

your best attention to the various speakers who are to address you in proposing and seconding the different resolutions. Let cordiality mark our proceedings to-day, as I had the gratification to witness in the discussion of other important business which I have hitherto subjected to your consideration."

Mr P. Henley proposed the first resolution:—"That this meeting desires to give public expression of thanks to the bishops of New Zealand for their constant and energetic advocacy of the rights of Catholic parents to educate their children according to the dictates of conscience; and we promise to do our duty in obedience to the resolutions formulated by the hierarchy at their meeting in Dunedin last August." Mr Henley, who, on coming forward to propose the resolution was greeted by applause, said:—"Ladies and gentlemen, it is with pleasure and at the same time a certain amount of diffidence I appear before you to testify my heartiest approval of this excellent movement, diffidence because I cannot as I would wish to justice to this resolution. Ladies and gentlemen, how can we render sufficient thanks to our zealous bishops for their self-sacrifice, and the wisdom they have displayed in the discharge of their sacred office? The bishops of the Catholic Church have shown themselves to be true apostles, evangelising the country with a zeal and devotedness similar to what we read of in the primitive ages of the Church; and not only without the comfort and convenience enjoyed in the older countries, but sometimes at great risk of life. As one of the oldest pioneers in Canterbury, I can speak from personal experience how our bishops had to travel long and tedious journeys by sea and land, crossing swollen rivers and precipitous mountain ranges, had in fact, to use a colonial expression, 'to rough it' very often. From the first days of colonisation we have seen them with the wisdom of far-seeing statesmen make provision for church and school sites which now prove of inestimable value. They have out of the slender support rendered by their flocks (no government endowment) got erected schools, convents, colleges, and churches which now dot this fair land. It would be impossible for me, ladies and gentlemen, to tell you in a short speech of the services our bishops have rendered to Church and State. I will ask you to cast your eyes over the

having failed to train a generation of enlightened and law-abiding citizens. Out of the mouths of gentlemen of different professions, not excepting the bishops of the Protestant Church and leading parsons, lawyers, and others speaking on this subject, all trace the growing increase of crime and larrikinism to that incubus upon the people—that national calamity, the public system of education. While all are unanimous in their condemnation of the public system of education as being conducive to bring up a race of unbelievers and freethinkers, still we regret to see that those very leaders of denominational bodies uphold this system rather than give their voice and influence in favour of Catholic claims. It is, therefore, necessary for us to make our case known and show how unjust and iniquitous is that law which obliges us to pay for the education of other people's children while we are conscientiously obliged to erect and maintain separate schools for the education of our own." Mr Bourke then moved the following resolution—"That this meeting protests against the present system of public instruction as unjust to a large portion of colonists (namely the Catholic body), which compels us to pay for the education of the children of other people, while obliged upon the motives of conscience to erect and maintain at our sole expense separate schools for the education of our own children. And we are determined, with the members of other denominations who likewise condemn the present Godless system, to agitate for an amendment in the present Public Schools' Act in the way of payment by results."

Mr M. Ryan, Broadfield, in seconding this resolution, apologised for not being a fluent speaker. My method, said the speaker, is in action rather than words. I believe it takes some time and no small amount of labour to obtain the redress of any grievance; but time and energy can do wonders. We Catholics labour under a galling and oppressive grievance; one that should not stain the records of a flourishing and free country as New Zealand is. Therefore we will resolutely go to work, and by time and unceasing agitation, work for the redress of this grievance. I have much pleasure in seconding this resolution."

Mr Leatham, who, in his jovial good-natured manner stepped forward to propose the third resolution, was greeted with rounds of

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Colony from north to south and see yourselves what is done in the way of educational establishments. According to Parliamentary reports a sum little short of £390,000 has been expended by the Catholic body in securing land, and erecting schools, with an annual expenditure of at least £50,000, and an average attendance ever increasing of 13,000 children. These are facts that prove the extraordinary wisdom of our bishops their practical zeal for religion and education, so that they deserve the best thanks not alone of Catholics, who look up to them with pride and gratitude, but also of every true religious man in the Colony and friend of education. With these remarks I have the honour, ladies and gentlemen to propose the resolution."

Mr M. O'Neil seconded this resolution, and in doing so said he endorsed every word spoken by the previous speaker. It was plain to everyone who wished to distinguish the true successor of the Apostles from the counterfeit that the bishops of the Catholic Church and they alone, could, for zeal in the cause of the gospel and self-sacrifice, lay claim to that office. "Our bishops are the real watchguards in the house of Israel, and we are deeply grateful to them for the benefits and advantages we enjoy in the practice of our holy religion. It is with great pleasure I second this resolution."

Mr W. Bourke said, "rev chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I have been invited to propose the second resolution. I wish it was entrusted to some other person who could show you better than I can with what good reason we, as Catholics, protest against the public system of education. It is not in any spirit of opposition to the system as a channel of education, and far less in any spirit of blind bigotry we raise our voice in protest against this iniquitous legislation. There is not, ladies and gentlemen, any institution in the wide world more devoted to enlightenment than the Catholic Church, as there is no more staunch and truer friend of liberty than that grand old Church, which in every age has sounded the note that all men are brothers and equal in the sight of God. It is her love of enlightenment, true enlightenment, and her desire of true liberty and equality that have urged her to step forward and condemn in unmeasured terms a system of public instruction, which after fifteen years of existence is condemned by the voice of its promoters as

unpleasant. He said:—"Rev chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—It is unnecessary for me to dwell upon the first part of this resolution which I have the honour to propose. That has been very ably and very lucidly treated by one of the previous speakers, my friend Mr Bourke. I will, therefore, ask your attention while I submit to your consideration the second part, namely, that we resolve to support no candidate who will not publicly pledge himself to support the Catholic claims. This, I think, is quite within our legitimate right, and the privilege of free men, to be able to record your vote freely and preferentially for one whom you know by his public utterance to be ready to defend your just rights. Some may, at first sight, imagine this is asking too much and may be disposed to have no little trepidation and shyness in making this demand of the candidate who will think well to seek our suffrage. Now I ask you to reflect and weigh the proposition. If you do you will, I feel certain, be convinced that, so far from its being too strong or formidable, it is only the correct thing, showing that we are alive to a sense of duty, and prepared to stand up for our rights in this age of vaunted liberty and equality. Why, any candidate who would be afraid or ashamed to declare himself ready to support and defend the just claims of any portion of his constituents would be a dishonourable man, not to say an impudent knave, and it is evident, instead of representing his clients in court, he would be grossly misrepresenting their dearest interests. How is it that the members of every association and corporate body may obtain such a pledge of the candidate, who is always most outspoken in declaring his willingness to obtain redress of any grievance inflicted upon the members of that association he represents? Why, then, should we shrink from making this demand, and why should any honourable man be afraid to comply with this usual custom? The reason is well known to you, ladies and gentlemen. We have been subjected to insults similar to those cast upon our co-religionists in England and Ireland. The Public Schools Act is a penal law, and certain bloated bigots think they can, without injury to their purse and place, keep us under their heel everywhere, but I tell you they are mistaken, and if they do not already see their error they must be blinded with prejudice. We are determined to stand together as we have done on a former occasion when, by united