

let him submit the evidence in point, which we have demanded or shall demand, to a committee of inquiry jointly named by the Rev. Mr. Isitt and the editor of this paper—the findings to be published in the 'Prohibitionist' and the 'N.Z. Tablet.' Do our reverend friend and his informant accept our challenge? If they do, we think we can safely promise interesting developments.

The extent to which Father Hays was 'influenced' by the notorious Wellington address may be gauged by the two following facts: he publicly repudiated it in our issue of February 11, 1904; and in a letter before us (in reply to the eight Catholic signatories referred to above) he states that he had decided, if he could see his way, to visit New Zealand, in consequence of invitations received by him long before the extremely suspicious communication from the undiscoverable Wellington 'two hundred' was ever dreamed of.

(3) There is one, and only one, thing in the Rev. Mr. Isitt's letter that has given us real disappointment and pain. It is the nonchalant way in which he dismisses the flagrant falsehood, published in his journal, that Catholics have been officially certified by the Government statistician to furnish two out of five of all the drunkards in New Zealand. Surely, such an outrageous untruth calls for more serious reparation than a halting statement that, if our reverend friend had seen it in time, he would 'probably have asked permission to omit' it when publishing the now notorious Wellington 'Catholic' address. What becomes of his promise to correct that statement in his paper 'even now at the eleventh hour'? We had expected and expected better things from our reverend friend. He, at least, has shown himself capable of rising above the bitterness and pettiness of mere sectarian feeling. But Catholics have been taught by long experience to expect, from the bulk of his co-leaders and co-workers in the Prohibitionist movement, only insult and outrage to their most cherished religious sentiments. The Rev. Mr. Isitt's lay and clerical confreres are themselves responsible for the suspicion with which the Prohibition party is viewed by very many Catholics in New Zealand. It is not thus in Victoria. But in this Colony that suspicion has been created and burned in by the extraordinary violence—not to say savagery—with which a number of the leading advocates of Prohibition attack the Catholic Church and body; by the ostentatious offensiveness with which they head every no-Popery movement; by the shameless manner in which many of them lend themselves to the filthy campaigns of impostors like the Slatterys and of degraded gaol-birds and fallen women like Margaret Shepherd. We have reason to know that all these coarse manifestations of sectarian rancor are putrid carrion to the nostrils of the Rev. F. W. Isitt. But Catholics are neither deaf nor blind nor devoid of common human feelings. And this crying scandal of intemperance and inflammatory no-Popery, that clings around so large a part of the personnel of Prohibition officialdom, furnishes one explanation of the difficulty which even Catholic advocates of No-license find in co-operating in the social or political work of the New Zealand Alliance.

Notes

Tangled Counsels

It was said of Goldsmith, in a mock epitaph, that he 'wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll.' We do not know that the hired political agent of the Bible-in-schools Conference writes like an angel. We hardly think he does. But he certainly talks like poor Poll on the Bible-in-schools scheme. His utterances in Dunedin, at any rate, are a mere parrot repetition of the fallacies, contradictions, evasions, and false assumptions that swarm in the public pronouncements of his em-

ployers. We have, for instance, the same old demand for a 'referendum' which (as they well know) is not a referendum, but merely a plebiscite. We have the same old cry that 'religious instruction' is not intended—and all the time the Conference is endeavoring to introduce into our schools the course of what is officially called 'religious instruction' drawn up by a Royal Commission in Victoria. There is the same weary repetition about the bogus 'conscience clause,' coupled with the same significant evasion of the deadly evidence of its utter worthlessness that was published by our Hierarchy. And, crowning all, the public are again asked to take seriously the good old 'snake-yarn' about the 'huge majorities' obtained at the sham, open-vote, amateur 'plebiscites' of three years ago.

Thus far the paid agitator of the Bible-in-schools League. But things livened up a bit when other speakers at the Dunedin meeting 'got a houlty iv the flure.' In an unfortunate moment the League's paid politician declared that politics would be kept out of the movement. Well, Mr. Bedford, M.H.R., felt that politics should enter into it—even to the extent of suppressing the Upper House and kicking the Seddon party out of power. Last week we quoted another Bible-in-schools leader (Rev. I. Jolly, of Palmerston North), who stoutly maintained that it was indispensably necessary to drag the movement into 'the turmoil of the political arena' and to 'let politicians know that the question means votes.' And did not Dr. Gibb make a statement identical in substance? And at a recent meeting of the Dunedin Presbytery another standard-bearer in the agitation declared that 'the whole tone and trend' of the movement 'were to the effect that Seddonism would soon come to an end, and that then the Bible-party would have their way.' One speaker (Mr. Wright) stood for 'Bible-reading only' (from the discredited King James's version of the Protestant Bible). The League Conference pleads variously for 'Bible-reading only,' for selected Scripture lessons with 'simple explanations of a literary, historical, and ethical character,' and for 'religious instruction.' The League's political agent declared that its weather-cock proposals had shifted, for the moment, to 'Bible-reading simply.' One reverend speaker (Rev. Mr. Laws) commended the New South Wales system. Another (Rev. Mr. Hodge) was concerned only with the literary side of the Bible, and darkly hinted at the general formation of 'great denominational schools,' if the New Zealand Parliament will not relent. And yet another (Rev. W. Hay) was fully prepared to 'take the risk' of 'the thin edge of religious teaching and sectarianism' being introduced into our public schools. All things considered, it seems that the Bible-in-schools people want something very badly, but do not know what it is they want. It seems that this is about the extent of the 'marvellous unanimity' about which the Rev. Dr. Gibb spun such a sweet little fairy tale into the ear of the Premier once upon a time.

DIocese OF DUNEDIN

The annual meeting of the members of St. Joseph's Mens' Club takes place on April 7.

At St. Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday a mission for the women of the parish will be begun by the Jesuit Fathers.

A mission by the Jesuit Fathers will be begun in St. Patrick's Basilica, South Dunedin, on Sunday, April 9.

The new church in Invercargill is rapidly approaching completion. The solemn opening is fixed for the second Sunday after Easter.

The new Catholic Church at Bald Hill Flat is to be solemnly blessed and opened on Sunday next. The ceremony is to be performed by the Very Rev. Mgr. O'Leary.

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