

The 'Battle of the Borough' and the 'Saige O Timaru':

SECTARIAN RIOT IN COLONIAL CANTERBURY



ON BOXING DAY 1879 Canterbury Orangemen attempted their first public processions in the province's two main centres.¹ In Christchurch they marched under the auspices of the Protestant Alliance Friendly Society of Australasia, while in Timaru Loyal Orange Lodge No. 13 marched with the Foresters and Oddfellows in an annual procession of Friendly Societies. Both marches were advertised in the days before Christmas. Catholic reaction in Timaru was immediate and the head of the local police force, Inspector Peter Pender, himself an Irish Catholic, became aware on 23 December that any Orange march in that town would be opposed. No such opposition was anticipated in Christchurch, where the Catholics of the city planned their own march on Boxing Day, en route to the Catholic schools' annual picnic. By 26 December rumours of impending confrontation in Timaru were widespread and the *Timaru Herald* expressed its hope that the Orangemen would give up their undoubted right to march, since such a 'challenge' was out of place and 'calculated to give offence to a section of the community'.² Meanwhile Inspector Pender, Resident Magistrate Beetham and the mayor had all been active in preparing for any eventuality. By 1 a.m. in the morning of 26 December it was clear that there would be a confrontation, and a telegram was despatched to Christchurch for police reinforcements, while all police in the Timaru district were ordered to town. In the morning the RM and the mayor went to the Orange lodge room and sought unsuccessfully to dissuade the men from marching. The only concession the Orangemen would make was to leave off their regalia until the procession proper began.³

At 10 a.m. some 40 Orangemen set off from the Rechabites Hall in Russell Square and marched the short distance to the Foresters Hall in George Street to

1 The Christchurch Orangemen had, in fact, marched in procession to a service at St Andrews Presbyterian church in July 1879 but this was not an Orange parade proper and was only publicly noted after the event. *Christchurch Press* (Pr), 14 July 1879.

2 *Timaru Herald* (TH), 26 December 1879.

3 This account of the events in Timaru and Christchurch is drawn from newspaper reports (TH, Pr, *Lyttelton Times* (LT), *Otago Witness* (OW), *Saturday Advertiser and Public Opinion* (SA), *Cromwell Argus* (CA)), evidence presented to the courts (as reported in the press), and official police material in P Series 1, 4, 5, National Archives (NA), Wellington, and AG 168 2/1, Hocken Library, Dunedin.

join the procession. Simultaneously a detective, strategically placed between the two, observed some 80 men leaving Thomas O'Driscoll's Hibernian Hotel for the same destination. While the Orangemen formed up behind the Oddfellows and the Foresters and began to put on the regalia of their Order, the Hibernian crowd, which by then numbered some 150 men, surrounded them shouting that they would not let them march 'with their colours'. Inspector Pender on horseback, the RM and other Timaru police on foot got between the two groups and attempted to persuade the Hibernians to let the Orangemen march. This had no effect and they kept shouting and pushing forward. At this point Inspector Hickson and 19 men arrived from Christchurch by special train. Any relief for the embattled forces of law was short-lived, however, as some 100-150 Hibernian reinforcements arrived on the train from Waimate at the same time. The Foresters set off in procession with the Orangemen at the rear and police efforts to hold back the crowd were unsuccessful. The Hibernians broke the police line and surged into the Orangemen cutting them off from the rest of the procession, which went on its way unmolested. For a few minutes there was a confused mêlée but no blows were struck and only one Orange scarf was torn off. Most of the Orangemen then retreated into the Foresters Hall. One or two drew their swords but were advised by Pender to put them away and did so. The Resident Magistrate read the 'Riot Act'. This made no impression on the Hibernians and the stand-off continued until the Orangemen decided that they could not march and divested themselves of the 'colours' which were the object of the opposition.

The authorities decided against attempting any arrests on the spot and drew off toward the police station followed by the Catholic party, which then formed a loose procession of its own and marched in triumph along the main street. This drew to a close the first phase of the 'Saige O Timaru'.⁴ Most of the Catholics involved had come in from the country districts around Waimate and Temuka and they returned to their homes by the afternoon and evening trains.⁵ But the Orangemen were not expected to take the loss of their procession lightly and both sides were soon protesting their intentions to roll up reinforcements for New Year's Day. Timaru was in a state of siege in the colony's most serious sectarian confrontation since the 1868 'Fenian' scare on the West Coast. The official response reflected the seriousness of the situation.⁶ Police reinforcements were requested from Dunedin and Oamaru and these, with special constables sworn in during the day, brought the total police force in the town to over 70 by the night of 26 December.⁷ The commander of the South Island constabulary, T.K. Weldon, came with the men from Dunedin to take command himself and remained in Timaru until 3 January, maintaining regular telegraphic communication with the Commissioner, Colonel Reader, in Wellington. The Volunteers were also called out and maintained a nightly guard for the next week. A

4 This sobriquet was bestowed by the poet Thomas Bracken as the title of his satirical record of the Timaru disturbance, first published under his pen name 'Paddy Murphy' in SA, 3 January 1880.

5 LT, 27 December 1879.

6 Superintendent Weldon to Commissioner Reader, 5 January 1880, P 1 1880/84, NA.

7 The population of Timaru borough had been recorded as 3389 in March 1878. *Census of New Zealand 1878*, table vii.

detachment of the Armed Constabulary was reluctantly sent down from Wellington at the insistence of local magistrates and for New Year's Day 300 special constables were sworn in. The police were armed with snider rifles and the specials with batons. Fears were held, according to the police report, that since 'both parties were supposed to be mustering all the available men they could, [and] arms and ammunition were called into requisition by the contending parties . . . an affray or riot of no ordinary kind was fully anticipated'.⁸

Christchurch also witnessed a major sectarian confrontation, more violent than that in Timaru and with the slenderest of police resources to deal with it. The police detachment sent to Timaru from Christchurch represented a major portion of the city's constabulary.⁹ Its 6 a.m. departure by special train suggests that there was no expectation of any sort of ruckus in Christchurch. In fact, the relative police absence from the city may well have set the scene for it. The route from the police depot to the railway station led along High Street and past the Borough Hotel. This was an Irish hotel which provided accommodation for some 30 labourers, many of whom worked for the publican, John Barrett, who had an extensive contracting operation. A fortnight before Christmas Barrett began two shifts around the clock on his contract to lay the first tram lines in Christchurch and these men were working from the hotel and living on the premises. Over Christmas their numbers at Barrett's, and similar establishments in the city, were swelled by labourers from the countryside who came to town for the holiday. In 1879 this included a particularly large group of navvies from the railway extension at Waipara.¹⁰ The police party's dawn departure for the south was certainly noted by those who subsequently ambushed the Orange procession.¹¹

At 9 a.m. 98 Protestant Alliance and Orangemen set off in procession from the Orange Hall in Worcester Street in full regalia, with banners and a band. Rather incautiously their processional route to the railway station also led them past the Borough Hotel. As soon as the band had gone past the hotel about 30 men, armed with pick handles, surged out of the yard behind the hotel and launched a violent attack on the Orangemen. The Orange banner was seized and carried off. There seem to have been two 'rows', with a slight lull between them, the whole attack taking about a quarter of an hour. Inspector Broham and a couple of policemen were on the scene fairly quickly as the police depot was not far away, but they were too few to have much effect and came under attack themselves. The Inspector then sent for Father Ginaty and the priest succeeded in drawing a

8 Weldon to Reader, 5 January 1880, P 1 1880/84, NA.

9 There were 39 policemen of all ranks at the Christchurch station with a further eight constables in the suburbs. *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* (AJHR), 1880, H-10, p.16. Those remaining in Christchurch on 26 December were, moreover, the 'sick leave' men, LT, 27 December 1879.

