

Waiapu Church Gazette

FEBRUARY, 1940.

GENERAL SYNOD

For the first time since 1913 General Synod will meet in Nelson, this month. This has been an unusually long interval, for as a rule the Synod visits all the Dioceses in rotation, but it has chanced that Nelson missed its turn some time ago.

It is curious to look back at the changes that have taken place in the Church in the last twenty-seven years. The whole of the Episcopal bench has changed, in some cases two or three times over. The present Archbishop was there as Bishop of Waiapu, and the junior bishop of the bench. Bishop Sprott still lives in retirement, but all the other Bishops of 1913 have passed out of this life. This diocese was represented by Archdeacons Chatterton, Ruddock and Herbert Williams of the clergy, Messrs Andrews, Fielder, Sheath, and Tanner of the laity. All are gone, and there will not be six members of the 1913 Synod present this year at Nelson.

Normally General Synod meets once in three years and most people think that enough, though three years ago at Hamilton some enthusiastic spirits suggested an annual meeting, though others shuddered and thought once in ten years would be more than sufficient. There is usually a fair but not an enormous amount of business to be done. Of course a great deal of time is wasted, but that is the common fault of all deliberative and legislative assemblies, not by any means excepting parliament.

The appointment of a new Primate is one thing to be done at this Synod, and it is curious that the retiring Archbishop will be at the opening, though of course he can have no part in the election of his successor. The

manner of it is this. When General Synod decides to proceed to an election, the Bishops, meeting privately, elect by ballot one of their own number. The name is then communicated to the clerical and lay members sitting in separate chambers with closed doors. If both chambers, voting by ballot, confirm the choice of the Bishops, then that bishop becomes Primate. If there is no agreement, the whole procedure is repeated, and if that too fails, then the Senior Bishop becomes acting-Primate. It would be interesting but futile to speculate on the result on this occasion.

There are five possible choices, as two sees are vacant (Auckland and Nelson). But there is a further complication this time, because it is most probable that before the election the question of making the Primacy fixed to a certain see will come up for settlement. Wellington seems the obvious choice if one is to be made at all. There was much agitation on the subject about twenty years ago, but the proposal collapsed because no one could see how to safeguard the interests of both the Province of New Zealand and the Diocese of Wellington. And, be it whispered, jealousies between the different cities were not yet dead.

In most countries the Primacy is fixed, in England, Canterbury and York; in Ireland, Armagh and Dublin; in Australia, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. But it is not always the case. That very vigorous little body, the Episcopal Church of Scotland has no Archbishop, but one of the Bishops, who may belong to any see, is chosen to be Primus. The provinces of the West Indies follow the same plan as New Zealand.

Our own way works well enough, and it is not easy to see very much gain in making a change. It has been suggested that the Church is lacking in leadership, but it is hard to see that there would be any better leadership necessarily from an Archbishop fixed in Wellington than from an Archbishop who may be in Napier or Dunedin or elsewhere.

Perhaps the real need of the Church is not so much leadership as (to coin a word) followership. How many people are ready to follow a lead when they get it? And to ask another question, how many readers of this article could name the representatives of this Diocese at the coming General Synod?

Calendar for February

- 2nd. (Fri.).—Purification of the B.V.M.
 4th.—Quinquagesima.
 7th (Wed.).—Ash Wednesday, first day of Lent.
 11th.—First Sunday in Lent.
 14th (Wed.).—Ember Day.
 16th (Fri.).—Ember Day.
 17th (Sat.).—Ember Day.
 18th.—Second Sunday in Lent.
 24th (Sat.).—St. Matthias, A.M.
 25th.—Third Sunday in Lent.

The Way to a Right Peace

The Church must keep the Christian faith ready for when peace comes and to see that any new order rests upon the natural law and divine revelation. In his Encyclical just issued His Holiness the Pope said: "To hope for a decisive change exclusively from the shock of war and its final issue is idle as experience shows. The hour of victory is an hour of external triumph for the victor; but it is equally an hour of temptation . . . There is danger lest settlements, decisions born under such conditions be nothing else than injustice under the cloak of justice. The new order of the world must rest, not on the quicksands of ephemeral standards dependent on the selfish interests of groups and individuals, but on the unshakable foundation of natural law and divine revelation."