

## Hibernian Society, Dunedin

The annual Communion of the members of St. Joseph's branch of the Hibernian Society, Dunedin, took place in St. Joseph's Cathedral at the nine o'clock Mass on Sunday, when about 120 members in regalia approached the Holy Table, in addition to which several received Holy Communion at the early Mass and also at St. Patrick's Basilica, South Dunedin. The sight of so many men making public profession of their faith was most edifying, and gave a good example to the whole of the parish. His Lordship the Bishop who was celebrant of the Mass, in the course of his sermon expressed his pleasure at seeing such a large number of members of the Society present. The Society from its very beginning, said his Lordship, had always given a good example, and had always supported the Church. He could not speak too highly of the Society, and his greatest pleasure would be to see all the young men members of it, where they would be encouraged to practise their religion, to frequent the Sacraments, and to perform their other religious duties. It was one of the rules of the Society that the members should receive Holy Communion in a body, and thus make public profession of their faith. As a benefit society the members had temporal advantages, and were provided for in time of illness. Again he congratulated the members on the good example they had given, and he prayed that God would shower His grace upon them.

At the conclusion of Mass the members formed in procession and proceeded to St. Joseph's Hall, where the annual breakfast was laid. His Lordship the Bishop presided, having on his right Bros. Butler (president) and Saunders (vice-president), and on his left Bro. J. J. Marlow (P.P.), District Deputy, who represented the District Executive. Justice having been done to the excellent breakfast provided, Bro. Butler called upon Bro. Marlow to address the members.

Bro. Marlow, in response to the request of the president, dealt briefly with the history of the Society. In the first place he explained the significance of its name. It was founded as a benefit society, and as such it conferred on its members all the advantages of any other friendly society. Members and intending members could rest assured that its financial position was thoroughly sound. Their own branch alone had funds amounting to £2000. In the first place the Society was Catholic, and here only they made a limit to admission, for every candidate was asked if he were a practical Catholic. Unless candidates were prepared to make open profession of their faith the Society did not want them. In 1865 twelve Catholic young men in Melbourne formed themselves into a Catholic benefit society under the title of the St. Francis Catholic Benefit Society, which rapidly spread throughout the city. In Ballarat a similar society was formed, and another in Albury. As these three bodies had the same object in view, and were working on much the same principles, it was decided at a conference in 1872 to amalgamate the three under the designation of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society, with the approval of his Grace Archbishop Goold, who laid down two conditions, that the members should be practical Catholics, and that they should not belong to any secret society. During the last two years the Society had made rapid progress in Australasia, 3000 new members having joined, whilst £27,000 were added to the funds. In 1901 the Society was approached by the Ancient Order of Hibernians of America with the idea of affiliation. The A.O.H. was established about 200 years ago. That society has now a membership of 150,000, its increase of membership for three successive years being, 10,000, 12,000, and 25,000, and reaching as much as 15,000 in one quarter. The president writing some time ago said he expected in the near future the society to have a membership of a quarter of a million. The H.A.C.B. Society was now affiliated with this great American organisation. In concluding he asked the members to make the Dunedin branch what it ought to be, as not one-half of the Catholic young men in the city belonged to it. Every Catholic young man should be in their ranks, and instead of 250 members the branch should at least have a membership of 500.

Bro. T. J. Hussey spoke of the relations of the clergy to the Society, which were of the most cordial character. He referred to the great interest taken in the progress of the Society by his Lordship the Bishop, who had at all times advised the young men of the parish to become members. He paid a tribute to the work of the Rev. Father Coffey (chaplain) on behalf of the Society, and also to the Rev. Father Corcoran. On the other hand the members of the Society were always ready to co-operate with the clergy in any and every good work in the parish.

Rev. Father Coffey, Adm., said he was very pleased at the excellent attendance of the Society at the Cathedral that morning, when nearly 120 members approached the Holy Table, in addition to which were some who received Holy Communion in South Dunedin. Such a manifestation of their faith could not fail to benefit the Society. Some eight or nine years ago the branch had only a membership of 100, now it had 270 names on its books. Fully fifty more of the young men who had been at the nine o'clock Mass should belong to the Society. He had always found the members of the Society to be good practical Catholics. The members were always ready to assist when called upon by the clergy, and he trusted the Society would prosper and increase in membership.

Bro. J. B. Callan, jun., spoke of the Catholic press, making special mention of the 'N.Z. Tablet,' to which they were greatly indebted for the publicity it had given to the reports of the Society. The 'Tablet' had done much for the Hibernian Society, and the members in return should support it and extend its influence in every possible way.

Rev. Father Cleary replied.

Bro. O'Connor (secretary) announced that Mr. Marlow had been appointed District Deputy for Otago and Southland by the District Board, an announcement that was received with applause.

His Lordship the Bishop said he need scarcely assure the members of the great consolation it was to him to see so many men make public profession of their faith that morning by receiving Holy Communion. It was a great pleasure to him to assist at the present function. He took a great interest in the Society, and he thought it was of the utmost importance that all young men should be enrolled in Catholic societies, for by this means they would be encouraged to persevere, and would give a good example to those about them. He was glad to hear that the closest union existed between the priests and members of the Hibernian Society, and he hoped that union would always exist. The priests took the deepest interest in the success of anything connected with the congregation, and it was a great consolation and a great encouragement to know that the members of the congregation appreciated their efforts, and in return were prepared to help in any possible way. He was pleased to hear that the Hibernian Society was prospering, and he trusted it would continue to prosper, and so long as they were faithful to their rules they might be sure the Bishops and priests would take a great interest in the Society, and it would advance and in every possible way prosper and succeed.

### Invercargill

(From an occasional correspondent.)

A branch of the Hibernian Society was opened in St. Mary's Club room, Invercargill, on Monday, October 7. The number present easily constituted a record for the opening of a branch of this Society. Bro. J. J. Marlow, District Deputy, presided. Forty-three members were initiated, and 60 candidates were nominated. The following officers were elected:—President, Bro. G. W. Woods; vice-president, Bro. J. Sims; secretary, Bro. G. McNamara; treasurer, Bro. J. Mulvey; warden, Bro. P. Scully; guardian, Bro. J. Shepherd; sick visitors, Bros. T. Trainor and F. Byrne; trustees, Bros. T. McGrath, T. Matheson, and J. McDonough; auditors, Bros. T. Trainor and F. Thorpy. It was arranged that the branch meet on Wednesday evenings, the first meeting to be held on October 23. The chairman, after installing the officers, spoke of the advantages to be derived from membership in a society that offered financial benefits second to none, and in addition to being a powerful Catholic organisation, it was a society speaking to the world on behalf of everything Irishmen hold dear. He said that they need have no fear of the future of an organisation which was founded on charity, nurtured by the patriotism of its members, and cared for by the Church whose children it was their glorious privilege to be.

The Rev. Father Delany, in a very eulogistic speech, proposed a vote of thanks to the District Deputy for the able and efficient manner in which he had carried out his duties.

Bro. Marlow in reply said that the compliment was the other way about, as it was he who should thank the members for being allowed to assist at a ceremony that created a record for friendly societies in the Dominion. So far as he knew there had never been an instance of a friendly society opening a branch with a membership of more than one hundred. The success achieved was a tribute to the well-directed labors of the Rev. Father Delany and those connected with him in organising the meeting.