10 The activities of the Waipara navvies had attracted attention from press correspondents earlier in the year (Pr, 7 July 1879) and their arrival in numbers in the city for the holiday break was noted with a hint of trepidation. Pr, 24 December 1879.

11 One of the rioters was heard to encourage the others that there were 'no bobbies in town'. LT, 27 December 1879.

portion of the riot group off toward the Catholic church. The others withdrew into the yard behind the hotel, still clutching their pick handles.¹²

The Orangemen did not attempt to reform their procession but continued on to the railway station and at 11 a.m. took the train to Prebbleton for their picnic, as planned. Five of their number were taken to the hospital with injuries and as news of the attack spread through the city it was rumoured that one man at least had been killed. This was not true but the Borough began to attract a hostile crowd. The situation was potentially explosive and the city authorities swung into action to meet an unprecedented threat to public order in Christchurch. Barrett was instructed to close his hotel at 2 p.m. and 250 special constables were sworn in by the mayor and deployed alongside the available policemen outside the Borough. In the early evening the Orangemen returned from Prebbleton and marched back to the scene of the attack carrying their banner and with swords drawn. They stopped outside the hotel, shook their flag and shouted defiance, and a huge crowd of onlookers cheered enthusiastically. As darkness fell the crowd swelled even further to some 3-4000 and stones began to rain down on the hotel. The police and specials managed to apprehend half a dozen stone throwers but into the night the sound of smashing glass was greeted with loud cheering by the crowd. The next day was Saturday and the scene outside the hotel was again the most popular entertainment in Christchurch. A crowd began to form early in the day and remained into the night, and it was not until Sunday that the town began to return to normal. The specials were finally dismissed at 10 p.m. on Sunday night.

Such was Boxing Day 1879 in Canterbury: two Orange processions, two Catholic parties in opposition. The 'riots' so-called have attracted relatively little attention from historians.¹³ Where they have been discussed the events in Timaru and Christchurch have been lumped together without qualification, as they were by newsmen in 1879. It seemed inconceivable to most contemporaries that simultaneous attacks on Orange processions in the two principal towns of the province could be anything but concerted and co-ordinated. In fact the attacks were quite autonomous reactions to the processions and were markedly different in all but the common antagonism to the symbols of Orangeism. The two incidents will therefore be analysed separately, and with a particular focus on the rioters themselves, to offer some insights into both the dynamics of sectarian tension and the Irish sub-cultures of colonial Canterbury.

To look first at the Christchurch situation. The attack in Christchurch was sudden, brutal and quickly over. The rioters were denounced vehemently by the local priest from the pulpit and in the press he distanced the 'miserable few'

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ R.P. Davis, *Irish Issues in New Zealand Politics, 1868-1922*, Dunedin, 1974, pp.57-62; Michael O'Meehan S.M., *Held Firm by Faith: A History of the Catholic Diocese of Christchurch 1840-1987*, Christchurch, 1988, pp.135-9; R.S.Hill, *The Colonial Frontier Tamed: New Zealand Policing in Transition 1867-1886*, Wellington, 1989, pp.340-1. D.H. Akenson's recent book on the New Zealand Irish offers no comment on sectarian conflict: *Half the World From Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand 1860-1950*, Wellington, 1990.

responsible from the Catholic body as a whole.¹⁴ Respectable Catholics in Christchurch had nothing to do with the affair, were indeed on parade themselves on Boxing Day at the annual Catholic schools picnic attended by 700 children and as many parents and friends. It was the low Irish denizens of the Borough Hotel and, at one remove, their patron John Barrett, who were the villains of the piece. Four of the attackers were arrested for 'riot and assault' on 26 December, another was picked up at Lyttelton the next day, and then on Saturday two detectives worked their way through the Borough residents arresting a further eight who seemed likely participants. Some 50 witnesses came forward in response to a police notice to provide identification of these men. Further arrests followed until 18 alleged rioters were in custody and on 31 December John Barrett, the publican of the Borough Hotel, was arrested for aiding and abetting the rioters. This arrest caused a sensation and followed rumours of Barrett's involvement with the incidents on the West Coast a decade earlier. On 2 January the cases were heard at the district court and charges were dismissed against five of the accused for lack of evidence or because of alibis. The charge against Barrett was also dropped. There were 30 prosecution witnesses, 20 of whom were Protestant Alliance or Orangemen who had been in the procession. The case was then heard in the Supreme Court on 12 January. Four of the rioters provided no defence whatsoever, while only one of the others was able to muster alibi witnesses who had any credibility before the court. The others mustered a sorry array of their fellows to testify on their behalf, many of them Borough residents who were highly suspect as probable participants in the riot themselves. The end result was in little doubt and 11 of the 12 were convicted. Four were judged especially active in the attack and given 18 months with hard labour, the rest 12 months with hard labour.¹⁵

These men were unknown to the police. They had no previous convictions and after serving part of their sentences they were released for good behaviour.¹⁶ Their subsequent fate is unknown, but they do not appear to have lingered in Canterbury after their release.¹⁷ Their basic details are recorded in police registers; they were mostly young, seemingly unattached, labouring Irishmen.¹⁸ They are remarkable chiefly for their apparent sectarian loyalty. Undoubtedly marginal figures in colonial Catholic society, they protested nonetheless an enduring loyalty to the Catholic church as the focus and symbol of an Irish identity.¹⁹ Patronage of Irish hotels and a violent reaction to insults, real or imagined, are indicators of the psychological support that many Irish emigrants

14 Pr, 27 December 1879.

15 Pr, 14 January 1880.

16 *ibid*, and *New Zealand Tablet* (T), 1, 8 October 1880.

17 Details of the convicted men provided in the fortnightly returns of prisoners released from gaol (*New Zealand Police Gazette* (NZPG), 6 October, 17 November 1880) are sufficient to make an identification of the men possible. Only one was positively traced in biographical sources, however; Thomas Magner who committed suicide in Christchurch 16 months later.

18 *ibid*.

