

agreeable to popular taste in order to, as it were, harden it into a fact, not to be questioned, in the public mind. Secularists know their public well, and are thoroughly well acquainted with the most efficacious mode of proceeding for creating an unreasoning public opinion. We have no doubt, therefore, that the public of New Zealand, accepting as gospel the teaching of the secular Press, is convinced that our present system of education is not only economical, but the most economical that could be devised.

Our contention is, and has been from the first, the opposite of this. We hold that a system of secular education paid for by Government is not only expensive, but the most expensive to the State that can be imagined. Theory first led us to this conclusion, which every day experience has only tended to confirm. It always appeared to us only reasonable to suppose that schools maintained in part only by the State could not possibly be as expensive to Government as schools maintained wholly by the State. This seems a self-evident proposition, as clear as the proposition that the half of four is two. But our public instructors say No, you are quite mistaken; the fact is, if you take two from four, you make the four six. This is, in reality, the contention of secularists. They say if the Government pay only a moiety of the expenses of public education, they are at greater expense than if they paid the entire sum required for schools. Such an argument is worse than childish.

But leaving theory, let us come to undoubted facts. Everybody knows that in England there is a dual system of education—the secular and the denominational—or, as it is officially called, the voluntary, both equally aided by grants from the Government. This dual system has now been in operation for seven years. And what, let us ask, has been the well-ascertained result as to the relative expense to the State? No higher authority on this question exists than the Minister who has charge of the Education Department in the House of Commons. This Minister, who is at present Lord G. HAMILTON, moved, in committee in the House of Commons on the 5th August last, the vote for public education in a remarkable speech. It is not our intention to burden our readers with all Lord Hamilton's figures, but, refer them, for a report of his speech to the *Mail* of the 7th August. There is only one part of his statement which concerns us to-day. From this it will be seen that secular schools are five times more expensive to the ratepayer than denominational, or voluntary schools. We think we can do nothing better than give his lordship's own words on this point.

Here they are, "The only public money, with the exception of a few fees, which voluntary schools received, was from the annual grant; the whole of the rest of their income was drawn from private sources. School Boards, however, derived the chief part of their income from rates, which was as much public money as taxes, though levied locally. Deducting all private sources of income, and dealing only with the public money, the education of a child in voluntary schools costs the country 14s. 4d., in Board Schools £1 15s. 0½d. But even this comparison does not show the real cost of School Boards, for he had excluded all expenditure except that of the maintenance of the school. The School Boards spend now three and two-thirds times as much from the rates as they get from the grant. If they had the whole of the grant they would be levying £6,750,000 in rates alone."

How would the British ratepayer regard such crushing taxation as this? The taxation of the School Boards amounts at present to something less than £400,000 annually; but, were there no denominational or voluntary schools, this taxation would have been, instead of far less than half a million, six millions seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling last year. Denominational schools, then, have saved the English people from additional taxation to the amount of nearly seven millions of pounds sterling in one year. Nor can it be said that Secular or Board Schools are more efficient than the Voluntary. The aid given to all schools is apportioned in accordance with the results of examinations by Government Inspectors; and Lord HAMILTON states the amount granted per head during the last two years, in these words:—"As regarded the grant, the children in Board Schools had turned the tables this year upon the children in Voluntary Schools. Last year the grant to Voluntary Schools was 13s. 3¼d., as against 13s. 0¼d.; this year it was 14s. 4d., as against 14s. 5d. to Board Schools. The cost of maintenance per child was estimated in Voluntary Schools to be £1 13s. 11d., in Board Schools £2 1s. 4½d."

Here, then, is a proof of the error of these public writers who never weary of telling the public that to aid Voluntary

Schools is to waste the public money. In England the experiment has been made of both Government Secular Schools, and of Denominational or Voluntary Schools; and the results show that Voluntary Schools are as efficient as Board Schools, and five times cheaper to the ratepayers. The experience of Victoria is to the same effect. There it has been ascertained that under the aided school system as many children were as well educated at an expense of £180,000 as have been under the secular system for £500,000. Even here, in New Zealand, though this latter system has been very lately introduced as a general system, it is evident that our experience will confirm that of England and Victoria. For the maintenance of schools we shall have to pay this year £200,000, and another £200,000 for the erection of school buildings. Nor will £200,000 suffice to provide sufficient school buildings throughout the country. See what a burden all this imposes on the taxpayers, a burden that is absolutely unnecessary, and without any real justification, a burden, too, which is imposed for the purpose of giving a free education to children well able to pay, in part at least, for their education.

THE EDUCATION QUESTION.

It was at one time thought in Victoria that this question had been finally settled, and politicians flattered themselves that a law suggested by political hatred and carried amidst the plaudits of bigots and infidels had extinguished for ever the love of Catholics for their religion and the manly virtues of self-respect and courage. Parties felt convinced that they could do without Catholic support; and an idea prevailed that it was only necessary to wait a little in order to see the total collapse of Catholic schools.

But years have elapsed and the realization of these hopes seems more distant than ever. Instead of collapsing the Catholic school system has been found to be extending the sphere of its influence and usefulness. New Catholic schools are being built, old ones enlarged, Catholic pupils are increasing by thousands, and Catholic generosity and enthusiasm in the cause of Christian education grow stronger day by day.

And not only this, Catholics have again brought their grievances before the legislature, demanding justice to their schools, and a partial repeal of the iniquitous education laws of that colony. Will this demand be refused by Parliament? The present Victorian Government opposes justice to Catholics, and this may probably induce Parliament not to listen to Catholic demands at present. For this Catholics are, it appears, prepared. But they are also prepared to punish the *soi-disant* liberal party, which, though loudly proclaiming its advocacy and love of fair play, is the veriest tyrant in existence.

Nor, it appears, will Catholics forget the reiterated calumnies and insults of the liberal organ, the *Age*, which, except at the bidding of liberal leaders, would not dare habitually to slander Catholicity. At length it would seem that the spirit of the Catholics of Victoria has risen to the exigencies of the situation, and determined to do what we have so often recommended the New Zealand Catholics to do, viz., to keep a list of all who in Parliament vote against justice to Catholic schools, with a view of voting against them on the first opportunity, no matter who may be their opponents.

This is the policy Catholics in the sister colony should have pursued long ago. And it always appeared to us disgraceful to Victorian Catholics that they should have been found in the ranks of the present liberal party. The fact is, so long as this question of education remains as it is, Catholics should carefully oppose all parties and all politicians who insist on giving the rising generation a godless education. To help secularists to maintain themselves in power is to be disloyal to God and to CHRIST, to manifest a wicked indifference to the true interests of individuals and society, and to patronise that which must inevitably lead not only to the loss of the Christian faith but to the destruction of society.

We were delighted then to learn from the columns of the *Melbourne Advocate* that Catholics were about to sever their connection with Messrs. BERRY & Co., and the constituents of the ignorant or slandering *Age*. We hope this project will not be permitted to remain a mere project, but that it will be soon realized in very decided action. Catholics may rest assured there is nothing to be gained by an unholy alliance, and that it will be better for all their legitimate interests to put themselves into an attitude of opposition to Mr. BERRY and the *Age*, than to support both or either.

The faith, zeal, and generosity of Victorian Catholics, as such, cannot be praised too highly, but they ought also to