

N.Z. CATHOLIC FEDERATION

CHRISTCHURCH DIOCESAN COUNCIL.

PUBLIC MEETING AT TEMUKA.

On Wednesday evening, the 21st ult., a public meeting was held in the Dominion Theatre, Temuka, under the auspices of the New Zealand Catholic Federation, the theatre being crowded. The *Temuka Leader* reports:—

His Lordship Bishop Brodie was to have presided, but was unable to be present, and the Very Rev. Dr. Kennedy, Adm., Christchurch, did so. Addresses were delivered by the chairman, the Very Rev. Father Coffey, Diocesan Administrator, Dunedin, and Messrs. J. R. and W. Hayward, Christchurch. Several musical items and a recitation were interspersed with the speeches.

The chairman (Very Rev. Dr. Kennedy) said in addition to apologies from several of the delegates, who were unable to be present, he had to apologise for the absence of the Bishop, whose pressing duties detained him in Christchurch. His Lordship was the organiser of the public meetings held in connection with their yearly and half-yearly business meetings, considering them a powerful means of removing misunderstandings and mistrust. The aim of the Catholic Federation was simply the exercise of the right of self-protection, and surely no one would begrudge them it. They wished to give the greatest amount of publicity to the people regarding their claims and objects. The chairman then briefly touched on the topics to be dealt with by the other speakers, and said he believed the meeting would achieve important results, which would not be confined to this district, or the assembly he was addressing. In this favored district all denominations were closely associated with their Catholic neighbors, whose co-operation in all good works must have called forth their admiration. Much of the good feeling was due to the devoted work of Father Kerley, and he would be the first to admit that he had only carried on in accordance with the traditions set by the late Father Fauvel. The chairman then went on to speak on the subject of Catholic schools, in relation to the State system. The maintenance of their schools was a matter that entailed the greatest anxiety, and the work of the Federation was to lighten the work of the pastors, and they did well to concentrate upon the subject, for it was the duty of Catholics in these times to support their schools with all their power. Their school system was a voluntary one, and it called out the full responsibilities of parents and Catholics. Catholics must be prepared to defend their school system, for, being in such a minority, it was a great responsibility. It would be useful therefore to recapitulate some of the main principles on which the school system was built. They were mainly religious. The word educate meant to develop the whole of the faculties of the human being, and to do so they must begin in childhood. No one believed that education was simply the storing up of knowledge. There was no school system that was truly secular, and God forbid that there should be. Education was therefore the development of all the faculties, and there was where the Catholic Church came in. The Catholic must dedicate his whole life to his Creator. Whatever you do do it for the glory of God. Knowledge was the not all in all of life. The Sermon on the Mount warned them against over solicitude for the perishable things of life, and the Catholic Church looked to the spiritual as well as to the material side of education. Science was the servant of humanity. The Catholic Church does not limit her efforts to primary schools, they aim at giving higher education, and in all her activities to promote and protect the religion of the Church. Catholics could not countenance a system that dissociated religion from education. What did ancient and contemporary history teach? What was corruption in Government and decadence in the morals to be attributed to but false systems of education. It had been pointed out that there were greater dangers in a young democracy such as ours than in older countries. Here the ballot box decided everything, and therefore how careful should be the man when casting his vote. There was no doubt that education failed at times, even when supported by religion. Parents had from God and nature the duty to educate their children according to their conscientious beliefs. In New Zealand the State recognises this right, but by some of its actions it seemed as if in its heart it would like to kill it if it could. Catholics do not deny the rights of the State within its own province. They would rather be prepared to admit that these should be enlarged. But they held that the public school system was unjust, because it was only sectional—because it was sectarian. Let non-Catholics put themselves in Catholics' places, would they submit to the treatment to which Cath-

olics were treated? If they were true to themselves they would not. Catholic duty was clear, and as far as they were concerned the struggle was over. Their schools would remain open. As long as there were Catholics they would have Catholic schools. As a New Zealander he was proud of his country, and with all her faults he loved her. If a substantial State grant was to be made to Catholic schools to-morrow, it would not bring into existence one new school in New Zealand—and he believed the same could be said in Australia—the reason being that wherever a Catholic school was required one had already been erected through the loyalty, devotion, and self-sacrifice of Catholic parents. The speaker referred to the silence observed in Parliament regarding this most important subject. Parliament observed a benignant neutrality, but Catholics had chosen the better part which shall not be taken from them. (Applause.)

Mr. J. R. Hayward spoke on the subject of "The Maintenance of Catholic Schools," dealing with it under three headings: efficiency, economy, and justice. Catholics contended that their system was more efficient than the State system, inasmuch as it was founded on religion, and no country could be great without religion. Catholics were only one-seventh of the population, yet they had spent over a million of money on their schools. They owed a deep debt of gratitude to their brothers and sisters who taught in their schools. They were deeply indebted to the Marist Fathers. In a few days they would open a college at St. Bede's, Christchurch, which had cost £20,000, and would give Catholic boys the opportunity to get the highest education in their own schools. The Catholic Federation could be proud of having established several scholarships, and this year two of the winners of their scholarships would be admitted at St. Bede's College. Two new Catholic primary schools were shortly to be opened in Christchurch. It had been proved that denominational education cost less than State education, and from an economic point of view it would be well to adopt it. Then in regard to justice, Catholics had had to contribute £290,000 last year to the State school system, and at the same time educate their own children. Was that just? As Catholics paid the same rates and taxes as everyone else they should be entitled to the same privileges. The Government provided for the medical and dental examination of children attending State schools, and he contended that children attending Catholic schools were entitled to the same benefits. They paid their share of the cost. Yet some would take away even the few privileges they now possessed. It was very different in Scotland, where their schools received the same treatment as others. They had a great and noble cause to fight for, and would go on fighting until they got justice. (Applause.)

Very Rev. Father J. Coffey, Adm., Dunedin, speaking on Catholic Charitable Institutions in relation to the State, said:—

Many men are apt to ask nowadays, "Am I my brother's keeper?" For us Catholics there is only one answer to this question. We are our brothers' keepers. Our loving Master and gentle Saviour told His Apostles to suffer the little children to come to Him. The Apostles, with a burning zeal for the lambs and sheep of Christ's flock, made the care of the poor and the needy their first care. And so that this work may not impede them in their mission of preaching and teaching in different countries and different peoples, they appointed Deacons in the various churches in which they taught, whose special duty it was to look after and provide for the widows and the orphans. And as the Church came down the ages keeping close by the running brook of Christ's love, her grandest and noblest and proudest boast were her works of charity. This was the mark to which she could always point to indicate that she was the true Church. In her orphanages and hospitals she placed all her treasures. St. Lawrence was only one out of thousands of her saintly children, who, if asked by the rulers of this world of darkness, to hand up her great treasures, could produce at a moment's notice, the poor, the feeble, the lame, the blind, the orphan, and pointing to them with Christian pride, say these are the richest treasures of the Church. The work first taken up by the Apostles was passed on by them to the Deacons, and in course of time it became the special care of the religious Orders in the Church. Prominent amongst them were the Benedictines, the Cistercians, the Dominicans, and the Franciscans. Later on these different Orders attached to themselves members of the third Orders, composed chiefly of lay persons working in conjunction with the monastery. Then came the great lay associations, chief amongst them being those founded by St. Vincent de Paul in 1633. This Saint of God whose name is a household word wherever Christian charity lives to-day, was one day going through the streets of Paris where he came upon an old criminal beggar naming a small boy that he might be more useful to him in exciting