

and Sandhurst. He joined the 18th Hussars in January, 1914, and was taken prisoner in October last. (3) Captain Henry Jump, 1st Royal Dragoons, son of the late Henry Jump, K.S.G., J.P. He was educated at Stonyhurst, promoted Captain in 1914, and wounded and taken prisoner in November last. (4) Lieutenant Edward Bernard Trafford, Scots Guards, son of the late Edward Southwell Trafford, and the Hon. Eleanor Mary, daughter of the 12th Lord Petre, of Wroxham Hall, Norwich. He was taken prisoner in November last.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

(From our Wellington correspondent.)

Under the auspices of the St. Joseph's Parish Committee of the Catholic Federation, Mr. P. J. O'Regan delivered a lecture on 'Proportional Representation' at St. Peter's Hall on Monday evening, June 14. Mr. J. J. L. Burke occupied the chair, and his Grace Archbishop O'Shea and the Rev. Fathers Hurley, S.M., Adm., Barra, S.M., and members of the Dominion executive occupied seats on the platform.

The chairman, in introducing Mr. O'Regan, said that the subject was one that should be carefully studied by every Catholic, and he was quite sure that the evening would be a profitable one for all present.

Mr. O'Regan, who was received with applause, in his introductory remarks assured the audience that the subject was by no means a complicated one, as some people seemed to imagine. If a person never saw type being set, nor letters sorted, he would be inclined to regard both operations as most complicated, but if the same person went into a printing office or the mail room of a post office he would look upon both operations as comparatively simple. In the same manner a person who had not studied the system of proportional representation would regard it as complicated, but after studying it, he would come to the conclusion that the system was a much simpler and a more effective one than the present. Under the proportional system all minorities, except very small ones, would be represented, and, whilst minorities would have representation, majorities would in no way be interfered with. It was a most effective system, and the number of votes wasted would be reduced to a minimum. Why have you got votes? the lecturer asked. Because you are entitled to parliamentary representation. Catholics in New Zealand were in a minority, being one-seventh of the population, consequently a system which would give a minority representation in Parliament should appeal specially to Catholics. Under the proportional system Catholics would be entitled to a representation of eleven in Parliament as a matter of right, and consequently would not be very long before they would have their grievances redressed. Mr. O'Regan cited the debate on the education question in which there was a fierce political controversy. Take the *Hansard* report of the debate on the Education Bill when it was first introduced; as everyone knows, it contained clauses placing considerable disabilities upon Catholics. Catholic opinion was never explained as it might be, as we did not have the representation, and therefore could not be heard. Under the present system Catholics were practically disfranchised, because they are not effectively represented. Under the proportional system the minority was just as sure to get representation as the largest majority. Under the proportional system single electorates would be abolished, and plural electorates substituted. The plural electorates must be larger, but how larger was a matter of practical politics. The system was at present in vogue in Tasmania, having been in use there with successful results since 1896. There were thirty members representing six electoral districts, every district returning five members. Under the Electoral Act, passed last year, the election of members of the Legislative Council in this Dominion would be by the proportional system. Not a word appears to have been said about it in the New Zealand press. He presumed the war was responsible for this. There

would be twenty-four members elected under this system. The North Island and South Island would each be divided into two electorates. Each electorate in the North Island would have a representation of seven, and each electorate in the South Island five. The quota of a single electorate under the present system was arrived at by dividing two into the number of votes recorded and adding one to the result, consequently practically half the electors were disfranchised. Proportional representation would get rid of this anomaly. The actual mode of working the proportional system was extremely simple. The voter would be handed a ballot paper on which would be printed the names of the candidates. On a square opposite each name the voter would indicate his preference for the candidates by means of figures. For instance—Brown, 1; Smith, 2; Jones, 3; and so on. At the close of the poll the papers instead of being counted at the booths, as at present, would be sent to the central or principal booth, and counted by the returning officer and his assistants. Take, for example, an electorate returning five members with 30,000 votes cast, the returning officer would add one to the number of candidates, which would bring the number to six. He would divide six into the number of votes cast, 30,000, which would give the result as 5000, to which would be added one, making the quota under proportional representation as 5001, against 15,001 under the present system. Any member securing that number would be declared elected, consequently giving a minority representation. All votes in excess of the quota arrived at would be distributed amongst the remainder of the candidates, as indicated by the voters in their choice recorded on the ballot papers. Under the system the majority would still rule, but the minority would have the inestimable advantage of being heard. The system would make ineffective the pernicious practice of plumping, whilst politics would be made cleaner and freer from party government, which was a curse to any country. It would enable men of independent ideas, not tied down to the party system, to be returned, making for the better government of the country. Proportional representation is the only system by which Catholics can have any chance to voice their opinions on any legislation affecting them as Catholics. Take, for example, the legislation with regard to divorce, and compare it with Catholic ideals. Parliamentary records show that it was passed almost unanimously by Parliament, whereas, as a matter of fact, one-seventh of the population was totally against the legislation, but, owing to the absence of Catholic representatives, Catholic opinion was not expressed. Other matters affecting Catholics are legislated upon, with the result that disabilities are placed upon the Catholic community quite unintentionally, whereas if that body had representation, which it would get under the proportional system, its voice could be heard and no doubt effectively heard.

In conclusion, he appealed to his hearers to give the subject careful study, and if any one required further information he would be glad to answer any questions they desired to ask.

A number of questions were then asked, and ably answered by Mr. O'Regan, who was accorded a hearty vote of thanks on the motion of his Grace Archbishop O'Shea, who said that he had listened, with much profit to himself, to the able explanation of the proportional system of voting, which was one they should all study, as they would, as explained by Mr. O'Regan, be called upon to vote by this method at the next general election for members of the Legislative Council. All minorities, said his Grace, had the right to be heard, and he trusted that such a system as would provide this would supersede the present one.

During the evening an enjoyable musical programme was contributed to by Messrs. John Sidford and J. Boyce, and Miss Wallis. Mr. A. Cassie, secretary of St Joseph's committee, had charge of the arrangements.

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