

Bro. Casey (Greymouth) said that the Grey branch had unanimously affirmed the principle of unity in the society, and was entirely opposed to disruption. He had been extremely sorry to notice the announcement in the *N.Z. Tablet* of the intention to form a new district in Auckland in the event of the removal of headquarters to Wellington. A proposition that had been consistently defeated at previous conferences might well have been left to lie for a while, until such time as there might be evidenced a decided change in the general conditions and policy of the society. The same arguments as were being adduced at the present conference were adduced previously. Why persist? In order that they as a society might present, in defence of their spiritual and temporal interests, a solid and united phalanx, they must preserve the unity of the whole.

Bro. Doolan (Christchurch) said that he rose with some diffidence to represent the views of his branch. Those whom he represented were in open revolt against the district administration. The great bone of contention at each conference, he considered, had been that of Auckland versus Wellington. What was this question? Wellington, Dunedin, and Christchurch, had been regularly out-voted in the battle for the removal—by district executive votes. A district officer, when speaking to any question before the conference, exercised a double influence upon the minds of the voters. The opinion of such men carried weight. He regretted that dissensions existed in the North Island. It was not so in the South.

Bro. Duggan (Oamaru) rose to a point of order. He should allow the other branches to speak for themselves.

The president agreed. The speaker should confine himself to what the Christchurch branch had affirmed upon the matter.

Bro. Doolan said that he was in a position to vouch for the minds of eight branches on this subject, and who were prepared to rally round the flag which Christchurch was prepared to hoist. Could Bro. Duggan say as much?

Bro. Duggan remarked that had he been so disposed he could have placed himself in a position to vouch for more than eight.

Bro. Doolan, resuming, indulged in some criticism of the executive, but was frequently called to order by the president, who urged him to confine his remarks to the point at issue. His criticisms could be voiced when miscellaneous business was being dealt with.

Bro. Doolan concluded by expressing his belief that the existence of two separate districts, with headquarters, need not imply disruption.

Bro. Hooker (Hawera) said that the Hawera branch, in giving notice of motion, merely desired to have this question settled once and for all—it had no wish to accomplish the disruption of the society.

Bro. Dennehy (Milton) sarcastically referred to the fact that while in one breath they, as a society, were urging the Irish Party to preserve a united front on the Home Rule question, they were, among themselves, most inconsistently debating the question of division. He objected to a remark which had been passed the previous day, that the District Executive had brought delegates from the south to represent branches (with which they had no connection) by proxy. He was one of those alluded to. As a resident of Timaru, he had not sought the representation of Milton, but he had been prominently connected with the society for years, and he would be glad to know who was better fitted to speak at the meeting than he.

Bro. McKeowen (Wellington) said that the matter resolved itself into a triangular duel between three sections. Let these three, he urged, thresh out their differences in committee. He moved that the Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin delegates be allowed to confer on this matter and report to the meeting at 2.30 p.m.

The president was afraid that such a course would deprive those who had not spoken of the right of addressing the meeting. He went on to review the position as it concerned Auckland. The Auckland Executive, which was also the New Zealand Executive, had decided, in view of the continued resolutions of Wellington in regard to the removal of headquarters, to form a separate district. When the matter was dealt with by the District Executive, he, as chairman, said that the branches throughout New Zealand should be informed of the action proposed by Auckland, and for doing this the Executive had been condemned. In explanation of the accusation made the previous day, that three Auckland delegates held proxies for South Island branches, he said that these gentlemen, desiring to spend their holiday in Wellington, and wishing to meet their Hibernian friends, were given proxies to attend the conference.

Bro. McKeowen's motion was ruled inadmissible.

Bro. Bechan (Auckland) insisted that the Auckland branch had had nothing to do with the issuing of the circular to the branches. The responsibility for that lay with the District Executive, which was not to be confused with the branch.

The President said that the issue of the circular was the result of what had appeared in the Auckland press. In consequence of what had been published in one of the Auckland papers, the Executive had resolved to put the position before the branches.

Bro. Callaghan (Wellington) desired to take a vote on the ruling of the chair with regard to Mr. McKeowen's

motion, but was ruled out of order, as he had already spoken. He protested that unless there was some definite issue before the meeting, the debate would lead nowhere. He hoped someone would move in the matter.

After further discussion it was decided by the president that the Auckland delegates having stated their position, Bro. McKeowen should be allowed to put his proposition to the meeting.

Bro. McKeowen accordingly moved that the representatives of the Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin branches meet in conference on the subject under debate, and report to the meeting at 3.30 p.m. He hoped that the meeting would adopt his view that such a course would bring about an amicable settlement of any differences which might exist, and clear away misunderstandings.

The motion was carried on the voices, and the meeting then adjourned for lunch.

THE PRINCIPLE OF UNITY.

When the conference resumed late in the afternoon, the committee submitted the following resolution:—

'That this meeting of the District Executive and delegates from the Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin branches affirm the principle of unity, and pledge themselves and their respective bodies in the cause of unity, and that a small sub-committee be formed to go into details.'

Bro. J. J. Marlow (Dunedin), in moving the adoption of the report, said that nothing could give him more pleasure than the resolution arrived at.

Bro. Corrigan (Waimate) seconded the motion, which was adopted unanimously with applause.

A motion was passed, with a few dissentients, to the following effect:—'That the entrance fees of reduced benefit members be as follow, according to an age at entry: Rule 75, Clause 1, 16 and under 25 years 2s 6d, 25 and under 30 years, 5s. The opposition to the motion was based on the opinion that reduced benefit members should not be encouraged. A majority of the conference, however, was evidently of opinion that this provision was useful for bringing young members into the societies.'

A discussion took place as to whether the next triennial conference should be held at Napier, Westport, or Invercargill. It was decided to hold the meeting at Napier.

Report Adopted.

At the evening session the following report was presented by the committee and unanimously adopted:—

(1) That a boy be engaged to assist the district secretary.

(2) That three nominees for the office of deputy be made by the parent branch in each district where a deputy is required and submitted to all the branches in such district, the branches then to call a special meeting and take a vote on such deputy. The candidate who receives the highest number of votes from among the said branches to be recommended to the District Executive for approval.

(3) The first election to take place at the half-yearly meeting in June, 1910, and thereafter every three years.

(4) That district officers should insist on the returns from branches being carried out according to rule, and that no further leniency should be extended to them other than provided in the rule referred to.

(5) That no proxy delegate should be allowed to act at triennial movable meetings who was not directly appointed by the branch which he represents.

(6) That consideration of the question of forming two districts in New Zealand be held over until the triennial movable meeting in 1916.

Several speakers expressed their cordial satisfaction with the report, which was adopted with applause. The president expressed the hope that by 1916 the formation of two districts would become imperative, owing to the great increase and development of the societies.

The question of establishing a Catholic organ, which should enunciate the principles, opinions, and deliberations of all Catholic societies, including the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Catholic clubs and Hibernian societies, was referred, after discussion, to the District Executive, with instructions to refer the matter to branches.

Election of Officers.

After votes of thanks and congratulations had been passed, officers were elected as follow:—District president, Bro. C. Mulholland; district vice-president, Bro. H. Nerheny; district treasurer, Bro. M. J. Sheahan; district secretary, Bro. W. Kane; district auditors, Bros. J. B. R. Stead and J. Smith.

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