

H.A.C.B. SOCIETY

TRIENNIAL MOVABLE MEETING

The triennial movable conference of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society (New Zealand district) commenced its session at St. Patrick's Hall, Wellington, on Wednesday morning, March 30, the district president (Bro. P. J. Nerheny, of Auckland), presiding. There were about sixty delegates present (says the *Dominion*).

The president, in his opening address, said that it was his pride and pleasure to welcome such a large number of representatives, and to preside at such a distinguished gathering. The society had numerically and financially improved by leaps and bounds. He hoped that the advance would be even more rapid in the next than in the last six months. It was always pleasing to Hibernians to see the interest the clergy were taking in their work. When he was in Tasmania, the clergy had thrown in their lot with them, in order that the Catholic young men might be drawn together, not only for the material, but for the spiritual, benefit of one another. He hoped that they would all bind themselves together for the mutual strengthening of their hands. On June 30 the membership was reported to be 2275 (2071 benefit members and 204 honorary members). To-day, or rather on January 31, the number had increased to 2632 (2364 benefit and 268 honorary members). The funeral fund in July last had stood at £7438. On January 31 that amount had increased to £7795 2s 2d, an increase of £356 11s 4d. During the half-year they had paid away £260 from the funeral fund, but the accumulated interest on the fund during that time had amounted to £235 14s, which practically represented the amount paid away with the exception of £20 6s. The guarantee fund had stood at £364 10s in July last. On January 31 the amount had increased to £386 5s. The sick fund stood at £12,558 5s. The president concluded his remarks by requesting delegates to be brief in discussion, as they had a lot of business to get through. He called on the treasurer to move the usual motion of fidelity and loyalty to his Holiness the Pope.

Message to the Holy Father.

Bro. M. J. Sheahan (treasurer), of Auckland, moved that the following message be sent to his Eminence, the Papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Merry del Val, Rome: 'Hibernian Catholic Benefit Society, N.Z. District Board, assembled triennial meeting, Wellington, respectfully begs to tender to your Holiness its deepest sentiments of love, loyalty, and devotion, and at the same time earnestly and humbly invoking your apostolic benediction.—Nerheny, president.' It was also moved that the text of the motion be cabled at once to Cardinal Merry del Val. This was carried unanimously.

A motion sympathising with the Auckland diocese in the loss it had sustained by the death of the Right Rev. Dr. Lenihan, and expressing appreciation of his devoted services to the Church, was passed.

District Officers' Report.

The district officers, in their report, stated that during the half-year the funeral claims had amounted to £260. The funeral fund had £7795 2s 2d to its credit, and showed an increase over last balance of £356 11s 4d. The balance sheet showed that the whole of the funeral fund had been invested, and a further sum of £144 17s 10d borrowed from the general fund to make up the amount for a loan. Up to last audit the amount lent was £7510, and of this sum £200 had since been paid off. During the last half-year a further sum of £630 had been lent. The general fund maintained a strong position, and it was needless to say that it was a great advantage that it should remain so. The guarantee fund showed a further increase of £21 15s. They desired to express their sincere thanks and appreciation of the great assistance given by the Redemptorist and Marist Orders towards increasing the membership of the society, and otherwise recommending it. The business to be transacted was of a lengthy and important nature, and they could only commend it to the careful consideration of the conference and trust the unity and prosperity of the society would long continue.

The report was adopted.

The balance sheet was also adopted after various members had congratulated the executive on the healthy state of the finances.

The funeral fund showed a balance to credit of £7795 2s 2d, as against £7438 10s 10d on July 31 last, and the general fund increased its balance from £529 7s 6d to £655 14s 2d. The guarantee fund had grown from £364 10s in July to £386 on January 31.

The value of assets over liabilities is set down at £761, of which amount £510 16s 4d is cash in bank and £144 17s 10d a loan to the funeral fund. The balance sheet showed that a cheque for £10 18s 9d had been remitted for the

cost of a stained-glass window for the Church of St. Gerard (Redemptorist), Wellington.

