

interest in St. Joseph's Boys' School. I am happy to be able to bear testimony that this school is an excellent one, that it maintains the character it earned long ago, and gives evidence that it will go on improving year after year, as in the past, until, after a time, it shall have attained the very height of perfection. I am sure I only give expression to your sentiments this evening when I say we are all very much obliged to the boys for the distinguished entertainment they have given us; and for fear I might forget them I may also say I give expression to your sentiment and feeling when I say we are under deep obligation to the good Brothers for all the labour and zeal that they have manifested in the care of our boys. To this care and zeal we are indebted in a great measure for the proficiency of the school, and for the admirable entertainment we have witnessed this evening. It is unnecessary for me to enlarge upon this subject, for you all understand how great and high are the services of the Brothers; and we are all, I am confident, most grateful to them for what they have done, for the many years they have laboured here for our children. For 20 years I have been arguing the same question annually at the distribution of prizes in this school. I have also argued the question on other occasions, and have written a good deal about it, so that really I think there is nothing that I can say that is new to offer for your consideration this evening. But if you will be so good as to bear with me for five or six minutes, I should like very much to put all that I have said and written hitherto, as it were, in a nutshell. I like to put on record on an occasion like this our position in reference to the education question, and to renew our demand for justice and fair play. The Government of this country, backed by the people of the country as a people, have established a system of education of which we cannot conscientiously avail ourselves. Therefore we have established schools for ourselves, and in the midst of great difficulties and after great sacrifices we have provided for our children an excellent education wherever any considerable number of Catholic children is to be found. Here in this town nearly 900 children are attending the Catholic schools, and as we support these schools ourselves, unaided by the Government, we are saving the Government no less a sum than £3600 a year, and we have done this for 13 years. The sum is an easy one, if you take the trouble to tot it up. The result is that we have saved the Government in this town alone a very large sum of money in the past few years, and if, then, you consider what we Catholics have done throughout New Zealand, you will find we have saved the Government something between £30,000 and £40,000 a year during 13 years, so that I believe the public is actually indebted to us in the sum of very nearly half a million of money. We have been wronged to this extent, and I do not hesitate to use strong language, as I generally do use strong language when speaking upon this subject, because my sense of justice and fair play has been always outraged. We have been plundered. That is the term; that is the word. We have been plundered of the sum of nearly half a million of money because we have conscience and faith. I am surprised that our fellow-citizens are not ashamed to find themselves guilty of such enormous robbery, and of inflicting such a crying injustice on their fellow-citizens. It was said in the beginning that we would not hold out—that the burden would be so great that we should be obliged after a little while to accept the Government system of education. But we have not done so, nor are we likely to do so. On the contrary, as time has gone on we have been doing better and better for our own schools, and this is a matter so evident that many who in the beginning opposed our claims to justice and fair play, frankly acknowledge that there is no hope of inducing Catholic people to throw away their conscience, or to endanger or abandon their faith. In the beginning, also, we were met by some very comical arguments. When we complained of this injustice, we were told by some shallow people—and all our opponents at that time were very shallow—that we had no claim. That we might as well refuse or complain or remonstrate against paying taxes for the support of the police force of the country, and, lastly, that we might as well claim to be exempt from paying for the railways. Well, that argument has been exploded long ago. If we paid for police always to look after ourselves, and some people say that that would be very just and proper, then, indeed, we would have a claim. But as the police force that does for other people does very well for us, it is only fair, of course, that we should pay our share to its support. And it is the same way with the railways. If we had a railway system ourselves—and that might be very convenient for our poor children coming to school—it would not be fair to tax us for the railways; but as we use them like other people we cannot complain about paying our share, so that those arguments seriously brought forward in the beginning have on consideration been found to be so extremely absurd that everybody has given up throwing them at us. Then we are told there is no other system possible except the present godless system established by the Parliament of the country. Well, the people who say that must have a very low idea indeed of the intellectual powers of their fellow citizens. No other system possible! Is there not intellect enough in the country to devise any other system? Is there not genius enough in the country to do that which is fair and just and honourable? Is the intelligence of the country of such a character that our statesmen and fellow citizens can devise nothing but that which is mean? For is it not mean for people to take your money to give godless free education to their own children, while we are paying smartly for the education of our own children? Look at the kinds of argument brought forward against us. The arguments of men without intelligence and intellect, and arguments only calculated to insult the intelligence of the country—arguments which make those at a distance laugh at the statesmen of New Zealand. Thus, we are told, it is impossible to do anything else. Surely that which exists in other countries is possible here. In England and Scotland there is more justice than here. In England and Scotland we have not the state of things which exists here. Yet people came here to do better. Here they boast of their democracy, whereas, the fact is, they are less democratic and just—consequently more unjust—than in England and Scotland. In England and Scotland the Catholic schools receive aid. The State recognises the Catholics as tax-payers, and they have not yet descended to the low depth of meanness of taking money off Catholics, and employing it wholly

