

two distinguished ecclesiastics, the Very Rev. Dr. Kennedy, S.M. (Meeanee), and Father Holley, S.M. (Blenheim) were also pupils of Mr. O'Connor. The former was now Rector of St. Patrick's College, Wellington, the highest position in Catholic secondary education in the Dominion.

Mr. S. Saunders (editor of the *Lyttelton Times*) proposed the toast of the 'Old Boys,' warmly congratulating them on the thoughtfulness which prompted the arrangement of that evening's function and the splendid success of their endeavors. He assured them that he felt very proud at being a guest on the occasion when the old boys of Mr. O'Connor's school were doing due honor to their former schoolmaster. The community here owed a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. O'Connor for the really good men he had educated, the result of the teaching of a good-living Christian gentleman.

Responding to the toast, Mr. F. E. Hyman (manager of the *Lyttelton Times* Company) said that when he went to school in 1867 he was impressed with the fact that Mr. O'Connor was 'mighty firm-looking.' Mr. O'Connor made things very merry if any pupil shirked or showed a disposition to play dirty tricks, but he never punished unless he was sure punishment was due, and then he made the punishment fit the crime.

Mr. W. Hayward, jun., also responded to the toast with eulogistic remarks on the school work and well-sustained results of Mr. O'Connor's tuition.

Among other speakers were Mr. F. K. Cooper, who, with a fellow old schoolboy, had come a distance of sixty miles to be present, and greatly entertained the company by his recital of incidents relating to school days and kindred subjects.

During the evening songs were contributed by Messrs. C. Goggin and W. Mackay, the accompaniments being played by Mr. H. Rossiter, and a recitation was given by Mr. James Maher.

A hearty vote of thanks was accorded the chairman and Mr. D. O'Connell, honorary secretary, and 'Auld lang syne' and the National Anthem were sung.

RELIGION AND CRIME

UNRELIABLE STATISTICS

During the course of his sermon at St. Mary of the Angels' Church, Boulcott street, Wellington, on Sunday night (June 27), Rev. Father Venning made reference to the remarks made at Home recently by the Chief Justice on the question of education and crime (says the *Dominion*). Sir Robert Stout, it will be remembered, stated 'that the best proof of the success of the secular system was seen (1) in the diminishing of serious crime, and (2) in the fact that those trained free from sectarian bias produced only half as many criminals in proportion to their number as those trained in the denominational schools.'

From time to time, Father Venning said, Catholics were told that they were worse than those around them. According to the figures in the *Year Book*, the Catholics represented 14.32 per cent. of the total population. But the figures in the *Year Book* touching prison records made it out that the proportion of prisoners belonging to their religion in the gaols was 34 per cent.—or more than twice as many as there ought to be. He wished to say, first of all, that the figures in the *Year Book* were absolutely misleading as evidence that Catholics were worse than people belonging to other denominations. He did not say that was any fault on the part of those who compiled the statistics, nor did he say that the authorities failed in their duty in taking statements from prisoners as to their religious beliefs. What he did say was that the uncorroborated statements of prisoners as to their religion was quite unreliable. But those who knew the Chief Justice, and his attitude towards the question of religion in schools, were not surprised at the view which he had expressed at Home.

Crimes Where Statistics Fail.

Those who made the charge to which he had referred would, Father Venning continued, have to show that all criminals in New Zealand were caught, ticketed, and entered up. Of course, such a thing could not be done. There were whole classes of crime—such as pre-natal murder and other forms of infanticide, frauds, swindles, breaches of trust, burglary, etc., which were never detected. Large numbers of people who committed crime were known to the police, but proceedings were not taken, owing to the difficulty in establishing guilt, the heavy expense, and the exposure which proceedings would mean. Were there not many people who fuddled their brains with fire and water and made their own homes terrible places, and yet the police could not interfere? Were there not numbers of wife-beaters and child-beaters whom the law could

not touch? Were there not numbers who were guilty of juvenile depravity and flagrant conjugal infidelity of whom the law took no note? What he wished to remind his hearers was that there was a God who took note where the policeman and the statesman failed. The well-dressed infant-slayers, the darkness-loving transgressors, and others sinned more grievously before God than the man who got drunk and the man who committed a petty theft.

Relation of Poverty to Crime Statistics.

Opponents of religious instruction in schools would, Father Venning said, next have to prove that there was a proper record as to religious belief of every criminal in New Zealand. He wished to point out that only the religion of those who were sent to gaol was taken a note of. Now, it so happened that only a fraction of those who were convicted went to gaol. Out of 27,561 persons convicted in New Zealand in 1906, only 2439 received penitentiary imprisonment. It was interesting to note also that 3476 had the option of a fine. Those who could afford to pay a fine saved themselves from going to gaol. It was well known that drunkenness, for instance, was punished by fine more than by imprisonment. Now, the Catholics undoubtedly formed the poorer part of the people of New Zealand. Those who were able to pay a fine were just as bad as those who could not, by that means, escape gaol. It was a fair presumption that a majority of those who paid the fines were not Catholics. To condemn religious training in the face of the real facts was shallow reasoning—it was not logic.

Prisoners: False Declarations as to Religion.

Father Venning went on to say that another point which those to whom he was referring would have to establish was that all those who were entered on the gaol records as Catholics were really members of that Church. He could prove that a majority of such prisoners did not belong to their denomination. Catholics would never have to hang their heads in shame at true statistics. Many of those who were on the gaol books as Catholics were frauds—they had never been members of the Church. He gave instances of prisoners in the local gaol who had wrongly declared that they were Catholics. One of them, he said, had asserted that he did not believe in the existence of God. Another, who had at one time been paid to blow the organ at one of the churches, had put himself down as a Roman Catholic 'because he liked their music.' There was also a bigamist who had admitted that he really was not a Catholic, but his wife (he had three of them) belonged to their Church.

Two Tests at the Terrace Gaol.

It would also have to be shown, Father Venning continued, that those prisoners who claimed to be Catholics were the products of their Church and their schools. He could prove that 75 per cent. of those who declared that they were Catholics were not the products of their schools. During the last eighteen months he had made two tests at the Terrace Gaol. On the first occasion he found that only 6 out of 38 had ever been inside a Catholic school. Out of 38 so-called Catholic prisoners, on the second occasion, only 8 had been trained in their schools. In order to show the kind of Catholics at the Terrace Gaol and Point Halswell, he might say that out of 55 prisoners who claimed to belong to their Church only 4 went to Easter Communion. He would like to ask whether those men were there as a result of Catholic teaching, or of the neglect of it. Prisoners had absolutely no scruples about bearing false witness as to their religion if they thought there was any prospect of any advantage. As to why there were so many Catholics among the prisoners, it was not for him to say.

In conclusion, Father Venning said that no figures could be obtained to prove the allegation which the Chief Justice had made. According to the *Year Book*, 159,231 children attended school in New Zealand in 1906. If the Catholics were to be credited with one-seventh of the criminals, they should be credited with the same proportion of children attending school. But what did they find? Instead of having 22,754 scholars, they had only 11,948. The statistics in the *Year Book* were right as far as they went, but they proved nothing. Those who made odious comparisons against the Catholic Church should clothe themselves in armor like the modern American footballer. Such people had got it into their heads that the Catholics were bad, and they twisted and mangled figures to try and prove their case. Those prisoners who wrongly claimed to be Catholics went to Mass when in gaol because, if they did not go, it would be considered a breach of discipline. If those who did not belong to their Church attended the service, no objection was taken. 'We cannot remain silent,' Father Venning added. 'As Catholic people, we feel that we must speak out, and our case is a sound one.'

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