

matter and show that a change for the worse has taken place. In politics it was the same. Might was right, and but few persons now regard the justice of any proposal under consideration. The same writer said that the people of New Zealand were, in consequence of the education system, the most enlightened community under the sun. Well, that writer stood in no need of repeating the prayer uttered by an old Scotch lady, who said: "May the Lord gie us a guid opinion o'ourselves" (laughter). We may be the most enlightened people that ever lived, but he knew or had read of but few communities more easily imposed upon by political and religious quacks than the very community in which they were living. In politics or in theology no proposition, however grotesque or illogical it might be, but would have followers by the thousand (loud applause). Perhaps that was a way they had of manifesting the enlightenment resulting from their marvellous system of education. Coming to the great question of how grievances of Catholics were to be remedied, he said they must look at the objections which would be urged against them. He did not think the prejudice against Catholics as such was now as strong as many persons supposed. The fact that Mr W. B. Perceval was returned second on the poll for Christchurch, though an advanced supporter of the claims of Catholics, was a strong proof of this. The great obstacle that he thought stood in the way of justice to Catholics was the fear of workingmen, that if aid were granted to Catholic schools, the present system of free education would be broken down, and that school fees would be reinforced. Now it appears from what had been said by Messrs Nolan and White that it cost the Government from £4 to £5 a head to educate children in the State schools, while the same work was done by Catholics at a cost of £1 5s per head. Perhaps if it were definitely known that while Catholics considered as a matter of strict right and justice that they were entitled to as much per head of the education grant as was paid to the State schools, yet that as a compromise for a time at all events they would be satisfied with, say two pounds per head, the moderation as well as the justice of their demands might disarm opposition. Nor could it be said that the granting of their claims would lead to others making similar demands. Even if they did,

sum paid by the Catholics of this country to secure freedom of religion for the children. That £40,000 is a fine paid yearly for liberty of conscience. And this is a land where liberty is for all. This is not a matter of sentiment, it is a matter of justice. The law that forces that fine upon the Catholics of this Colony is an unjust law, and we all know that an unjust law does not bind. There is no more justice in that law than in the law which in former days said: "No Catholic shall possess a horse worth more than £5." That is one of the penal laws of the past. There is not a bit more justice in our present education law than there was in that which said all Catholics shall attend the Protestant church; those who do not shall pay a fine of £20 a month. The case is precisely the same now. Catholics shall send their children to the godless schools or they shall pay a fine of £40,000. This is a smiling and a glorious country. You may call it a land of freedom; but I fail to see the freedom of the Catholics, made subject to a law like that.—Carried unanimously.

Mr R. Dobbin proposed the fourth resolution, which was as follows:—"That a committee be formed to see that every Catholic duly qualified be registered on the electoral roll of the district in which he resides." In moving the resolution, Mr Dobbin hoped he would be excused if he said that the past attitude of the Catholics of New Zealand in general, and of Christchurch in particular, had always irritated him. They seemed to rehearse their grievances without taking any steps to get them redressed. He trusted that that meeting might be taken as a sign that the days of mere talk were passed, and that the time for action had arrived. The first thing we had to do was to ascertain our strength in the constituencies, to organise our forces, and to throw all our weight upon the same point. He hoped the day was not far distant when we should be in a position to approach the leaders of parties in the country with a statement of our numerical strength, and to pledge our united support to the party favourable to our claims. But before this could be accomplished committees must be formed to see that Catholics register their votes, know how to vote, and vote for the right man. When this was done he believed the Catholics of New Zealand would be in a fair way to

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there was no reason why the country should pay four or five pounds per head for work that could be done for half the money. He merely wished to suggest to the leaders of the movement that it might be better if it was definitely known that concessions would satisfy the Catholics. The more moderate it was, of course, the more likely in his opinion was it to be granted. The great thing at present was to get all possible Catholic voters on the roll. Then when election time comes round, for the leaders of the movement in the different parts of the Colony to act unitedly so as to make the Catholic vote as effective as possible in the way of making its influence felt in all parts of the Colony. Other classes in the community were organising to protect their interests, and Catholics had an equal right to do the same. It was not numbers so much as thorough organisation which gave such power to unionism. If Catholics organised in a like manner the day of obtaining redress of their grievance was not far distant. Again thanking his Lordship for having asked him to take part in the meeting, he concluded by moving the following resolution—"That we claim as an act of justice our due share of the taxes paid by all for the elementary education of the children of the Colony, and we are resolved to vote for no candidate who will not publicly pledge himself to support the Catholic claims."

This resolution was seconded by Bev Father Bell, who spoke as follows:—"I have ever been taught from my youth to look upon the colonies as the place where justice was done to the honest workman; where he could use the energies which God gave him, and see the fruits of his labour. Australasia was held out to our hopes as the place where industry reaped its reward.

"Cheer, boys! cheer,
There's wealth for honest labour,
Cheer, boys! cheer,
For the new and happy land."

I thought that the oppression of the old country was a thing of the past, and that penalties for religion would never disgrace the statute book of a country like New Zealand. I was doomed to disappointment. Pains and penalties for religion were not a thing of the past; they exist at the present moment. £40,000 a year is the

obtain redress of their grievances.

Mr H. H. Loughnan, in seconding the resolution, said that if the large attendance of Catholics at this meeting could be taken as evidence that the Catholics of this part of New Zealand were at length shaking off the apparent lethargy which had for so long characterised their attitude towards secular education, it was a matter upon which Catholics as a body might well congratulate themselves. For many years in Canterbury no one had been found able, ready, and willing to step on to a public platform and advocate with his whole heart and soul the sacred rights of Catholics in this matter. No one had attempted to organise or in any way turn the voting power of Catholics to a useful purpose. Up to this time every individual Catholic elector had found himself to be powerless to control or in the slightest degree influence for good the elections in which he had been called upon to take part, and thus had come about this extraordinary state of things that, although it would seem that Catholics possessed a fair numerical strength in many constituencies, nowhere, as far as he could learn, had candidates thought it necessary or advisable to attempt to secure the Catholic vote. He hoped that the committee spoken of in the resolution would prove itself of practical utility, and the result would be that the ill-directed, disunited Catholic vote of the past would be moulded into a powerful weapon of offence and defence for the future. With regard to the chances of success he was of opinion that in this part of the Colony such opposition as was to be found to this Catholic claim to a share in the public money spent on education was founded not so much on a spirit of religious intolerance as on the thin-end-of-the-wedge argument, well referred to by a previous speaker. Religious intolerance of the kind alluded to had not, he thought, any large hold in Canterbury, but the opposition to Catholic claims was kept alive, if really it existed at all, by continuous repetition of the bug-bear—that assistance to denominational schools involved the destruction of the national scheme of education, the lapse of the whole people into ignorance and barbarism. It was evident, however, from many of the signs of the times that numbers of men who had been influenced by this mistake were now beginning to realise that the threatened

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