19 For a useful discussion of this phenomenon see W.J. Lowe, 'The Lancashire Irish and the Catholic church 1846-71: the social dimension', *Irish Historical Studies*, XX, (1976-77), pp.129-55.

derived from this identity, even if this did not always flow on to active religious practice. There are a number of examples of collective disorder along the sectarian divide in colonial New Zealand, but it is the relative absence of such disorder that has been more commonly noted. This may reflect more on the paucity of the historical record than has been realized. Incidents such as the Boxing Day riots, or the Westland 'Fenian' confrontation, represent major expressions of antipathy that demanded a state response and simply could not be ignored. The more quotidian experience of sectarian animosity is more difficult to fathom, since it is seldom reported directly. It was probably strongest at the lowest levels of colonial society, where the Catholic Irish jostled most determinedly for their slice of the antipodean pie and where, perhaps for that very reason, Orange lodges had their support base. The editors of newspapers and the writers of diaries could ignore this substratum of antagonism. There had, for instance, been a major riot threatened in Christchurch in November 1871 over a prospective Orange march. The failure of the Orangemen to appear was all that prevented a major clash. While the *Lyttelton Times* reported the incident in some detail, the *Press* referred to it obliquely in a couple of lines.²⁰ Similarly there are hints among the press reports that the Waipara navvies divided along the sectarian line and intended to carry on the 'battle of the Borough' out of public view in their camp at Amberley in 1879, but this cannot now be verified.²¹

The Christchurch jury, in passing its verdict on the rioters, also made a pointed reference to the man popularly held responsible for the riot, declaring its disapproval of the practice of men working on contract being paid at a public house. The judge added his censure to the alleged conduct of the publican Barrett. Five months later Barrett defended himself unsuccessfully against these charges before the Licensing Court and lost his licence.²² John Barrett merits closer attention. For one thing he provides an intriguing link with the events in Westland in 1868, in which he was one of seven convicted over a procession to honour the 'Manchester Martyrs'.²³ More importantly his career provides some useful insights into stratification among the Catholic community in Christchurch and the leadership role of a small educated élite who were Christchurch's 'lace curtain Catholics'.²⁴ Barrett was a Roscommon man who began his colonial

20 OW, 18 November 1871; Pr, 6 November 1871.

21 Pr, 1 January 1880. A connection with the Waipara navvies was also implied in cross-examination of witnesses at the Supreme Court hearing, LT, 13 January 1880.

22 Pr, 16 June 1880.

23 The West Coast 'Fenian' scare has been best analysed by Neil Vane, 'The Dual Tradition: Irish Catholics and French Priests in New Zealand; The West Coast Experience 1865-1910', MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1976. A popular account was published by David McGill, *The Lion and the Wolfhound: The Irish Rebellion on the New Zealand Goldfields*, Wellington, 1990; Davis, O'Meehan and Hill all examine the 1868 confrontation in some detail, the latter in his earlier police history, *Policing the Colonial Frontier: the Theory and Practice of Coercive Social and Racial Control in New Zealand 1761-1867*, Wellington, 1986.

24 This phrase is taken from B.F. Cadogan, 'Lace Curtain Catholics: The Catholic Bourgeoisie of the Diocese of Dunedin 1900-20', BA Hons thesis, University of Otago, 1984. For a discussion of Catholic leadership in Christchurch in the colonial period see B.S. Allom, 'Bishop Grimes: His Context and Contribution to the Catholic Church in Canterbury', MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1968.

career on the goldfields of Victoria. He followed the gold to Otago in 1862 and then to the West Coast in 1865 where he graduated to contracting and hotel keeping. In this he epitomizes the many Irish publicans and contractors of humble background who found relative prosperity in New Zealand. But Barrett was more ambitious than most and throughout his life sought a leadership role both in Catholic affairs and in the public sphere. Four years after his conviction for sedition in 1868 he was elected to the Hokitika Borough Council. He was also involved with the Hibernian Society from its beginnings on the Coast, treasurer of the Hokitika branch in 1873. Two years later he transferred his activities to Christchurch and soon emerged at the forefront of Catholic society there. By 1879 he was the Vice-President of the Hibernian Society in Christchurch, a leading figure in the Catholic Young Men's Club and among a select few whose names invariably appeared in any account of Catholic affairs in the city.

Barrett was the odd man out in Christchurch, however. Other Catholic leaders were from a different social level, a number of them English Catholics of some means. Not unsurprisingly, his public identification with the riots in 1879 led to his temporary eclipse: his name is notably absent from the list of leading Christchurch laymen who in 1880 proposed the establishment of a New Zealand Catholic Union to protect Catholic interests. This initiative, which apparently came to nothing, was the response of the Catholic élite to the riots and to the colonial tour of the notorious anti-Catholic lecturer Pastor Charles Chiniquy which followed.²⁵ Barrett also resigned from the Vice-Presidency of the Hibernian Society in 1880. Certainly the opprobrium of his association with the riots dogged his later efforts to seek public office in Canterbury and as late as 1889 the affair was quoted against him by other Catholic leaders. A letter, found among the papers of the Irish Nationalist leader John Dillon in Dublin, records the discomfiture of Father J.J. O'Donnell and the Christchurch Irish Delegates Reception Committee that Barrett was to host the Dillon party during their stay in Christchurch in 1889:

Now in Canterbury you could not have a worse recommendation to the general public than to be in any way identified with Mr Barrett's Hotel. A riot between Catholics & Orangemen in which I am sorry to say the Catholics were the aggressors originated in that hotel & had as it were its headquarters there. The riot has caused incalculable harm & tho' it occurred so far back as '79 has caused the Irish Catholic name to be even still somewhat under a cloud in Canterbury. The general public look on Barrett's as the headquarters of what they consider the low Irish element as contradistinguished from the Irish body generally...²⁶

25 The archives of the Catholic Diocese of Dunedin hold a copy of the printed form letter circulated by this group of influential laymen in October 1880. It proposed the formation of a New Zealand Catholic Union on the British model 'to establish some permanent and national means for protecting Catholic interests and urging Catholic claims in this Colony'. The signatories were R.J. Loughnan, W.M. Maskell, R.A. Loughnan, P. Doyle, Westby B. Perceval, A.J. White, H.H. Loughnan, Joseph B. Sheath, E. O'Connor, and Arthur Bathurst. Action on the proposed union was delayed because of Bishop Redwood's absence abroad and seems to have come to nothing. T, 3 December 1880. For Pastor Chiniquy see below and note 37.

26 Father J.J. O'Donnell to Dillon, John Dillon Papers, Trinity College Dublin, MS 6850, No 43. My thanks to Rory Sweetman for this reference.

Father O'Donnell also noted that 'no one wished to make an enemy of Mr Barrett' by opposing the proposal, but 'most of the others were much disgusted with the arrangement'.

Barrett was no doubt innocent of any direct involvement in the riot on Boxing Day and indeed he presented witnesses at the licensing hearing who attested to his efforts to dissuade the men from interfering with the procession. But his record on the Coast in 1868 suggests he was a man who was not averse to fighting talk, and bar-room bravado was obviously a major catalyst in the Christchurch riot. His remarks at the Christchurch Hibernian Society's St Patrick's Day dinner in March 1879 provide some evidence of this. 'I remember the days, gentlemen, when Irishmen were so few in number in certain places, and so oppressed, that they scarcely dared mix publicly with other men. Today's demonstration has shown us all that those days are of the past. In our unity we have a strength that must be felt, and where before we were slighted, the time has come when we are treated with our due respect.'²⁷ Such respect long eluded Barrett and though he ended his days both as a Justice of the Peace and a major financial backer of Bishop Grimes's cathedral project in Christchurch, the *Tablet* did not honour him with the obituary accorded many a lesser Catholic figure.

