

CATHOLIC FEDERATION OF VICTORIA

THE PAST YEAR'S WORK

A striking instance of the results of energetic and enthusiastic organisation is furnished by the wonderful development of the Australian Catholic Federation of Victoria during the past year. The organisation was launched on December 12, 1911, at the Cathedral Hall, but the work of organising branches was not taken in hand until late in January, 1912.

Members of the provisional committee have addressed about 500 meetings in the course of the year in every part of Victoria, including districts as far distant as Warracknabeal, Swan Hill, Quambatook, Wodouga, Bairnsdale, and Beech Forest. The enthusiasm displayed at the meetings has been remarkable, many persons journeying 20 or 30 miles to be present at them. The addresses delivered by the delegates have emphasised the advantage of unity and organisation for the furtherance of Catholic interests, but have also set forth emphatically that the Federation was not to be an aggressive body, and would ask for no privileges or favors for the Catholic community. Every item included in its platform the Federation desires should be enjoyed by every religious denomination throughout the State. Up to date 400 branches of the Federation have been formed, and 30,000 members enrolled. Notwithstanding that the initial outlay was necessarily heavy, the organisation enters on the new year's work with a credit balance of about £600.

As from January 1, the subscription to the Federation will be at the reduced rate of 1s per annum, and it is anticipated that a very large membership will be built up during the coming year. It is intended to continue the work of visiting branches and addressing meetings in every part of the State, so that the interest in the organisation shall be fully maintained.

At these meetings the important question of Catholic Education will be discussed in all its bearings, and the request made by the Federation for a royal commission to be appointed to investigate the whole educational system of the State will be brought prominently before the people. It is held that, since the problem has been satisfactorily solved in Great Britain and Ireland, Germany, Canada, Belgium, Holland, and other countries, a solution satisfactory to all sections of the community could be achieved in Australia. As over 40,000 children are being efficiently educated in the Catholic schools of Victoria, each of whom would have cost the State £6 12s 3d, according to the figures of the last financial year, the Federation asks that the Catholic community, in common with any other body which educates its children up to the required standard, should be recompensed for the work done.

It is also intended to continue the work of circulating Catholic literature, and branch councils have been asked to undertake the enrolment of regular subscribers to the Catholic newspapers, and also to the Australian Catholic Truth Society.

At the first meeting of the State council on January 25, a proposal for a self-denial week in aid of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and the Association of the Holy Childhood, will be discussed. The work for caring for Catholic immigrants will be continued and developed during the year, in addition to many other important phases of Catholic social work.

Gisborne

(From our own correspondent.)

January 5.

The members of St. Mary's Choir were the guests of Father Lane, at the presbytery at Christmas, and occasion was taken by our pastor to make a presentation to the conductor (Mr. F. Hale), and the organist (Miss M. Neill), at the same time making eulogistic reference to the efforts of the recipients to promote the welfare of the choir.

Rev. Father Lane, who left early last week for Tolaga Bay, for the opening of the Catholic bazaar at

that place, returned early on Saturday morning. Speaking on Sunday, Father Lane made reference to the splendid and gratifying results of the undertaking, and especially thanked the Catholics of Gisborne for their great generosity in assisting the bazaar. The Catholics of Tolaga Bay had asked him (Father Lane) to convey their heartiest thanks for the generous assistance given, for indeed the success of the bazaar was mainly due to the generosity of the Gisborne parishioners. The indefatigable efforts of our worthy pastor to promote the welfare of the Church in his extremely large parish always commands success.

Tolaga Bay

(From an occasional correspondent.)

For months past the principal topic of conversation in Tolaga Bay was the Catholic Church bazaar, which was organised for the purpose of procuring funds for the liquidation of the debt on the recently acquired church site. Interest in the event culminated on New Year's Eve, when fully 400 people attended the opening ceremony. A brilliant scene was presented when the bazaar was in full swing, the like of which was certainly never seen before in Tolaga Bay. Great taste was displayed in the arrangement of the interior of the hall.

At the opening ceremony the Rev. Father Lane, of Gisborne, expressed his pleasure at seeing so large an attendance. All moneys, he stated, derived from the bazaar would be expended on the requirements of the Catholic church in Tolaga Bay. They were therefore assisting local enterprise by their presence that evening. It was generally admitted that a parish without a debt was in a more or less stagnant state. Such a state would not befall Tolaga Bay, as the question of erecting a new church would present itself for consideration as soon as the present debt was removed. He cordially thanked all who had worked so willingly and well in organising the bazaar, and also the large number of people who had contributed so generously to the stalls. He then called on Mr. W. E. Holder to open the bazaar.

Mr. Holder, who was received with applause, said he was delighted to see such interest in so good a cause. It was pleasing to notice among the large crowd representatives of almost every denomination. It spoke well for the good feeling that existed in the township. He referred appreciatively to the splendid display made by the various stalls, and said that such a display was never before seen in Tolaga Bay. He then amidst much applause declared the bazaar open.

The Hauti Brass Band played a number of lively airs in front of the hall prior to the opening ceremony. A party of thirteen experienced workers came up from Gisborne for the occasion. During the evening some most attractive fancy dances were done by Misses Hunt (2), Newey (2), and Freda Pistor, of Gisborne.

The various stalls were presided over by the following:—

Dominion Stall.—Mesdames Delany, Guthrie, Larmer, J. C. Hale, Misses Hale and Lynch.

England.—Mesdames C. E. Smith and D. J. Parker, Misses Moore, Lincoln, Hamill, and Dunphy.

Soft drinks.—Messrs. Grant, Evans, and Dunphy.

Christmas tree.—Misses Evans and Dixon.

Fish pond.—Mrs. Evans.

Produce Stall.—Messrs. J. Hart and E. Kelly.

The joint secretaries, Messrs. V. J. Delany and J. P. Guthrie, had all the arrangements running like clockwork, and proved themselves thoroughly competent organisers. Mr. D. J. Parker, of Gisborne, also gave very valuable assistance. The gross takings amounted to over £350—a brilliant result for a town of the size of Tolaga Bay.

During the year 1912, eleven students from St. Joseph's College, Hunter's Hill, passed the Junior Public Examination; five the senior, all the latter obtaining the Higher Matriculation passes, including three M.E.; and three passed the Law Matriculation.