and entirely to their own purposes. But our great Democrats, who have come to this country to establish a model government, have for their principle not justice, not fair play, not common sense, but a majority. It is a majority must rule—counting heads, not counting intellects; counting numbers, not counting brains. It is the majority that must rule us, forsooth; not justice, nor fair play, nor common sense; and the example of other countries is lost on our great Liberal Democrats—men who take a delight in tyrannising over their fellow citizens, and in rifling their pockets for their own special purposes. Surely that which exists in Canada is possible here, and in Canada there is the most just system of education conceivable. No man's conscience there is interfered with. Siress is put upon no man's views there, but even justice is done to every man without exception. In Canada there are several provinces. There is the province, for example, of Quebec, where 99 out of every hundred people are Catholics, and the Provincial Government of Quebec does the most absolute justice to the minority though insignificant, and gives it equal rights. Then if you go to another province, Ontario, where the majority are Protestant, we find a similar state of things. There the Catholics are in a minority, but they are on a footing of perfect equality with their fellow citizens in the matter of education. Ontario is similar to New Zealand, though it is larger in population and has a wider territory to look after, and wherever in Ontario there are 30 children of school age, and the parents of these children wish to have a school for themselves, the law of the land is that the parents of these children can elect a school committee for themselves, and the moment that is done, all the taxes the parents of those children pay for schools are handed over to their own committee, and not only is that the fact, but other people, who think that the Catholics are entitled to extraordinary aid, are entitled to tell the tax collector to give their taxes to the Catholic committee, and very many Protestants do that. Then the central Government of the country makes an annual vote, and the school committee receives a *pro rata* share of that vote, so that there the schools of the Government have not a penny of advantage over the denominational schools. That is justice and fair play. Catholics are not obliged to find taxes to pay for the free and godless education of mean people, for I call them nothing less than mean people, while they have to pay for the entire cost of their own children. There justice and fair play are recognised and given to every man. No one has any advantage over another. There are no people bawling and fattening upon the plunder of the Catholics of the country as there are here. There is no special interest—no peculiar interest—established by doing injustice, as is the case here, but there all have fair play. The Catholics where they are in the ascendant, as in Quebec, give perfect justice to their non-Catholic fellow citizens, and the Protestant majority of Ontario give perfect fair play and justice to their non-Protestant fellow citizens (applause). Now if that be the state of things in Canada, why could not a similar state of things be here? There is nothing in the wide world to prevent it, but that while in Canada there is a sense of justice and fair play and the people there have brains and hearts and are in earnest in support of education, here, I do solemnly declare my conviction that it is not education so much they care for as trampling upon the Catholics of the country (loud applause). And now I will go one step further. Where has this system of godless education originated? Who have been the originators of it, and for what purpose have they originated it? There can be no doubt whatever about what I am going to say now, because I have official documents in my possession to establish the truth of every word I shall state. It is the Freemason lodges in Italy and France—mind you, I do not include the Freemasons of England, because they have separated themselves from those godless men, but it is the Freemason lodges of Italy and France who started this idea of godless education for the express purpose of destroying Christianity, and above all the Catholic religion. And who are the men who are foremost in maintaining this system of injustice, and of trampling upon us, and of keeping their heel upon our necks? They are the emissaries of the godless Freemason lodges of Italy and France (applause). Now, I am saying nothing about the lodges in Italy and France, but what they are saying of themselves. They have their newspapers, they have their periodicals; their leading men from time to time are making speeches before the public, and these are reported in the papers—all these, one and all, have declared and have made a boast of it, that it was they who originated this idea of godless education, and that the object of doing so was to destroy Christianity, and above all the Catholic Church and the Papacy. The system is godless; it is anti-Christian. Its principal object is to destroy the knowledge of Christianity, to wring the very idea of Christ out of the minds and hearts of the rising generation; and any Catholic who gives his aid towards the maintenance of this system of education is an apostate Catholic. He does not deserve the name of Catholic (applause); and I will go further and say this. We had an election here lately. I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of Catholics voted as they ought to vote; but I have been assured that a few Catholics did not vote as they ought to have voted, but voted for men who declared they would not give the Catholics justice. I say these Catholics have denied their religion (loud applause). They are unworthy men. They do not deserve to be in our body. They do not deserve to be permitted to consort with us. They have abandoned Christ. They have joined the men whose object it is to destroy Christianity and to destroy the Catholic religion. They have made themselves the abettors of those men. They have helped them into power in order that injustice might be persevered in, and that those men might have power to trample upon us, and to violate our consciences. Now if the people of this country wish to be just, there is nothing easier and nothing more simple than to do an act of justice to us. They can imitate the example of England and Scotland; they can imitate the example of Canada—Quebec, Ontario, and other provinces. They can do that if they wish to, but they do not wish to do it, and they continue using absurd arguments to throw dust into the eyes of the people, who either do not think or are incapable of thinking. We have fought, and in fighting the battle of Christianity we have been fighting the battle of social order and social peace. As the Catholics of the country we