There were two parts to the colonial Irish equation, of course, and if the Irish Catholics receive scant account in the historiography, their Orange countrymen have fared even worse. The semi-secret nature of the lodge is the major factor in their invisibility in the historical record. The enthusiasm of the Christchurch Orange brethren to testify against their assailants therefore presents a rare opportunity to examine a sample of the rank and file of the Orange order in 1879. The names of over 30 men associated with the Orange procession are given in the various court reports and these men have been traced to determine where possible their place of birth, occupation, religious affiliation, length of residence in the colony and age. A second group of names gleaned from newspaper reports of Orange affairs in North Canterbury up to 1880 has been researched on the same basis. In the absence of official Orange records, which if they do survive are not publicly available and are unlikely to become so, these small samples may be a useful proxy.²⁸

Occupations were the easiest characteristic to determine. Of the 27 to whom occupations could be ascribed in the 'riot' group, 48% (13) were tradesmen or semi-skilled, 22% (six) were labourers and 15% (four) were merchants or shopkeepers. An accountant was the sole white-collar representative. The second or 'press reports' group was skewed toward the institution's office-bearers and included the country lodges around Christchurch. Occupations were traced for 41 members of this group. The trades and semi-skilled group were still the highest proportion at 41% (17), farmers made up 17% (seven), labourers 15%

27 T, 21 March 1879.

28 A wide range of sources was used in identifying the relevant characteristics of the sample groups. These included the press reports of the trials; birth, death and marriage notices in Christchurch newspapers; shipping lists; church registers of baptisms, marriages and burials; cemetery records; directories; obituaries; the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*; electoral rolls; McDonald, 'Dictionary of Canterbury Biography', Canterbury Museum Library.

(six) and white collar occupations still only seven per cent (three). This suggests that Orangeism held little appeal for the upper echelons of colonial society but provided a focus for the anxieties and enthusiasms of Protestants further down the social scale. As might be expected, there was a strong correlation between Orange membership and an Irish background: of the 'riot' group sample for whom places of birth were established (16) all were Irish-born and overwhelmingly from Ulster counties (11). The 'press reports' group were also predominantly Irish (13) and Ulster-born (ten), but a significant proportion were English (nine) or Scots (four). This underlines the wider appeal of Orangeism among British Protestants: Orange lodges were, in fact, established in some number in parts of northern England and Scotland soon after the first lodges appeared in Ulster at the end of the eighteenth century.

The sources available to determine religious affiliation almost certainly over-accentuate the Anglican contingent:²⁹ of 15 members of the 'riot' group with an ascribed denomination, ten were Anglican and four Presbyterian, the other a Baptist. Of 29 of the second group, 23 were Anglican, four Presbyterian and two Wesleyan. Individual Anglican, Presbyterian and Wesleyan ministers were all identified with lodges in newspaper reports in the period up to 1880. A greater or lesser degree of enthusiasm for the Orange cause therefore apparently depended on personal rather than on denominational origins. None of the 15 members of the 'riot' group for whom a date of arrival could be determined had been in the colony during Canterbury's first decade (1850-59), six arrived in the 1860s and the other nine during the 1870s. Arrival dates were found for 30 of the second group and they tended to have arrived earlier, ten in the 1850s, 13 in the 1860s and only seven in the 1870s. This corresponds with the 'Irishness' of both samples: the Irish began to arrive in Canterbury in numbers only in the 1860s and increased their proportion in both the immigrant flow and the general population in the 1870s.³⁰ Ages were approximated for 18 of the 'riot' group: four were 40 years or more in 1880, eight were in their thirties and five in their twenties. The second group were older (sample = 39): four in their sixties, six in their fifties, ten in their forties, 12 in their thirties and seven in their twenties. Were the data available, these figures might be usefully compared with the age structure of the Hibernian Society or a non-sectarian lodge in Christchurch.

Orangeism was brought to New Zealand by two groups: soldiers in the British Regiments stationed there in the 1840s and 1860s and British Protestant immigrants.³¹ Only the second group was involved in the development of lodges in the South Island. The first southern Orange lodge was established in Lyttelton

29 The religious affiliations were mainly determined from church register transcripts, Canterbury Public Library. These were mostly from Anglican parishes and included some Presbyterian registers but no other Protestant denominations. The other sources detailed above provided some correction of this bias.

30 R.H. Silcock, 'Immigration into Canterbury under the Provincial Government', MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1963, Table II, p.185; K.A. Pickens, 'Canterbury 1851-1881: Demography and Mobility. A Comparative Study', PhD thesis, Washington University, St Louis, 1976, ch. 2.

31 J.A. Carnahan, *A Brief History of the Orange Institution in the North Island of New Zealand from 1842 to the present time*, Auckland, 1886, ch.7.

in 1864, spreading from there to Christchurch. Timaru's lodge was the thirteenth, opening in 1873. In neither place was the arrival of the institution welcomed, since the Orange image was tarnished by its association with disturbances in England, Ireland, Canada and Australia. The twin Orange ideals of loyalty to the crown and Protestant religion had a wide potential appeal, however. The panoply of lodge ritual and regalia, with the added appeal of a semi-secret organization and the spectre of Catholic influence in the colony, added to the attraction. To Protestant Irish the Order was, moreover, a familiar institution in the new environment and may have been as valuable in this respect as the Catholic church was to their Catholic countrymen.³² The relatively recent settlement of most of the rank and file Orangemen in the 'riot' group suggests such a function, and some of the Ulster-born witnesses testified that they had never in fact belonged to a lodge before coming to the colony.

July 12th was the high-point of the Orange calendar, 5 November having a similar if secondary importance. Both commemorate victories over Catholic threats to the Protestant hegemony in Britain. They are marked by Orangemen around the world with dinners and balls and, most desirably, by public marches. These parades had symbolic overtones as ritual assertions of dominance and were often physically opposed by Catholics. New Zealand Orangemen by their own account did not feel 'strong enough' to make such a public display until the late 1870s.³³ The first 12 July procession in New Zealand was not held until 1877 in Auckland and the 3-400 Orangemen who marched were drawn from all over the upper North Island.³⁴ The Christchurch lodges gave consideration to holding a procession in 1878 but 'after some discussion' opted for the less provocative dinner, as in previous years.³⁵ At the end of that year, however, a visiting Catholic missionary, Father Hennebery, arranged huge Catholic processions as the grand finale to his parish missions around the country. These processions, and Hennebery's controversial statements on marriages with Protestants, education and other subjects, were widely resented.³⁶ The visit of the renegade Canadian Catholic priest turned anti-Catholic lecturer, Pastor Charles Chiniquy, to Australia through 1878 and 1879 provided an opportunity for the Orangemen to match the Hennebery tour. Chiniquy was invited to tour New Zealand after his visit to Hobart in mid-1879 set Tasmania alight with sectarian riot and discord.³⁷ These riots seem to have been ignored by the New Zealand press but were

32 A biographical survey of identifiable Timaru Orangemen hinted at an Orange enclave among the surfboat men and wharf labourers in Timaru. When the Toneycliff family arrived in Timaru from Ireland in 1875 they were sheltered by the Irwins. The families do not appear to have been related and came from different counties in Ireland. The link seems to have been Orangeism as members of both families were prominent Orangemen. (John Toneycliff obituary, TH, 21 November 1938.)

