

QUEENSTOWN.

DURING the sitting of the last District Court here, a certain Catholic gentleman was asked to give evidence in reference to a case, *Scott v. Hall*. The gentleman in question declined to take an oath by kissing a Protestant Bible, there being no other there, but expressed his willingness to swear should they provide him with a Catholic one. The Judge (Harvey) refused, of course, to take his evidence.

At the next Warden's Court, Mr. Johnston requested to know if the B.M. would see that a Douay version, for the use of Catholics in the Court, be procured. Mr. Stratford replied that he would communicate with Government in order to procure a Douay Bible for each Court over which he presided.

It seems strange that another gentleman of the long robe who enjoys the honour of pleading in the same Court and professing himself to be a Catholic, would have allowed such an opportunity to pass without turning it to account. Yet, no! But so it is; we invariably receive more courtesy and justice from honest Protestants than from these wishy-washy half-and-halves.

August, 1877.

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MEETING AT NAPIER.

(From the *Hawke's Bay Herald*, 24th ult.)

A LARGELY attended meeting of Catholics was held last evening in the schoolroom to discuss the effect upon the Catholic body of the Education Bill now before the Assembly. The meeting was called for half-past seven, but it was considerably past eight o'clock before the proceedings commenced.

The Rev. Father FORRESTER having been voted to the chair, he expressed himself very happy to see so large a number of Catholics assembled on the occasion. They were no doubt aware that they had met to discuss the Education Bill that was before the Assembly. The Bill contained, according to the opinions of Catholics, several clauses that were not acceptable to them. Those clauses would be examined by the several speakers who would address the meeting with the view of eliciting the opinion of those present. His (the Chairman's) own opinion was that in several respects there were points in the bill which could not be acceptable to Catholics. First, there was the reading of the Bible and the prayer. Secondly, there was the fact that Catholics could not attend those schools, and yet they would have to pay capitation rates and support their own schools besides, which was very unjust. Thirdly, there was the question as to the books used in the schools. These, in such schools as were not in connection with the Catholic body, might be such that should not be put in the hands of Catholic children. What was desired was that the Government would grant the Catholics freedom as to teachers and schools where Catholics could establish schools. In places where Catholics could not have their own schools, of course the children would have to attend public schools. But the books should not be such as were contrary to the Catholic faith. Those schools should be entirely secular.

Mr. LEE moved,

That the proposed Education Bill would, if passed in its present shape, inflict great hardship on the Catholics, who would, in order to secure the religious education of their children, be obliged to support their own schools, and also be compelled to contribute towards the support of the public schools from which they could derive no benefit.

He thought they were entitled to be heard on that question, as, looking at the report of the Inspector of Schools, it would be found that the Catholic schools had one-fifth of the school attendance of the province. That showed, at all events, that Catholics did something in the cause of education. It was not his intention to go into the question in a rabid manner, nor to show any unreasoning hostility to the bill. Indeed, he would freely admit that if there were no Catholics in the colony to be affected by it, the measure was very well drawn, and showed that it emanated from persons who had experience of the subject in the southern part of the colony, and also in other parts of the world. But there were parts of the bill that were objectionable to Catholics. It provided for the establishment of public schools, but there was no provision for any other kind. The position they (the Catholics) would be in would therefore be that they would have to support their own schools unaided, and would have to pay besides a capitation rate of 10s. for every Catholic child (except where there were more than four in a family). Persons might be exempt from payment of the capitation rate by obtaining a certificate that the children were attending school otherwise than at the public school; but it might be perfectly impossible to get such a certificate, because it could only be granted by teachers of schools approved for that purpose by the Board of Education. He would now read to the meeting a letter written by Bishop Redwood, and which approached the question in a calm and fair manner. It was addressed to the editor of the *New Zealand Times*, and was as follows:—[As we have already given a report of His Lordship's admirable speech subsequently delivered on the subject, it is not necessary that we should insert the letter referred to.—ED. N. Z. TABLET.]—[That contained their (the Catholics') views, and they were views which some time ago had been put in the form of a petition to the Provincial Council, when it was thought that the system of education existing in Hawke's Bay was going to be utterly swept away—but it was not. He would now move the resolution he had read. (Applause.)

The Rev. Father KERRIGAN seconded the resolution. He said that what the Catholics wanted was to be left to educate the children of their community themselves. It had been said by an English statesman, Lord Beaconsfield, that there was a great difficulty in educating the Catholics, and that the only way out of the difficulty was to accede to their wishes and let them conduct their education according to their religious views on the subject. He hoped the Government of this colony would, in like manner, accede to the not unreasonable demands of the Catholics. Now that liberty

to Catholics had been so much extended in England that it had even received praise from the Sovereign Pontiff, it would surely not be restricted here. The Catholics only asked for a fair share of public money, and were always willing to accede to all others the same liberty as they asked for themselves. (Applause.)

