

journalistic Bayard rises in its place and with portentous solemnity lectures the 'Tablet' on truth and fair-play and honor-bright! Our Nelson contemporary's 'wisdoms' are, apparently, like those of Pudd'nhead Wilson: 'the author did not gather them from practice, but from observation. To be good is noble, but to show others how to be good is nobler, and is no trouble.'

The 'wisdoms' came to us in this way. Some time ago we stated that the recent School Committee elections in Nelson were run 'on a religious issue'; that certain intolerants 'seem to have been at the bottom' of the affair; and that they were 'solidly defeated.' Our Nelson Mentor's answer is: 'You lie!' Or (to quote it textually) it describes us as guilty of 'deliberate untruthfulness'—the cumbrous way of saying 'lie.' Our contemporary's logic and its manners are evidently in as urgent need of overhauling as its code of journalistic ethics. It so happens that our statements are strictly and literally true. Our Nelson critic is evidently trying to escape unwelcome attention to itself by recourse to the familiar resort of the runaway pick-pocket who cries 'Stop thief!'

The Nelson School Committee election was 'run on a religious issue.' We have this on no less an authority than a Press Association message that (we believe) emanated from the office of the Nelson 'Evening Mail.' It 'hinged,' we were told, 'on the determination to compel the Committee and the Education Board to enforce the provisions of the non-exemption certificates of the Act in regard to Catholic schools.' The sentence has the fuzziness of meaning that one expects as a matter of course from the 'Mail.' But the religious issue stands out in sufficient relief—namely, the fixed 'determination' to restrict by certain conditions the right (freely enjoyed elsewhere in New Zealand) of attendance at 'Catholic schools.' Our Nelson critic apparently differs from us as to the direction from which the latest apple of discord was tossed into the arena of local politics. But here its chronic lack of clearness leaves us more or less in a fog. So far, however, as we have been able to gather its meaning from a long special article, it seems, in some way not particularised, to place the original sin at the door of the Catholics. Our excitable contemporary is, however, somewhat fact-shy, and in its philosophy the course of things is often inverted, and they run up-stream. It will therefore be worth while to place the facts of the recent Nelson School Committee election in their proper setting. For several years the Nelson Education Board inspector inspected all the Catholic schools in their district. Some years ago (about 1900, we think) the Board intimated that its inspector could not, owing to pressure of work, undertake the additional arduous duty of examining St. Mary's schools, Nelson, in which three hundred to four hundred children are being taught. 'Application was therefore made to the Government,' says our Nelson correspondent, 'to appoint their own inspector. This was done. The results are public property. They have, as a rule, been extremely satisfactory.' (Our correspondent then gives detailed lists of the successes of the local Catholic schools, concluding thus: 'Of the twenty-one successful candidates at the late pupil-teachers' entrance examinations, four hail from Nelson, and, of these four, three were prepared for examination in the local Catholic schools, which need no puff or gloss of mine to emphasise the efficiency of their training'.)

Matters entered upon a new stage some months ago. 'The Nelson Education Board,' says our correspondent, 'desired that certificates of exemption should be procured for all children attending private schools. These certificates were to be granted to the Manager by the Board, or, individually, to the parents of the children on application to the School Committee. The Manager

of the Catholic schools (Father Clancy) declined to apply to the Board. The only alternative therefore left was for the parents to apply individually to the School Committee for the exemption certificates. This was done in several cases. The result was an eye-opener. No reply came from the Committee to the requests of the parents! Their letters were not answered—not even acknowledged. After some time the Committee declared its intention to prosecute all parents sending children to private schools without certificates of exemption! It was then high time to look to our defence. The result is already known. The Catholic parents quietly went in a body to the Provincial Hall. Four new members of Committee were nominated. They are described by a local paper as "Catholic nominees." As a matter of fact they were every one nominated by non-Catholics. And of the four, only one (Coddell) is a Catholic. The remaining three (Craig, Paul, and Lamb) are non-Catholics. These four were elected, along with some members of the old Committee. The members of the old body to whom greatest objection was taken were relegated to private life. The new Committee has thrown new life into its work. Inquiry was speedily made by them as to why the letters claiming exemption certificates were left unanswered. The members of the old Committee present when this information was demanded (among them the present chairman, the Rev. Mr. Kempthorne) declared that they had not even seen the letters! At the next meeting, the discussion will be continued, and the public may then, perhaps, learn why the applications sent in were not placed before the old Committee and granted at the proper time.'

There is the abundant justification for our statement that the recent School Committee election in Nelson was run on a religious issue; that this was the work, not of the great and sane and fair-minded body of the people of Nelson, but of a few intolerants; and that the attempt was solidly defeated. The whole trouble arose from the 'determination' to 'penalise, in the matter of certificates, pupils attending the Catholic schools.' 'Determination' is the word advisedly used in the Press Association telegram that emanated (presumably) from the office of a newspaper so notoriously hostile to Catholics as is the 'Evening Mail.' And—quite apart from the facts already cited—we may safely assume it to be cognisant of the counsels and intentions that were dissipated by the defensive tactics unexpectedly adopted by the ill-used Catholics and by fair-minded non-Catholics to whom even the semblance of unfair discrimination is odious. The people who raised the religious issue over the Nelson School Committee elections were those who committed an act of war upon the Catholic schools by penalising them in the matter of exemption certificates. The real offenders were not those who defended their rights, but those who made that defence necessary. On these the lash must fall, and not upon the men (Catholic and non-Catholic) who used the machinery of the Act to punish the perpetration of such scandalous and illegal partiality in the past, and to upset the 'determination' to continue on the same lines in the future. On Deuteronomic principles, the blame must rest with those few intolerants who first lit the fire.

Notes

'Tragedy in a Church'

The 'Auckland Weekly News' of June 21 published the following tale from a far off land:—

'Madrid, May 5.—A terrible tragedy took place today in the Church of Santo Domingo at Murcia. While a famous Jesuit priest, Father Pedro Morales, was celebrating Mass at the high altar, another priest named

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