33 Carnahan, p.269.

34 *ibid.*, p.279.

35 Pr, 15 June 1878.

36 Davis, p.57.

37 E.M. Dollery, 'The Chiniquy riots, Hobart', *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings*, 9, 4 (March 1962). Chiniquy's New Zealand tour is chronicled in Helen M. Curren, 'Pastor Charles Chiniquy: his New Zealand tour of 1880', History MA Research Essay, University of Auckland, 1984. A very useful background to Chiniquy's career can be found in his biographical entry in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, XII, 1891-1900, Toronto, 1990.

discussed by Orangemen in Christchurch at their July dinner in 1879.³⁸ Chiniquy's impending New Zealand tour was a major initiative for the Orange lodges, and that the lodges in Christchurch and Timaru marched in public procession for the first time only weeks before his arrival was no coincidence. The Chiniquy factor coloured the Catholic response as well; he was specifically referred to by the 'organiser' of the Timaru rioters, and Bishop Moran's reaction to the riots sought, successfully, to shift the Catholic response to Chiniquy to one of studied lack of interest.

For the Orange lodges the Boxing Day riots were a significant propaganda victory. Carnahan's 1890 history of New Zealand Orangeism cited the riots as the most important fillip to the development of Orangeism in the south. They swung public opinion behind the lodges and immediately boosted their membership.³⁹ Orangeism remained a small-scale affair in New Zealand nonetheless, and after the triumphal processions of 1880 the Canterbury lodges reverted to the less provocative dinners and balls to mark 12 July. The order's real significance is its role as a watchdog over colonial affairs on behalf of 'loyal' Protestantism. This was evident first in the political sphere, where the Orangemen aspired to a block Orange vote for favoured candidates at elections.⁴⁰ Their numbers were clearly against this having much impact through Orange votes alone.⁴¹ They could, however, focus attention on an electoral candidate's soundness on education and other key sectarian issues, which had currency for a much wider constituency. In the 1880 Christchurch mayoral election, according to the *Tablet*, one candidate's campaign was destroyed by 'No Popery' cries, after he was supposed to have hob-nobbed with a Catholic Bishop.⁴² From 1877 the Orangemen seem also to have made the 'bible-in-schools' issue their own. At the 12 July dinner in 1878, the South Island Grand Master, Edward Revell, expressed the hope that 'if Orangemen only stuck together and worked they might yet see the Bible in their schools'.⁴³ Reverend Watson similarly exhorted the Orangemen to use their influence at the forthcoming elections and make education 'cheap, compulsory and Christian'.⁴⁴ A striking feature of the Canterbury Orangemen was the number who were involved for extended periods with

38 Pr, 14 July 1879.

39 Christchurch Loyal Orange Lodge (LOL) No. 24 at its first monthly meeting after the riots added 32 new or readmitted brethren to its ranks, LT, 3 January 1880. This begs the question of the existing strength of the lodge, for which no figures are available. Eleven years later, however, in the bicentennial year of the Battle of the Boyne and after 'steady progress', the average lodge membership of the 41 South Island Orange lodges was 26, the highest (Greymouth) was 71, and LOL 24 had 54 active members, *Report of Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand, Middle Island, Held on Friday and Saturday, December 26 & 27, 1890 at Timaru*, Christchurch, 1891, pp.18-19.

40 This led to a spat between the editor of the *Press* and the Orange Grand Master in December 1875, after the latter published advertisements instructing Orangemen to await lodge resolutions before promising their vote to any candidate in the election. Pr, 10, 11, 15 December 1875.

41 In 1890 there were 1084 active Orangemen in the 41 South Island lodges. There had been 30 lodges at the beginning of 1880. *Report of Proceedings*, pp.18-19; Carnahan, p.299.

42 T, 3 December 1880.

43 Pr, 13 July 1878.

44 *ibid.*

school boards. Almost every Orangeman in the sample surveyed who had an entry in the 1905 *Cyclopaedia* had such an involvement. What this meant in practice for the schools is unclear, but it certainly suggests a deliberate and successful strategy of influence by the lodges at a local level.

The Christchurch riot was an episode of considerable excitement, but quickly over and, with the imprisonment of its perpetrators, more or less laid to rest. For all its brutality it did not signal a serious challenge to the social order emerging in the city. The police response to it was appropriately low-key.⁴⁵ The situation in Timaru was felt to be more serious. The 'riot' there had not been unexpected. It did not involve any significant violence, though much seemed to be threatened. Nor was it quickly over. The town was in a state of tension into the New Year and only the overwhelming state response and the effective leadership of the Catholic clergy seems to have prevented the even greater confrontation that was anticipated on that day. Like Ginaty in Christchurch, Father Chataigner, Timaru's pioneer priest, also preached strongly against the folly of Boxing Day, but his remarks were directed at the whole congregation and not 'a miserable few' on its fringe. Once the arrests were made in the days after 26 December, it became clear that South Canterbury's Catholic community was implicated in the affair in precisely the way that Christchurch's was not. The priest's injunction to ignore the Orangemen and have no part in any further confrontations and Bishop Moran's advice along the same lines was decisive. A meeting of Catholics on 28 December overwhelmingly voted to have no part in any further confrontation and actively to dissuade others from so doing.⁴⁶ But if the Catholics pulled back from their confrontational posture the sectarian animosity heightened by their actions remained.

The demographic and religious characteristics of the population of colonial Canterbury varied markedly between different regions in the province. The earliest settlements around Christchurch were the quickest to develop from frontier societies to mature communities, a process usefully tested by the ratio of men to women. In 1878 the greater Christchurch region had 112 males between the ages of 21 and 39 for every 100 females, while this ratio in South Canterbury was 205 males per 100 females.⁴⁷ An analysis of the 1878 census also suggests that Catholics, ergo Irish Catholics, were proportionally more numerous in the southern part of Canterbury.⁴⁸ Catholics made up 17% of the population of Geraldine and 15% in Waimate, the two South Canterbury counties, but only 10% in Selwyn and Akaroa, the counties around Christchurch. The relative gender ratios of the Catholic and non-Catholic populations was also markedly different in these two regions. In Geraldine county there was a non-

45 Twenty policemen sent from Christchurch to Timaru on the morning of Boxing Day were sent back to Christchurch by special train at 2 a.m. the next day, Weldon to Reader, P 1 1880/84.

