

CATHOLIC UNION OF GREAT BRITAIN

ANNUAL MEETING.

The Annual General Meeting of the members of the Catholic Union of Great Britain was held in the Hall, 114, Mount Street, W., on Tuesday, 14th July, 1925, the President, Viscount FitzAlan, K.G., being in the chair. Among those present were the Earl of Denbigh, C.V.O., the Earl of Kenmare, C.V.O., Viscount Campden, O.B.E., Major General Sir Cecil Pereira, K.C.B., C.M.G., Sir Stuart Coats, Bt., K.C.S.G., Sir Patrick Quinn, M.V.O., Sir Edward Brockman, K.C.M.G., Sir Walter Townley, K.C.M.G., Sir Gerald Strickland, G.C.M.G., Colonel Sir Arthur Dick, K.B.E., Major C. J. Vaughan of Courtfield, Major Raphael Jackson, Rear-Admiral Segrave, C.B., Mr. A. D. Leonard, Mr. J. Mulhall, and Mr. J. S. Franey, Secretary. Letters regretting inability to be present were received from Admiral of the Fleet Lord Walter Kerr, G.C.B., the Lord Mayor of London, the Lord Mayor of Newcastle-on-Tyne, General Sir George MacDonogh, G.B.E., Sir Charles Wolseley, Bt., His Honour Judge Parfitt, K.C., Captain Rushbrooke, Mr. H. Norman, C.B., Colonel Bowring, Mr. Tatton Bower, and Mr. E. Tylee.

CATHOLIC DISABILITIES.

In moving the adoption of the annual report the President said there were one or two points to which he would like to call attention, especially in reference to the Bill that Mr. Francis Blundell, a member of the Council of the Union, was endeavouring to get through the House of Commons for removal of the remaining Catholic disabilities. For some years it had been a question whether they should endeavour to abolish some of the existing legal disabilities with reference to Catholics or leave the matter alone. Many thought these were an interesting survival of a historic past and did no harm, although one never knew what might happen. Curiously enough, quite lately an incident had occurred which brought home the importance of doing away with these disabilities. He referred to the case mentioned in the report whereby the relief from income tax granted to charities by the Finance Act of 1921 would have been applicable were it not for the fact of the existing law against Catholics. [By Section 30 of the Act the inconvenience of charitable institutions having to lease their property in order to obtain the exemption from property tax was got rid of, and that exemption was extended to property actually used by such institutions for carrying on their charitable work. Relying on this change in the law the Fathers of a well-known Religious Order had claimed repayment of the tax assessed in respect of buildings used by them for carrying on the work of their schools. The Inland Revenue Authorities, while admitting that the law would hold the work to be charitable, refused to refund the tax on the ground that the Order is an unlawful association.] If they could get the Catholic Relief Bill passed into law that disability would be removed. They were all sorry that Mr. Blundell was not able to be present, but they wished him "God-speed," and thanked him for the efforts he was making with regard to the Bill.

OTHER BILLS.

The Guardianship of Infants Bill had not yet passed through both Houses. Whether it would affect Catholics very much one way or the other was open to argument. Then there was the Legitimacy Bill, which had yet to come before the House of Commons, but there was some doubt as to whether it would reach that House in time to be dealt with during the present session. They tried to get it amended last year in the House of

Lords but were not successful, otherwise they would have been able to bring the Bill into line with the Canon law. On the Summary Jurisdiction Bill there was a division of opinion among Catholics as to whether it was advisable to try and get it amended or not. The Council came to the conclusion that it was better to leave it alone and not ask for the suggested amendment. It would have had the effect of making separation between husband and wife much easier and quicker than it was capable of being made now, and they thought, in the interest of Catholics, that was not always advisable. It was just as well that if there were a difference the husband and wife should have time to consider it and not act on the impulse of the moment. He hoped they would approve of the action of the Council in that matter.

They would remember, the President continued, that Father Waterkyn kindly gave them an address on a scheme for procuring funds for the maintenance of the Holy See, and since then the Cardinal Archbishop had organised a committee to go into the question. In one or two cases as regards orphan children the Council had taken successful action. There was one in which the judge not only insisted on the children being sent to a Catholic school, but was also taking steps to watch that the religious progress of the children was satisfactory to the Catholic rector of the parish. Then there was the curious case of a lady detained on mental grounds in a home, though she was well enough to realise that her son was in danger. He was in charge of a lady who took to practising Christian Science, with the result that they found that the boy was being brought up in that faith ; they had been able to take certain action, and the Master in Lunacy had ordered the boy to be sent to a Catholic preparatory school.

There were some questions in regard to foreign legislation which might be serious if it so happened that foreigners were trustees of Catholic institutions in England.

After a reference to the coming Boy Scouts' pilgrimage to Rome, in aid of which the Union had received 12 in response to its circular, Lord FitzAlan introduced the Right Rev. Mgr. Mann, D.D., who addressed the meeting on the work of the Beda College in Rome, outlining its history and describing its work. A vote of thanks was accorded to Mgr. Mann, on the motion of the Earl of Denbigh, seconded by Colonel Sir Arthur Dick.