

Noes, 11.—Hon. Mr. Acland, Hon. Mr. Barnicoat, Mr. J. Buchanan, Hon. Mr. P. A. Buckley, Hon. Mr. Dignan, Mr. De Lautour, Mr. Dodson, Mr. Feldwick, Mr. C. J. Johnston, Hon. Dr. Grace, Hon. Mr. Lahmann.

So it passed in the affirmative.

Moved by Mr. J. Buchanan, That the minutes of proceedings and evidence be reported to both Houses, and they recommend that they be printed.—Carried.

Moved by the Hon. Dr. Grace, That the Chairman be authorized to bring up the report.—Carried.

The Committee then adjourned.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

FRIDAY, 3RD AUGUST, 1883 (Hon. Colonel BRETT, Chairman).

Dr. REDWOOD, examined.

1. *Hon. the Chairman.*] Dr. Redwood, there have been received by Parliament fifty-one petitions from Catholics, bearing 7,223 signatures. You have heard one of those petitions read, and also two petitions signed by the Anglican Primate of New Zealand. Will you be good enough to answer a few questions on the subject? First, I would ask, what is your position in the Roman Catholic Church?—I am Bishop of Wellington, New Zealand.

2. What is the extent of your diocese?—It comprises all New Zealand, except the Provinces of Auckland and Otago including Southland.

3. What is the number of Catholics in your diocese?—According to the statistics we estimate them at 38,000.

4. What is the number of children of both sexes educated in the Catholic schools in your diocese?—I have had a return made, which shows the number to be 4,563.

5. What is the proportion of Catholics in New Zealand to the whole Christian population?—As far as we have generally been able to find out it is about one-seventh.

6. Have the Catholics a conscientious objection to availing themselves of the State system of education?—If you will allow me, I will read a short statement I have prepared of the Catholic grievance, which I think will put the question before the Government in a way they have not yet heard it. The Catholics maintain that a grievous injustice has been inflicted upon them by the present law of public education in the colony. That injustice is shown by the following facts: It is a broad and notorious fact that there are 70,000 Catholic citizens in New Zealand; it is a broad and notorious fact that, during the last four years, the country has spent two millions in support of public education; it is a broad and notorious fact that the aforesaid 70,000 Catholic citizens are excluded from the schools of the colony by a law which, in their regard, is penal;—not that they have been excluded by an express enactment of the law, but by the conditions under which that law is administered—conditions which their consciences forbid them to comply with. Again, it is a broad and notorious fact that, throughout the colony, wherever a sufficient number of Catholics is found to erect a school, Catholics do erect a school or schools, and do maintain such school or schools solely at their own expense, and at great sacrifices, as statistics will undeniably prove. Further, it is a broad and notorious fact that these 70,000 Catholics in the colony are not idiots; and, therefore, it must also be a fact that their conscientious objections must be very great, since they make such enormous sacrifices to keep their children out of the public schools and in their own. From these facts it is plain that they are the objects and victims of a very grievous injustice. The law of education in the colony assails at once their pockets and their consciences, and practically produces the same effect as if the majority of their children were expressly excluded from the schoolroom. That law inflicts a grievous injustice upon them, because they contribute their fair share towards the revenue of the country, and have equal rights with their fellow-citizens to share in the expenditure of that money, without being forced to violate their consciences; but, in the matter of education, they receive no such share. They are compelled to contribute money to the education of other people's children—children of people who are well-to-do. They, as citizens, bearing the common burdens of citizens, are called upon to pay a double tax—to pay for their own schools entirely, and, to a large extent, in the teeth of their conscience, for the children of others. Is that fair? Is that just? Is that equitable? Is that politic? Our object is not to repeal the present law but to amend it, so that, without violation of principles we are bound to maintain at every sacrifice, we may avail ourselves of it. If that law is not amended the consequence will be to instil into the minds of Catholics, that is, of one-seventh of the population, an unutterable detestation of the legislation of the land. Is that politic? Is that to the colony's advantage? We ask for nothing more than what is done in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. We ask not for other people's money, but for our own, which is now taken to build and support schools, both primary, normal, and high, which we cannot use; to build and support schools in which other people's children, often the children of well-to-do people, are educated. We do not ask even as much as the Catholics in Canada are receiving. There, every shilling paid by the Catholic people goes by law to support the Catholic schools; and they receive, in addition, a fair share of the moneys voted by the Central Legislature. And non-Catholics are exactly on the same footing; there is even-handed justice. We do not, we could not, we would not, ask for more. Now, I can corroborate this by a few statistics, to show the enormous extent of the grievance which I am sure no one could be aware of until they heard the figures. The total number of schools in my diocese is fifty-seven; the expenditure in buying land for schools has been £12,473; cost of