

1877.

NEW ZEALAND.

PETITION OF 2,034 INHABITANTS OF THE ROMAN
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND.

Presented to the House of Representatives 31st August, and ordered to be printed 5th September, 1877.

To the Honorable the Speaker and the Honorable the Members of the House
of Representatives of the Colony of New Zealand, in Session assembled.

THE MEMORIAL OF THE UNDERSIGNED ROMAN CATHOLICS OF THE DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND,
RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH,—

THAT whilst your memorialists recognize with pleasure the intention of your honorable House to legislate in the present session upon the all-important subject of education, yet they would earnestly pray that nothing be admitted into the Bill now before the Assembly that may hinder its working beneficially for all classes of the New Zealand people.

That as any provision for religious instruction in schools which clashes with the conscientious religious convictions of any section of the community must always prove an obstacle to the success of an Education Act, they also earnestly pray that all provisions relating to religion in the present Education Bill will fully receive the grave consideration the subject demands.

That as your honorable House as well as your memorialists are aware of the non-existence of any State Church in this colony; so, upon the principle of religious freedom, the use of no version of the sacred Scriptures or forms of prayer, no matter how good or correct in themselves, should be required by a New Zealand Education Act, that might indicate any attempt to establish religious ascendancy.

That the present scheme of education contains a clause (namely, clause 85, par. 3) touching religion that would impose disabilities upon your memorialists and others of the community, which clause, therefore, they pray may not be embodied in the Act.

That your memorialists, also, as no objections such as those referred to above can be urged against the Nelson Education Act, which has been for some years in operation, and has given satisfaction, would suggest the enactment of a similar system, or of one akin to it, as suitable to meet the requirements of your memorialists and of the people in general.

That your memorialists do not presume to dictate to your honorable House, but do respectfully request that this memorial receive that considerate attention which the importance of its subject claims for it.

And your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

H. G. FYNES, V.G.,
(and 2,033 others).