

Address by the Bishop.

Address by the Bishop of Waiapu at the Hui-Topu held at Manutuke on Sunday, 10th April, 1921:—

I welcome you in Christ's name to this Conference. Since our last Hui-Topu there have passed away from among us the Rev. Walter Kopae, the Rev. Nepia Hotene, the Rev. Turuturu Ngaki, the Rev. Ratema Te Awekotuku, and the Rev. Henare Te Wainohu Wepiha.

The Rev. Walter Kopae, after being trained at Te Rau College, was sent to Nuhaka. There he did a wonderful work during the short time he was permitted to minister there, winning all by his strong personality and character. He realised the need of winning the children to Christ and gathered them whenever and wherever it was possible.

The Rev. Turuturu Ngaki was also trained at Te Rau College, and served the whole period of his ministry in the Bay of Plenty. His quiet, humble, and consistent Christian life won the respect of all who knew him.

The Rev. Nepia Hotene went from Te Rau as assistant curate and was only there a year or so when he was overtaken with illness. He was a quiet and reserved man and had scarcely time to make himself known to the people.

The Rev. Ratema Te Awekotuku came as a student to Te Rau College as an elderly man. As a student he made an historical visit to the Uruwera Country and was one of the first clergymen to penetrate the Uruwera Country since the early days of the Mission. After finishing his College career he was stationed at Whakatane with Turuturu. Later on he was transferred to the Hot Lakes District, where he remained till his death. During the period of the war, when there was a shortage of clergy, though retired he again did more active work, and his ministrations were much appreciated by those to whom he ministered. He was a man of calm, strong faith.

The Rev. Henare Te Wainohu Wepiha was a man the Diocese, especially at this juncture, can ill afford to lose. You all know how he volunteered as Chaplain to the Maori Battalion when the war broke out, and how he won the respect and confidence of all with whom he served. It was with his own men that he shone conspicuously. He was their courageous leader, their counsellor, their companion and friend, above all he was their father in God. On many of his men he made a vivid and enduring impression by his spirituality, coupled with a strong personality. He gained material honors for valiant service in the field. He

has now passed into Paradise, there to await his reward as a good and valiant soldier of Jesus Christ.

It is my intention to hold these triennial conferences at Manutuke as was originally intended.

This Conference was due to be held last year, but was postponed owing to my absence in England for the Lambeth Conference.

The Lambeth Conference of 1920 was the largest held at Lambeth since its inception. It was attended by 254 Bishops. It dealt with some of the most pressing questions that confront Christendom. The most important of the subjects was that dealing with "The Unity of the Churches." It is our intention to consider this subject either before or after the next session of our Diocesan Synod. I will not, therefore, say anything about it now, save to commend it earnestly to your thoughts and prayers.

There are other matters of local interest as well as of importance, claiming our serious attention to-day.

FINANCE.

I regret that I have again to place Finance in a prominent place at this Conference. I had hoped that the various Native Pastorates would have so responded to what is their clear duty that this would have been unnecessary. I regret to say that it is as necessary as ever. The response for the year ending March 31st, 1920, was wholly inadequate. There were some bright exceptions, e.g., Mohaka £115 and Wairoa £60, but the long established Pastorates of Turanga, Whangara, Tokomaru Bay, Hikurangi, Wawakawa, appear in the Year Book of 1920 as not having raised a single penny towards the stipend of their Minister. I believe one or two of the Pastorates sent in their contributions after the books were closed. But the fact remains—the amount contributed was wholly inadequate. The position to-day is a very serious one and unless the Church people of the various Pastorates awake to their sense of duty and responsibility, the position will be more serious still during the coming year. I view the position with very grave concern.

It is a most distressing state of things when a pastorate raises its full quota one year, causing one to hope that a new day has dawned, and then it drops away to contributing nothing the next year. Such fitful giving is unworthy of the Church of which we are members. I would again plead that each adult church member should set apart a proportion of his income for God and his Church, and that proportion should be a tenth. Only when we come to some such principle of giving, can the Church go forward in her work.

ENDOWMENTS.

There is, I am glad to report, a brighter side to this finance question. There are several Native Pastorates in the Diocese which are increasing their existing endowments, Porangahau, Te Hauke, Paki Paki, Kohupatiki, Nuhaka, Moteo, Omahu, Wai-pawa, and Te Kaha having raised considerable sums. I would like to express, on behalf of the Diocese, our sincere appreciation of this effort, and I would commend this effort to increase the endowment fund, to every native pastorate in the Diocese.

It is a solution, and I believe the best solution of the financial problem.

THE DRINK QUESTION.

This question must still exercise the minds of those who have the physical, moral, and spiritual welfare of our Maoris at heart. There has been some improvement, e.g., on the East Coast. But this improvement is merely local, dependent upon prevailing conditions. A better stamp of policeman who tries to do his duty, or of hotel proprietors, has meant some improvement, but still a large amount of liquor is consumed by natives in the dry area, and also off the premises in non-prohibited areas. This is often obtained through the medium of the pakeha, but in many cases it is obtained direct from the hotel proprietor. So that in cases where the proprietor is indifferent to the law, and bent upon his own selfish ends, drink has been on the increase, with its attendant results.

There are hotels on the East Coast and these in the dry area, which could not exist for six months, without Maori support. The Licensing Committee know this and the police know it, and the public generally know it; yet these hotels are permitted. The law as it stands is a farce.

While dealing with this, I must refer to the amount of drinking that goes on at tangis. In many quarters this evil is on the increase. Now it will be remembered that we have more than once approached the Government asking that the law shall be altered, making it culpable not only to the pakeha to give, or sell, liquor for the pakeha to give, or sell, liquor the premises in non-prohibited areas, but also that it shall be made an offence for any Maori to have it in his possession.

Until this is done, the policeman, however vigilant or zealous he may be in the execution of his duties, will fail to get convictions. I would, therefore, urge this conference to deal with this subject to-day, and to take such steps as it may think best to bring about this change in the law.