

presumable objectors to accept the united teaching of the "common" or "fundamental" or "non-sectarian" biblical or "general religious instruction" of the present measure. For Catholics this is contrary to well-known Catholic principles, and it was condemned by the Holy See on the 14th January, 1841, in the course of an official communication to the Bishops of Ireland. Thus under a fair-seeming phrase the electors of this Dominion are asked to empower the Government to compel considerable bodies of children to receive in the State schools forms of biblical and religious instruction which their parents could not in conscience give to them in the home. Against that tricky and odious conscience clause we Catholics would exhaust every form of protest permitted to us by the moral law. It gives legal power to tamper with the consciences of children without either consulting or considering the wishes of the parents—such, for instance, as Catholic and Jewish parents, who, on account of their religious principles, must be presumed to be opposed to such biblical teaching as is proposed under this Bill. I am in a position to prove by overwhelming evidence that the Irish proselytizing conscience clause of this Bill has been used as an instrument of the most odious religious tyranny in the land where it was invented. The great Irish Protestant statesman, Isaac Butt, for instance, shows (from the returns of the Commissioners of National Education) that in the one year, 1862, "at least sixteen thousand children" (Catholic and Protestant) were being indoctrinated under this conscience clause in Ulster alone with religious instruction at known variance with that of their parents ("Liberty of Teaching," Dublin, 1865, pp. 14, 15, 24, and 128). This conscience clause has been well described as a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. According to the League somewhat similar conditions prevail in New South Wales. There is no evidence that in any case the wishes of the parents have been ascertained or considered. On the contrary, the clear presumption is that Catholic parents do not approve of their children there receiving instruction in the State religion, since it is contrary to oft-specified principles and laws of their Church, to which every true and loyal Catholic will be faithful. And no Catholic can knowingly permit his child to receive such instruction unless he has been, in effect, proselytized into practical acceptance of the views, system, creed, or scheme now advocated by the League in this Dominion. The conscience clause of this Bill is, then, a measure to utilize State officials, State schools, and State funds to undermine by an unworthy ruse the faith of various sections of the people in this Dominion.

(d.) For sufficiently obvious reasons even written protests against the Government religious instruction are no real protection to dissenters. Protests were no safeguard in Ireland. Pastoral letters of Archbishop Delany, of Hobart—and other published and unpublished correspondence of his which I am prepared to submit to your Committee—declare also that in Tasmania even written protests by parents do not avail to protect the consciences of Catholic children from being tampered with, and that complaints to his priests on this matter are frequent. Tampering with the faith of children is also asserted by Rev. T. J. O'Donnell, of Wynyard, in the same State (Tasmania). But there is no need to seek or to affirm such cases of proselytism or attempted proselytism. The radical objection to the Irish conscience clause in the Bill is this: that it provides a legal opportunity to compel children, *without the consent of their parents*, to receive biblical and "general religious instruction" (as it is styled in Australian law) which their parents could not conscientiously give them in their own homes. No real protection is therefore afforded to dissidents who are compelled, as in this Bill, to receive Government biblical instruction unless specially and individually exempted. There is only one conscience clause that offers some measure of protection to minorities—the conscience clause which admits to State biblical or religious instruction *only* those children whose parents in writing demand it. Why was the League's Irish-Australian conscience clause so grievously misdescribed in the League petition? Why are all the above-mentioned facts concealed both in the League petition and in the ballot-paper of the Bill? I am firmly convinced that very few signatures indeed would have been obtained for the League's petition had these vital matters been candidly and straightforwardly placed before the petitioners. The same remarks applied to the equally strange controversial concealments and economies of truth that mark the ballot-paper in the Bill.

#### XIV. CONTROVERSIAL CONCEALMENTS, CONTRADICTIONS, ETC.

The confusion of the ballot-paper in this Bill becomes still worse confounded when we consider some of the controversial concealments, minimizings, and other economies of fact which mark the misleading and partly unintelligible reference proposals of the Bill. Let the following instances suffice:—

1. A distinction is made in the reference or ballot-paper of the Bill for an obvious controversial purpose. In Australian law, and in the League's own official publications, the Government biblical instruction conducted by the teacher is called "religious instruction," "general religious teaching," &c. In the ballot-paper it is referred to as merely the "reading" of "selected Bible lessons." The term "religious instruction" is applied only to the denominationalism taught by visiting clergy during school hours. The obvious purpose of this verbal distinction is to meet a controversial difficulty—to lead the unsuspecting voter to believe that the Government is not being pressed to relieve the League of part of the sacred duty of "religious instruction" which the Almighty has imposed not upon Governments, but upon parents and the Christian ministry. (Deuter., vi, 6-7; Matt. xxviii, 20; II Tim., iv, 2.)

2. In the League's petition-card "reading" from "Scripture books" under the "supervision" of the teacher is set down as the first part or feature of the system of religious instruction in State schools prevailing in Australia which the League wants to introduce in New Zealand. In the League's official publication, "Opinions of Experts," "religious instruction" by teachers is affirmed forty-five times by State officials as forming part and parcel of the "system of religious instruction" demanded by the League. In two or three other League publications this is affirmed some twelve or thirteen times. And yet in another publication of the League ("Notes