stage the meeting adjourned until Friday.

A press message from Auckland on Monday stated that the meeting, after twelve hours' debate, by 36 votes to 18, rejected the proposal to remove the District Board Office to Wellington. The office remains at Auckland. The society placed on record its appreciation of the labors of Messrs. Joseph Devlin and J. T. Donovan, Irish envoys, to dispel many, if not all, the slanders against Ireland and its people. Mr. J. Corbett was elected vice-president. The next conference will be held at Wellington.