46 Chataigner, an iron-willed Norman patriarch, had effectively shamed his congregation into this clear repudiation. TH, 2 January 1880. A newspaper report went out over the telegraph, however, reporting that only three people had assented to his motions, and this was widely published. CA, 30 December 1879.

47 Pickens, table 1.8.

48 Figures calculated from census of New Zealand 1878, table vii.

Catholic gender ratio of 134 males per 100 females but for the Catholics the figure was 142. In Waimate the difference was even more marked: the equivalent figures were 169 and 257. In Selwyn and Akaroa counties the Catholic population had a gender ratio of 116 and 119 respectively, the non-Catholic 113 and 125. South Canterbury in 1879 thus had both a proportionally larger Catholic population and one even more marked by the gender imbalance of the frontier than the general population.

One of the first Irishmen in South Canterbury was a Kerryman, Richard Hoare, who arrived as an assisted immigrant to Otago in 1860.⁴⁹ Within 18 months he was working on the Levels estate in South Canterbury and nominated his brother, sisters, parents, and brother-in-law for assisted passages on the *Echunga*, the second ship to bring immigrants direct to Timaru.⁵⁰ They were accompanied by other Kerry people who paid their own way and who in turn established a chain by which members of their extended families and neighbours arrived in the district. One of these passengers alone was joined by 17 members of his extended family over the next ten years.⁵¹ These early arrivals did well for themselves and established small landholdings along the boundaries of the large estates, which provided a steady demand for their labour. Their success led to a steady stream of Kerry immigrants to the district throughout the era of assisted immigration. Silcock's analysis of the assisted immigrants to Canterbury in the provincial period (1855-76) has shown that those from Kerry made up almost 11% of the Irish quota, second only to those from County Down.⁵² The largest proportion, 51%, of all Irish migrants to Canterbury were from the Ulster counties, many of them Protestant, but the Munster counties of the south-west, with Kerry chief among them, provided another 28%.

An analysis of Catholic marriage registers in South Canterbury suggests that much of this Kerry stream went south and constituted a significant proportion of the South Canterbury Irish (Catholic) population into the twentieth century. Marriage registers begin to show places of birth from 1881 and where diligently compiled can provide quite precise information on the immigrants' county and even their parish and town. Fortunately, Catholic registers may also identify non-Catholic marriage partners. From 1881 until the turn of the century there were three Catholic parishes in South Canterbury: Temuka, Timaru and Waimate. Marriage registers for each were analysed to assess the social profile of the Catholic community provided by a sample of all those marrying in Catholic ceremonies.⁵³ Waimate's marriage registers provide the smallest sample but also the most precisely recorded. They show that of the 136 people who married

49 *List of Immigrants, Debtors to the Provincial Government of Otago for Passage Monies, 4 August 1869*, Bill No. 1127, Copy, Otago Early Settlers Museum, Dunedin.

50 *Echunga* passenger list, Im CH 4/44, NA.

51 Patrick Brosnahan, the first member of my family to come to New Zealand. The 17 included parents, siblings, an uncle and aunt and cousins.

52 Silcock, table VII and VIII. The immigrants from County Down made up 13% of the total Irish group in this period and nearly 16% of the men.

53 Marriage registers for each parish are held at the parish office and I am grateful for the access granted to them. I am also grateful for assistance from Bede and Helen Brosnahan in analysing the registers.

between 1881 and 1899 almost 80% were Irish-born. A further 15% were of the New Zealand-born generation and presumably for the most part children of Irish parents. Their non-Catholic partners are clearly identified. There are only four, all of them grooms, and they virtually account for the English and Scots among the remaining 5% of marriage partners. Almost all of the Irish-born specified a county of birth, and for 37% of them this was Kerry (Galway and Tipperary each provided 11.5%). Of 384 marriage partners in Timaru's registers 1880-1899, 72% were Irish-born and 19% colonial-born. Unfortunately the Timaru registers were only compiled with specific county birthplaces from September 1880 to February 1885. Of the 114 Irish marriage partners in this period, who made up 92% of all those marrying, 33% were born in County Kerry. Among the 180 marriage partners in Temuka's Catholic registers for 1880-1899, the Irish-born constituted 71% and those from Kerry represented a full 52% of this quota. As a point of comparison Waimate's Presbyterian marriage registers for the same period reveal no similar concentration of county groupings for any national group, a much higher proportion of New Zealand-born at nearly 40%, and about 20% each of Scots and English.⁵⁴ This suggests that the Catholics were, as a group, later arrivals, and singularly characterized by a coherence of religious and ethnic identity.

An analysis of the occupations of grooms and fathers from the same sources provides an indication of a third level of coherence. In Waimate 46% of the grooms were labourers and 29% farmers. Of fathers 24% were labourers and 65% farmers. The remaining 25% of grooms and 11% of fathers were spread across a narrow band of occupations, chiefly tradesmen or publicans, with teachers among the few who might be classed as professionals. The situation was broadly similar in Temuka and Timaru, with a higher proportion of farmer grooms and fathers in Temuka, and a somewhat larger group in Timaru engaged in slightly more varied occupations outside the labourer/farmer group. There were few of the Catholic professionals who provided an élite leadership in the larger population of Christchurch. In their place leadership devolved on to the Irish small businessmen and tradesmen, amongst whom half a dozen publicans were a notable group, and it is their names which appear as the speakers, organizers and so on of Catholic affairs in the region. There was no Hibernian Society in South Canterbury in 1879, no Catholic Young Men's Club, and the Catholic school in Timaru had only just opened. The Catholics of South Canterbury were overwhelmingly Irish labourers and small farmers, who had recreated, or more accurately transplanted, a fragment of Irish rural society to the colony. They were bound together by creed, class and, for a very significant number, by kin and county loyalties.

This then is the Irish Catholic community of South Canterbury whose representatives came to Timaru in force on 26 December to oppose the Orangemen. Nine men were eventually arrested as the ringleaders of the Timaru riot, two of them members of the Waimate contingent. Seven of the nine were Kerry men and one of the two non-Kerry men was the pioneer Catholic of the Waimate

54 Waimate Presbyterian Marriage Registers, 17/6, Knox College Archives, Dunedin.

district.⁵⁵ The other Waimate representative was Maurice Moynihan, a clerk and Kerry-born, who when arrested was carrying a letter from Thomas O'Driscoll. This letter became a key feature in the subsequent court cases; it requested Moynihan to bring his friends to Timaru to help 'obstruct the [Orange] ruffians', and stated that O'Driscoll was 'sending an account everywhere I can'. O'Driscoll, who had taken no active part in the disturbance, was thus exposed, in Judge Ward's terms, as 'the head and front of the attack'.⁵⁶ The involvement of publicans in the 1879 disturbances was not surprising. The pub culture of Irish emigrant communities inevitably elevated the publicans to a leadership role, particularly on the frontiers of settlement where their services were vital and wide-ranging. In South Canterbury this did not embarrass anyone. O'Driscoll's position in the region's Irish Catholic sub-culture was unassailable. Born in Ballymacelligott, County Kerry, he had arrived in Canterbury with his brother in 1866, following another brother who nominated them for assisted passage. After a couple of years as an agricultural labourer, Thomas married the widow of a Timaru publican and began his long and successful career at the Hibernian Hotel. Quite apart from his customers, he had an extensive network of friends and relations from his own and neighbouring Kerry parishes in the country districts north and south of Timaru.⁵⁷