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Mr. REARDEN moved the second resolution as follows:—

That the Education Act of Hawke's Bay under which Government aid is given to denominational schools, which give a sufficient amount of secular instruction to satisfy the inspector, has been in force for many years; that such Act has given general satisfaction, and under it both common and denominational schools have been treated with equal justice, and that there is no reason why an Act similar in principle should not be brought into force for the whole colony.

He said that the Act under which they had been working gave satisfaction on all sides. It gave satisfaction to the schools, to the communities, to the inspector, and to the Board of Education. Indeed, it would have been a wonder if under it there had been any bickering. All had worked harmoniously for the common good. All the Catholics wanted was equal justice—the same share as others from the public funds. He recollected when the late Sir Donald M'Lean visited the schools, both of them being on the hill at that time, he said that the Catholic schools were a gratification to him and a satisfaction to the colony. Mr. Ormond also had given praise to the Catholic schools of the province. Neither of them were Catholics, and so their opinion should carry great weight. Mr. Colenso also had expressed himself in highly favourable terms in regard to the Catholic schools. The schools, then, being so satisfactory, there was every reason for contending that they should be continued. As to their being called denominational, that could scarcely be so when the doors were open to all denominations, whether they were able to pay or not. (Hear, hear.) That was truly colonial education. (Applause.) If the Assembly could be induced to shape the Bill so as to make it something like the Hawke's Bay Act, it would be doing a great deal for the peace, harmony, and prosperity of New Zealand. (Applause.)

Mr. MALCOM seconded the resolution.

The CHAIRMAN said that on one occasion the late Sir Donald M'Lean had remarked that he approved so much of the Education Act of Hawke's Bay, that he would do his best to have it taken as a model of an Act to apply to the whole of the colony.

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Mr. BOWERMAN moved,

That the teachers or managers of private schools should have a right to claim the inspection of the Government Inspector, and that upon the inspection being satisfactory, such teachers should be authorised to give certificates of exemption from payment of capitation rates and from attendance at public schools.

If the request, he said, made in the previous resolution met with the favourable consideration of the Assembly, the resolution he was now moving would not be so necessary; but if the Bill as brought in was to be adhered to, then it would become a matter of necessity that the Catholic schools should be placed under inspection, so that the masters might be in a position to grant certificates of attendance, and the Catholics be exempted from paying capitation fees for their children, and also be exempted from the compulsion of sending their children to the public schools. If those claims were granted, the Catholics would be relieved from the onus of paying for other schools at the same time that they were supporting their own. (Applause.)

Mr. REARDEN seconded the resolution.

Mr. LEE said there was one point in connection with the resolution which he wished to explain. The Minister of Education would have the power to refuse inspection to Catholic schools. The resolution therefore asked that the Catholics should have the right to claim inspection. If they obtained that right, even if they were unable to get any other modification of the Bill, they would take the sting out of it, and they would moreover be able to show by inspection that the denominational school was found to beat the public school. (Applause.)

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Mr. ST. CLAIR moved,—

That in the event of the Bill at present before the House becoming law, the clause relating to the reading of the Lord's Prayer and a portion of the Holy Scriptures should be expunged from the Bill.

The necessity for the resolution was, he said, obvious. That clause of the Bill placed the Catholic schoolmaster in the position of being required to do what was out of his power, and hence the injustice of it.

Mr. BARRY seconded the resolution.

The CHAIRMAN said there was no objection on the part of the Catholics to read the true Bible. They read it every day, and by heart too. But there were so many versions that for peace sake it was better not to have it read in schools.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Mr. M'GREYVY moved.—

That a petition be presented to the House of Representatives embodying the former resolutions, and praying for such a modification of the Bill as will protect the Catholics of the colony in the proper education of their children, in accordance with their religious convictions.

The motion was seconded by Mr. HAYDEN, and carried.

Mr. REARDEN moved,—

That a copy of the resolutions be forwarded to his Lordship Bishop Redwood, and also to the Hawke's Bay members.

The motion was seconded by Mr. LEE, and carried unanimously.

Mr. PETERS moved a vote of thanks to the representatives of the Press for their attendance at the meeting, which was carried by acclamation.

Father KERRIGAN said he desired to move another resolution. In the event of the Assembly not being disposed to adopt the principle of the Hawke's Bay Act, he thought it was necessary to state distinctly what the Catholics required. The resolution he would move would, he thought, embody what was required. It was: