

it failed in the qualities necessary for carrying them into execution.

There seems to be a disposition on the part of many members to act in a conciliatory spirit, and to lose no time in transacting the business of the country. It remains, however, to be seen whether this good disposition will be able to stand the test of party exigencies and political rivalries. No one can fail to perceive that the embers of strife may be fanned into a flame at any time. Perhaps before the publication of this the Province may find itself in the midst of another political struggle and party crisis. Would it not be well to allow Mr Tolmie to develop his policy? otherwise it will be said, and with justice, that the objection to him is unreasonable. Men in his position should be judged by their policy; and, as yet, he has had no opportunity of explaining to the Council his policy—at least, in a satisfactory manner.

He may be a very undesirable Provincial Secretary, but the public good demands that the people generally, as well as the majority of the Council—should there be a majority of the Council against him—should be convinced of this. Nothing can be more injurious to the character of the Council than to delay or obstruct public business by indulging in rivalries and contests, with which the population, as a whole, has no sympathy. It is to be hoped, therefore, that whatever is done by the Executive will be done at once, and the business of the country transacted without delay, and energetically.

WELLINGTON EDUCATION BOARD.

At the meeting of this Board on the 18th ultimo, the following resolutions were passed:—"That with reference to Roman Catholic schools, the present salaries of masters be paid from the 1st May till further notice; that in the opinion of this Board it is advisable to amalgamate the two male schools as soon as possible; that as regards the Convent school, known as 'St. Philomena's Girls' School,' the Board, considering the constitution of that school and its strictly denominational character, which it must always possess, feel that they are unable to take over the management and control of it; that the Board regret that they are unable to contribute towards the building contemplated to be erected by the Rev. Father Cummins."

Let us place the facts of this case clearly before our readers. The Catholics of Wellington have provided four good schools at their own sole expense. Between three and four hundred children out of a population of about twelve hundred Catholics attend these schools. It is evident, therefore, the Catholics of Wellington have done their duty to their children and their fellow citizens. If education be neglected in this city, no blame can be attached to the Catholic portion of the community. The Catholics therefore have earned and are entitled to sympathy and aid. This is one side of the picture; let us see the other.

There is a Sectarian Education Board in the Province of Wellington—that is, a Board charged to carry out a system of education on the principles of the Sect known as Undenominationalists, with power, however, to aid denominational schools. The law empowers this Board to aid denominational schools, and, by empowering it, charges it to do so. When there is a denominational school deserving of support, the Board is criminal in refusing it aid, merely because it is denominational? Yet this is the very thing that the Board has done in reference to St. Philomena's Girls' School: "That as regards the Convent school, known as 'St. Philomena's Girls' School,' the Board, considering the constitution of that school and its strictly denominational character, feel that they are unable to take over the management and control of it." The Board, therefore, refuses to do the very thing it is authorised and bound to do, precisely because it is authorised and bound to do it. This is the state of the case so far.

But there are other points for consideration. The Catholics are taxed for education; the Board clutches the money and spends it, not on the schools of the people, except to a very limited extent, who pay it, but on schools for those who have neglected and who neglect their children, and on schools of other denominations, particularly such as belong to the Godless school Sect. Meantime the Catholics have themselves to maintain their own schools. From these facts, therefore, it appears the Godless school Sect, which is at present in the ascendant, compels the Catholics to pay double taxes. Is not this monstrous?

Well, then, what does justice demand? And Catholics ask no more than justice. It demands that the money paid by them for educational purposes shall be handed over to them

for the maintenance of their own schools. If they had no schools, or not enough—if they were like so many others, utterly indifferent as to the education of their children—the case would be different. But as things are, Catholics are severely punished—heavily fined for having done their duty nobly in raising up good schools, which afford ample means of education for their children at the present time. A more monstrous injustice than this has never been heard of since men were compelled to forfeit their lives and properties in order to preserve their faith for themselves and their children.

SECULAR EDUCATION IN VICTORIA.

THE Godless system of education has had one year's trial in Victoria, and the results are not encouraging. It was stated by its friends in Parliament and the press that there were thousands of children not attending any school in the Colony, that the old system was unable to reach them, and that the new one was especially designed for their benefit. Among the many objections raised by its opponents, not the least important was the enormous expense it would certainly entail on the Colony. Mr Francis and his party, however, laughed this objection to scorn. Well, one fact is worth more than a thousand theories; and the patrons of Godless education have themselves been compelled to prove the truth of the predictions of the opposition.

Formerly the education grant of Victoria amounted to about £180,000 per annum; this year the Minister of Instruction asks for £485,482—an advance in the year of £300,000. And this is only the beginning. What will be the amount of the demand next year?

It may be said, however, that the Government schools are more numerously attended than hitherto. This is true, but it is not the whole truth. The real question is, are there more children, relatively to the increase of population, in attendance at the schools this year in the Colony than there were during the previous year? And the next, is, have the neglected children been reached. What, in the first place, is the true state of the case in reference to the increased attendance at the Government schools? It arises, if not altogether at least chiefly, from the fact that large numbers of children who used to frequent private schools now patronise those of the Government on account of the gratuitous instruction given there. The additional pupils, therefore, are for the most part those whose parents were able and willing to bear the expenses of their education, but who are now quite content to allow them to be educated at the public expense. Some, too, of the denominational schools have been handed over to the Government, and a part of the increase may, consequently, be attributed to this cause.

But what about the poorest and most neglected class of children? This is the all-important question; it is for such that Government schools are intended, and if they do not attract the poorest and most neglected children in the community, there is hardly any reason why they should exist at all. People who are able to educate their children will do so. How is it, then, in Victoria? What about the gutter children? It appears they are gutter children still; and not a few who had been at Government schools have, during the last year, been scared away by the large influx of respectable well dressed children.

The denominations and the benevolent, at their own expense, may take charge of the gutter children, whilst the public educates gratuitously the children of respectable and well-to-do parents; and politicians and bigots, in order to secure for themselves place and pension, denounce popery and denominational education.

But whilst the Victorian system of gratuitous education is in itself impolitic and unjust, whilst it compels people who have no children to pay for the education of their neighbours' children; in reference to the Catholics, it is especially tyrannical and unjust. The population is taxed at the rate of nine shillings per head for the support of this system; and as Catholics are one in five, they must pay £100,000 this year for the maintenance of a system of education to which they are conscientiously opposed, whilst bearing the entire expense of the education of their own children. And the Victorian statesmen are not ashamed! *O Tempora! O Mores!*

WEEKLY EPILOGUE.

THE thirty-second session of the Provincial Council of Otago was opened on the 1st inst., at noon, by His Honor the Superintendent. Mr Gillies was elected Speaker, Mr Reynolds withdrawing after he had been proposed, and Major Richardson declining the honor.