The Timaru case was heard before the Resident Magistrate on 31 December. Six men were then under armed guard in the Timaru lock-up, having been arrested the day before. This in itself had a cooling effect on Catholic passions for a New Year's Day stouch. There were as well the 300 special constables, 160 Volunteers and Artillery Cadets, 51 Armed Constabulary, eight Timaru and 23 Dunedin policemen, and six mounted constables, who formed a grand total of 557 men to preserve the Queen's peace in Timaru on 1 January. Inspector Pender outlined the case against the accused, presented the letter incriminating O'Driscoll and the men were remanded until 3 January by which time a further three arrests had been made and the men were all released on bail pending a district court trial in March. By March the charge against the rioters had been refined to one of riot and assault on John Reid, the only Orangeman to lose his scarf on 26 December. The rioters had meanwhile engaged the late Attorney-General Robert Stout for their defence. His defence, which argued from Irish history to show the provocative nature of Orange demonstrations, was effective and by appealing the guilty verdict of the district court he delayed the ultimate finding of the court until January 1881. By this time tensions had eased in Timaru, another Orange demonstration had been held without opposition and a host of character witnesses, including Inspector Pender, testified to the respectability and good behaviour of the accused men. The six convicted rioters were let off with a good behaviour bond, apart from O'Driscoll, who was fined £100.

55 Identified using details from NZPG, 24 March 1880.

56 T, 21 January 1881. Judge Ward also said that he would not 'send a man of his high character to herd with felons in gaol'.

57 There was an additional reason for this kin and county group to congregate in Timaru in Christmas week 1879 with the opening of the Shamrock Hotel by Richard Hoare's brother on Christmas Eve, TH 23 December 1879.

The most striking feature of the case, however, is the paucity of the prosecution evidence and the remarkable absence of Orange witnesses. In Christchurch these had lined up enthusiastically to point the finger, but in Timaru the police were only able to call on two members of the procession, neither of whom offered any identification of the men charged. The prosecution had to take the unusual step of calling the Resident Magistrate to give evidence, and the main witness against O'Driscoll was a temperance fanatic who lived opposite his hotel and who bore a grudge against him. This evidence was effectively dismissed by a bevy of non-Catholic defence witnesses, who testified that O'Driscoll was not involved in the riot; it was the letter alone which finally convicted him. The jury, all of whom were non-Catholics, offered a strong recommendation to mercy on the ground that the accused were only a few picked out from the crowd and they dismissed the charges against three of them. The failure of the South Canterbury Orangemen to reveal themselves in court is difficult to explain. One hesitates to suggest that they were intimidated, since public reaction in the town was four-square behind the Orangemen as against the Catholics. The much-trumpeted Orange march was, however, repeatedly delayed and only took place in the following November with massive reinforcements from all over the South Island. Even then there was a poor turn-out from local lodge men with only half the expected numbers at the post-processional banquet.⁵⁸

Public reaction to the Timaru riot was just as hostile to the Catholic faction as it had been in Christchurch, and in the Timaru context this assumes a greater significance. This generalized hostility was expressed initially in an impromptu procession on New Year's Day, the day touted for the settling of scores.⁵⁹ Fully 3000 people marched behind a Caledonian flag through the town to the sports ground. Periodically along the route cheers were given for the Queen and for the Orange lodge. An even larger procession followed the end of the sports in the evening. Perhaps the most significant evidence of this hostility, however, is the Timaru response to the Irish Famine Relief Fund. Ireland was in a state of turmoil in 1879-1880 as the third harvest in a row proved a disaster. In Connaught and in Kerry the distress was particularly acute and in both areas it gave rise to an increase in agrarian protest and political unrest. The political unrest naturally received a negative press in Britain, and consequently in New Zealand, but this did not generally affect sympathy for the famine victims. Throughout New Zealand in early 1880 Irish Famine Relief Fund Committees were established and substantial amounts raised in every centre of consequence. Timaru was uniquely recalcitrant. When a meeting was finally called to establish a local committee in February the response was very poor and much was made of 'the unfortunate feeling' current in the town as the reason.⁶⁰ The committee's street

58 TH, 6 November 1880. There is also an unsubstantiated local tradition in Pleasant Point that the town's Orange Hall, begun in 1886, was never completed because the Irish Catholics from nearby Kerrytown repeatedly pulled down the work in progress. This seems an unlikely situation, but is perhaps suggestive of an undercurrent of ill-feeling and a fear of Fenian bogeymen fostered by the Orange world view.

59 *ibid.*, 2 January 1880.

60 *ibid.*, 20 February 1880. The meeting and appeal unfortunately coincided with Chiniquy's week of lectures in Timaru.

collection on the following Saturday met with 'a disagreeable reaction' and only a paltry £5.11s. was raised.⁶¹

The English and Scots migrants, who together made up the bulk of Canterbury's population in 1879, brought with them to the colony considerable experience of a problematic Irish presence in Britain. England and Scotland had been flooded with Irish migrants after the famine in mid-century. This Irish minority presented a major social problem in Britain, disproportionately represented in every measure of social failure, and was perceived with considerable justification as a nuisance and a social threat. The cultural distance between the Irish and mainstream British society was exacerbated by the former's persistent and defiant deviance in religion and politics. Anti-Catholicism was part of the national myth of both countries and there was an enduring popular antipathy to Rome. Irish assertiveness in religion or politics was inevitably met with animosity, and sectarian disturbances were common in the north of England and parts of Scotland.⁶² Recent analysis of sectarian disturbances in Wolverhampton in the late 1860s suggests that these were, in part, the result of the growing organization and self-assertiveness of the city's Irish minority.⁶³ The visit of a rabble-rousing anti-Catholic lecturer, William Murphy, in the town was physically opposed by a large Irish crowd in scenes reminiscent of the 'riot' in Timaru. The large audiences, which Murphy attracted from Wolverhampton's Protestants, on the other hand indicate the appeal of anti-Catholic propaganda at a time when Irish immigration raised fears of Catholicism on the march. Both explanations seem salient to the South Canterbury situation in 1879.

Between the censuses of 1878 and 1881 there was little change in the relative proportion of Catholics in the two South Canterbury counties but the gender ratios had altered sharply with a huge increase in the number of Catholic females in South Canterbury. This can only be explained as the consequence of immigration and marks a significant stage in the development of the Catholic population in the region. The situation was not so dramatic in the boroughs. In 1878 the Catholics were only slightly more numerous in Timaru than they were in Christchurch, but by 1881 the Catholic proportion in Timaru had risen from 12% to 14% of the population, while remaining constant at 10% in Christchurch.⁶⁴ The gender ratio for Catholics in Timaru had also altered significantly: from 88 males per 100 females in 1878 to 118 in 1881, a proportion matching that of the non-Catholic population. There were other signs of the consolidation of an Irish Catholic community in South Canterbury in this period. The large and colourful processions which followed Hennebery's parish missions in Timaru, Temuka and Waimate in late 1878 were a major demonstration of growing Catholic self-

61 *ibid.*, 23 February 1880. The Catholics had independently raised £140 in Timaru and Temuka.