Bro. Flynn (Auckland) remarked that the total funds of the society stood at over £23,000. The Hibernian Society, he said, was more cheaply managed than any other benefit society in the country.

Bro. Beehan said that phenomenal progress had been made in the last six years, but the membership was not as large as it should be. The society should have 12,000 members.

Delegates from all parts of both islands congratulated the executive on the careful and economic management of the funds, which was largely responsible for the strong position held by the society to-day. It was stated by one speaker that the Hibernian Society was the most economically managed of all the benefit societies established in New Zealand.

Father Creagh, of the Redemptorist Order, thanked the conference for its kind references to his Order. The stained-glass window they had presented would be a constant reminder of their duty towards Hibernianism. It was, however, the parish priests on whom the burden of the work fell—they were only missionaries, but still would do all in their power to aid the society. The Rev. Father O'Connell, replying on behalf of the Marist Order, said that where there were Hibernians there was a good sound Catholic body, and he rejoiced at the cablegram sent to his Holiness the Pope as an action which showed their love and loyalty to the Church.

At this stage the conference adjourned until 2.30 p.m.

Home Rule for Ireland.

On resuming, consideration was given to the following motion by Bro. Dennehy (Milton):—

'(1) The New Zealand District Board of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society, at its triennial meeting at Wellington, heartily congratulates the Irish Party upon its successful efforts towards the attainment of Home Rule for Ireland, the consummation of which can only be obtained by unity and the abandonment of dissension; (2) that a copy of the foregoing resolution be at once cabled to Mr. John Redmond, M.P., chairman of the Irish Party.'

Speaking to the motion, the mover said that the subject was one that should appeal to every Irishman in the room. It was not his intention, he said, to make a patriotic speech. The Parliament of Ireland (when it existed) had voted away its own rights. The men at the head of the Irish Party had the subject of Home Rule nearest to their hearts, and were not going to allow differences of opinion to defeat their ambition. The motion, if passed, would assist the cause.

Bro. Corrigan (Waimate) seconded the motion. It would appear, from recent cablegrams, he said, that the Prime Minister of England had gone back on his promise on the Home Rule question, and it was their duty, he contended, to let the people at Home understand how the matter was regarded by Irishmen in New Zealand. All the world over Irishmen were in positions of trust, yet they were not allowed to govern themselves. Ireland had not been conceded self-government because she had not demanded it at the point of the sword. The Boers, after they were defeated, were granted self-government.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Investment of Funds.

An interesting discussion arose over the question of centralising, for investment purposes, the Sick Fund, the proposition being expressed as follows:—

'That this meeting affirms the principle of centralising the Sick Fund for the purpose of making moneys lying idle interest-bearing, and instructs the D.E. to formulate rules in regard to same, and submit them for approval to a subsequent meeting of the district.'

Bro. Kane, who tabled the motion, said that the success of their organisation depended upon the proper investment of their funds. Every penny available for investment should be interest-bearing.

Bro. Beehan (Auckland) said that according to the Registrar of Friendly Societies, no less a sum than £48,000, included in the assets of all the societies, was non-interest-bearing. Once, during the course of a conversation with the late Mr. Seddon, it had been suggested to him (the speaker) that the societies need not look very far for investments. They could purchase Government debentures at the Post Office.

Bro. Pound (Invercargill) contended that pooling of funds for investment would be impracticable, especially with the smaller societies.

Bro. Flynn (Auckland) suggested that a committee be set up to report upon the matter.

Bro. Hooker (Hawera) said that he had made some investigations with regard to the question of such investments, and had ascertained that 2½ per cent. of the funds of the Oddfellows was non-interest-bearing; of the Foresters, 3 per cent.; of the Rechabites, 3½ per cent.; of the Druids, 7 per cent. Of the funds of their own society, no less than 10 per cent. was non-interest-bearing. This was bad enough, but the fact that their existing investments earned