



*'To promote the cause of Religion and Justice by the ways of Truth and Peace.'*

LEO XIII to the N.Z. TABLET.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1900.

PRIVATE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.



THE Government are to be highly commended for sticking to their guns in the matter of 'The Private Industrial Schools Inspection and Industrial Schools Act Amendment Bill,' which was made the opportunity by a certain section of members in both Houses of the Legislature for stirring up the 'yellow dog' and having a gird at Catholic institutions. In moving the second reading of the Bill in the Legislative Council, the Minister for Education, the Hon. W. C. WALKER, made an admirable speech, in which he fully set forth the scope, tenor and intention of the measure. He premised that it was a matter of regret that legislation of this nature should be necessary, especially when the necessity arose because of misconduct on the part of the managers of any private industrial school. He had visited, he said, these schools in the course of his travels and met the managers and those who were teaching the boys. He saw the boys, and everything, so far as he could see, was going on satisfactorily. He knew the managers to be men of education and character, whilst the teaching was in the hands of one of the first teaching Orders of the Roman Catholic Church. It was a terrible shock to him and had been a matter of concern ever since this matter had cropped up that these things should have taken place. If, he proceeded to say, he had been in Parliament when the Act of 1882 was passed, he should not probably have been in favor of those private institutions being allowed to take State children. He had always felt a difficulty in the matter; not as to any fear that the children would not be well treated—in fact, anyone who went to see them could not say they were not treated fairly well. Take, he said, the report of the Commissioners who had dealt with this question. They find fault with certain trifling points of clothing; they say the food might have been a little more varied; but still they say that the children looked healthy and well, and they pointed to the fact that, during so many months there had been nothing in the matter of health, as testified by the medical officers. What he did not like about this system was that these private institutions always keep the children as long as they can, whereas the object should in his opinion be, to do what the Government do in their industrial schools, put the children out as soon as possible. He considered, therefore, that the Bill would tend to the good of the State if it tended to take some of the children away from these schools. What the Bill endeavored to do was not to destroy any of these institutions if managed in what Parliament was entitled to think was a proper manner. It was evident from the report of the Royal Commission at Nelson that the real source of the trouble at Stoke arose from the fact that there was an amount of avoidance of responsibility—that, while the Government looked to one gentleman as manager, that gentleman handed over the responsibility to somebody else, who was responsible to another gentleman across the seas. That was the first defect that the Bill desired to remedy. Then a great deal more power was given to the Government over the children in these schools, and very direct powers of inspection. Power was also given, if at any time the Minister was not satisfied with the management, to withdraw the inmates from any of these private schools, and the Minister might, with the approval of the Governor-in-Council, purchase, take on lease, or otherwise acquire for the purposes of a Government school any land or buildings used as a private school—if it was to be closed.

The main provisions of the Act were thus described by Mr. WALKER, but it may be interesting to give further particulars in regard to clauses which provoked discussion in Parliament, and in regard to which considerable divergence of opinion evidently existed. It is enacted that in no case shall any institution, the governing body of which is in its management interfered with or controlled by any society outside of New Zealand be hereafter approved by the Minister as a private or local school, nor is any such private or local school to be hereafter established under the Industrial School Act, 1882. With respect to every private or local school as aforesaid, already established at the time of the passing of this Act, the following special provision is to apply: In no case shall any child be hereafter committed or transferred to any such school. At the expiration of twelve months after the passing of the Act every such school shall cease to be a school within the meaning of the principal Act and no public money shall hereafter be granted in respect thereof. The clause quoted was really the crux of the Bill and the endeavor was made to alter it so that all private industrial schools should be included under it, and not only those, the managing body of which are 'interfered with or controlled by any society outside New Zealand,' the direct object being to close the Stoke institution, which is now entirely under New Zealand management. When the Bill was in Committee of the Legislative Council the Hon. C. C. BOWEN moved that the words 'as aforesaid' be struck out, and this was adopted on a division by a majority of five. When the Bill with this amendment was returned to the House of Representatives, it was decided, at the instance of the Premier, to disagree therewith, and a conference between the two Houses resulted, when, after some tall talking, the Council gave way and the words excised were restored: had they not been, it is well understood that Mr. SEDDON would have abandoned the Bill.

The Act provides that members of the Legislature, of local bodies, of Charitable Aid Boards, justices of the peace, and any other persons authorised by the Minister shall at all times be entitled to visit any private or local schools, and that every person so visiting may inscribe in a book to be kept by the managers any remarks he may think fit to make. The Governor-in-Council is authorised to make regulations for the conduct, management, supervision and inspection of the schools and for the employment, education, diet, clothing, correction, and industrial training of the inmates thereof; for the classifying of the inmates and for keeping certain of them separate and apart according to sex or character, place of committal, cause of committal, or antecedents or otherwise. If any inmate absconds from, or wilfully destroys or damages any property belonging to the school, or refuses to obey or conform to any regulations, such inmate is on conviction in a summary manner before a stipendiary magistrate to be punished in such manner as is prescribed by regulations; provided that said punishment is not to be inflicted by the school or by the managers. The magistrate is also, where necessary, to order the inmate to be sent back to the school.

NOTICE.

DURING the absence of the Editor (Rev. H. W. Cleary) on a well earned and much needed holiday, the attention of correspondents is specially directed to our standing rule that all communications connected with the literary department of this paper—such as reports, correspondence, etc.—should be addressed to 'The Editor.' Closed communications addressed by name to Rev. H. W. Cleary will be treated as his private correspondence and will be forwarded to his temporary address in Australia.

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN.

The ceremony of reception took place at St. Dominick's Priory on Sunday the 11th October. The young ladies who received the habit of St. Dominick were:—Miss R. Prendergast (in religion Sister Mary Barbara), Miss A. Hughes (in religion Sister Mary Peter Chanel), and Miss K. Donnelly (in religion Sister Mary Ambrose). The ceremony, which took place in the private chapel of the nuns, was performed by his Lordship the Right Rev. Dr. Verdon, assisted by the Rev. Father Murphy.

A notice with regard to train arrangements on the Government Railways in connection with the Prince of Wales' Birthday, will be found in our advertising columns.—\* \* \*

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