62 M.A.G. Ó Tuathaigh, 'The Irish in Nineteenth Century Britain: Problems of Integration', in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds, *The Irish in the Victorian City*, London, 1985.

63 Roger Swift, 'Another Stafford Street Row: Law, Order and the Irish Presence in Mid-Victorian Wolverhampton', in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds, *The Irish in Britain 1815-1939*, London, 1989.

64 Figures calculated from census of New Zealand 1878, tables vii and viii, 1881, tables vii and viii.

confidence, and irked at least the local Orangemen.⁶⁵ An impression of a rising tide of Irish Catholic immigration was reinforced by the rapid growth of Catholic institutions in South Canterbury in the late 1870s; a new stone church in Temuka, a new school in Timaru, a convent about to be established, and the first nuns on the way from America.⁶⁶ There are indications that sectarian animosity was a significant feature in the conduct of the general election in Timaru in September 1879. The candidate identified as having a likely Catholic 'block' vote in the country districts had his electoral meetings rowdily disrupted and he polled badly in the town.⁶⁷

Were the 'riots' of any consequence? Their enduring notoriety seems to relate mainly to Thomas Bracken's satirical record in 'The Saige O Timaru', but they certainly made a significant impact throughout the colony at the time. Special constables were mustered in Christchurch, Ashburton, Timaru, Oamaru and Dunedin to counter the disturbances that were feared for New Year. Even in Wellington there were rumours that any spark might set passions alight along the sectarian divide.⁶⁸ In Auckland the Orange organizers of the impending Chiniquy visit took the unusual step of approaching the Catholic bishop for his influence in discouraging any similar attention for the Pastor. Every newspaper in the country carried extensive reports on the riots and the telegraph wires burned hot from both Timaru and Christchurch for a fortnight. Some newspapers actually expressed editorial sympathy for the Catholics and suggested that all processions of a 'party' nature should be prohibited, as in Victoria. In July a bill to ban party processions was introduced to the House. This was felt to be an indictment of the Orangemen, however, and drew almost no support.⁶⁹ The main winners were the police force, whose efficient and impartial handling of the riots drew nothing but praise. The rapid concentration of an overwhelming force in Timaru on New Year's Day had nipped a serious threat to public order in the bud.

Throughout 1880 the police continued to monitor developments in Timaru and Christchurch in anticipation of the deferred Orange processions. By the end of May it was known that these processions would take place in Christchurch on 12 July and in Timaru on 5 November. Inspector Broham sought advice from Wellington since the Orangemen were known to have purchased large numbers of revolvers, and while it was 'most improbable that any attack will be made upon them in Christchurch . . . Inspector Pender tells me that he is not quite sure whether they will be allowed to march unmolested through Timaru, as the feelings of the Catholic party are deeply roused, and their number is very large in the district'.⁷⁰ On the advice of the Solicitor General a proclamation was prepared in early July enjoining all 'loyal and well-disposed persons' to abstain

65 Hennebery's mission in Waimate in August 1878 was promptly followed by the establishment of 'The Sons of Ulster Orange Lodge No 27 Waimate', TH, 23 September 1878. The Catholics were seen to have no grounds for opposing the Orange procession in 1879, given their own provocative (in some Protestant eyes) parades the year before.

66 The Sacred Heart sisters arrived in late January, TH, 20 January 1880.

67 TH, 22 August 1879; P, 6 September 1879.

68 *Canterbury Times*, 3 January 1880.

69 *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, 1880, 35, pp.294-300.

70 Broham to Reader, 27 May 1880, P 1 2071/1880 with 1952 attached, NA.

from any such armed procession, but in the end it was not published. Instead, its contents were communicated privately to Orange leaders and the Christchurch procession passed off quietly, with 1000 (unarmed) Orangemen marching and some 10,000 spectators accompanying them.⁷¹ Four months later in Timaru a more public police operation was mounted with 150 specials sworn in, police reinforcements from Christchurch, Oamaru and Dunedin, and the closure of the hotels but this, too, passed off peacefully. Significantly, however, there were 3000 members of the public marching in the van of the Orange procession, quite apart from the 500 Orangemen who had gathered from all over the South Island, and the only signs of opposition were the long green ribbons streaming from the curtains of the Shamrock Hotel and the women who spat at the marchers from behind.⁷²

For Catholics throughout the country the riots and their aftermath provided a valuable lesson in the dangers in pushing their claims too far. It is significant that Chiniquy's tour of New Zealand in 1880 passed off without a single incident of Catholic opposition — and proved something of a damp squib to its organizers. For the Catholics of South Canterbury the lesson was more acute, exposing the anti-Irish, anti-Catholic feeling which surrounded them. It contributed to the development of a Catholic community apart from the Protestant mainstream, an insular and self-segregating minority whose story provides a largely ignored counterpoint to that of the wider society within which it operated. Neither of the two major histories of South Canterbury reflect the story of this ethnically, religiously and culturally distinct minority. Gillespie's 1958 centennial history completely ignored the Irish Catholic sub-culture, while Anderson's 1911 work frankly stated that the Irish had been an unwelcome ingredient in the colonial mix.⁷³ The most interesting record of the Irish rural enclaves that developed in South Canterbury is contained in Helen Wilson's novel *Moonshine*, based on her experiences as a teacher in Waitohi in the 1880s.⁷⁴ This rather vicious caricature, drawn by a daughter of the Anglican establishment, provides an interesting glimpse of Irish South Canterbury and what it looked and sounded like, but is of dubious value as an historical record. Perhaps the most potent symbol of the hopes and aspirations of this historically inarticulate community is the magnificent Catholic basilica erected in Timaru after the turn of the century. In splendid isolation, and set well apart from the central city block of Protestant churches, it was larger and grander than any of them.

SEÁN G BROSNAHAN

Otago Early Settlers Museum

71 Broham to Reader, 12 July 1880, *ibid.*

72 P 13296/80 and TH, 6 November 1880.

73 O.A. Gillespie, *South Canterbury: A Record of Settlement*, Timaru, 1958. J.C. Andersen, *Jubilee History of South Canterbury*, Christchurch, 1916, p.373. Patrick O'Farrell's excellent *Vanished Kingdoms: Irish in Australia & New Zealand*, Sydney, 1990, has a disappointingly limited focus in its treatment of the Waimate Irish Catholic enclave. O'Farrell is, however, dealing with this community a generation later when his own parents followed a well established North Tipperary emigration chain to South Canterbury.

74 Helen Wilson, *Moonshine*, Hamilton, 1956.