

## CORRESPONDENCE

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for opinions expressed by our correspondents.]

## H.A.C.B. SOCIETY.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,—The order paper for the half-yearly meeting of the above society, to be held at Auckland on August 25 next, contains the following notices of motion:—

The D.E. to move—'That the triennial movable meeting, to be held in the year 1916, be postponed for one year, or during the war (in order to ascertain the views of branches thereon) believing that

(a) It is undesirable to hold the meeting because of the consequent expense (over £500) during the strenuous time when so many of our members are on active service our best efforts being put forth to pay their contributions and so ensure the benefits of the society to our brave boys and re-insure them so as to save the funeral fund from the severe strain possible during such a terrible war, and

(b) In consideration of members generally suffering more or less from the consequences of the war such as dearth of employment, and increased cost of living, and further

(c) In consideration of our decreasing income as well as the increased outlay herein referred to and the extraordinary duties devolving from us in relation to men on active service, duties which require vigilance and constant attention.'

The words in brackets, 'in order to ascertain the views of branches thereon,' make this motion beautifully vague. Are the views of the branches required on the question of postponement itself, or on the length of time of the postponement of the 1916 T.M. meeting? As this order paper has been received too late for many branch half-yearly meetings, how are the views of the branches to be obtained? Is it at the half-yearly D.M., which the D.E. knows will be a proxy meeting at which a majority of the proxies are appointed by the D.E. without the proxies receiving any indication from the branches they represent of their views on this or any other subject? If it is at the half-yearly D.M., the result goes without saying, but if on the other hand the D.E. wishes the branches to discuss this question and forward their views to the D.E., so that the wishes of the majority may be given effect to, I very strongly recommend the branches to oppose the motion and instruct their delegates (proxies or otherwise) to vote against it.

The T.M. meeting of 1916 has been looked forward to with very keen interest by Hibernians throughout the Dominion, as it is well known that many important matters which concern the well-being and very life of the society will be brought forward for discussion at that meeting. Taking the reasons the D.E. put forward for postponing that meeting, what do we find: (a) It is undesirable on the score of expense (over £500), because many of our members are on active service, and the D.E. best efforts are being put forward to pay their contributions, etc. How does the D.E. propose to lessen the expense in one year's time (or when the war is over)? The representative T.M. meeting, held at Napier in 1913, decided that the 1916 meeting should be held at Westport (whether that choice was wise or unwise is not a matter for discussion now), and since then I understand St. Canice's branch (Westport) has been making active preparations to ensure the success of the meeting. Surely the D.E. does not hope or anticipate by postponing the T.M. meeting to flech from the Westport branch the right of holding the meeting in its district, if not the expense will be the same in one, two, or three years, therefore the plea of expense goes by the board.

Then the D.E. pleads the best efforts being put forth to pay the contributions of the boys at the front and so ensure to them the benefits of the society. This is very plausible, but what is its value? The contributions of our brave boys are paid out of the interest

accrued from the 'guarantee fund' and their re-insurance to the extent of one-half from the interest accrued to the 'funeral fund,' the other half by the Government, and at best it means a cross entry in the books of the D.E. Of course the D.E. must have the names of all members who have gone to the front, but these and the necessary details are supplied by the branch secretaries, and as there is no possibility of men being called up and hustled to the front in a week or ten days (the time which might be occupied by the D.E. in attending the T.M. meeting), that reason is as effective as the former.

(b) Dearth of employment and increased cost of living.—Here are more plausible but very lame excuses. If our members are suffering from dearth of employment now, when so many thousands of men have gone to the front, how are their lots to be bettered in one, two, or three years' time when many of our soldiers have returned and are also looking for employment? Further, the war having caused an increase in the cost of living, is it not likely to be worse rather than better in a year's time?

(c) Decrease of income and increased outlay, etc.—Surely the D.E. is not putting these excuses forward in all sincerity for members to swallow without protest. As I have already pointed out, the district management fund from which the expenses of the T.M. meeting are paid, is not suffering one penny loss from members going to the war, as their contributions are kept good from the 'guarantee fund,' which is a contingency fund that is not likely to be drawn on for its legitimate object as long as the D.E. continues vigilant and active for the welfare of the society, and which is now being wisely used for the benefit of our members who are fighting our battles.

As there is consequently no reasonable excuse for the postponement of the 1916 T.M. meeting, I trust the branches which have the best interests of the society at heart will reject this motion, and insist on the meeting being held at the appointed time.—I am, etc.,

J. J. L. BURKE.

Wellington, July 16, 1915.

## ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

AN IRISH CATHOLIC.—We could not express an opinion without first seeing the stories. A poor person may, of course, 'write a book'; but if the book is of any size the cost of printing would be heavy.

A CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.—Yes, you can buy an annuity. Ask at the nearest post office, and you will be supplied with leaflets containing full particulars.

DUBIUM EST.—A lieutenant's pay in the German Army rises from £60 to £85, up to the sixth year, thence up to £120 in the twelfth year. A captain's pay rises from £170 to £255. A German pastor has a guaranteed minimum income of £90 per annum, rising at the end of twenty years' service to some three times that amount. You will be able to judge from these figures what reliance is to be placed on the tale about chaplains receiving £400 a year and a free house. Most European armies—France and Italy are, for the time being, exceptions—have a regulation requiring soldiers to attend every Sunday the service of the Church to which they belong. The regulation is not framed out of regard to any particular Church, but purely as a matter of general principle. The statement that German soldiers are required to attend Mass seventy times a year may be safely set down as an exaggeration.

## POLISH RELIEF FUND

Already acknowledged	£117	2	0
'Anonymous'	2	0	0
Dr. A. Reid, Opotiki	1	1	0
William Dowling, Seaward Downs	0	7	6
David Dowling, Seaward Downs	0	7	6
'A Friend'	0	4	0