

a private school and gains a proficiency certificate is entitled to free secondary education. But this free secondary education can only be availed of in a Government school, a secondary school, district high school, or technical school. The words 'equivalent school' have been left out of the Act, so that private secondary schools are excluded. The Act further provides that on account of the holders of free places there shall be paid to the secondary schools at which such free places are held grants according to the scale set out in the 10th Schedule of the Act, which practically means £17 per pupil. The injustice of these provisions is very apparent. If a child obtains a proficiency certificate while attending a Catholic school he could go to a Government school, a secondary school, district high school, or technical school and receive free secondary education, but if it is desired that the child should continue his secondary studies in a Catholic school or other private secondary school, the whole expense thereof must be borne by his parents. Now there is an extraordinary distinction drawn between free places and scholarships. A child who wins a scholarship may prosecute his studies in a private secondary school and the Government will pay for his secondary education, whereas if a child has obtained a proficiency certificate, and is therefore entitled to a free place, desires to prosecute his studies in a Catholic or other private secondary school the Government will not pay. We say that free-place pupils are logically in the same position as those pupils who have won scholarships and therefore, like them, should be allowed to prosecute their studies in our secondary schools, and that the Education Department should give a capitation-grant to pay for their education. Just one instance to show you how seriously this affects us:—Ninety per cent. of the boys entering St. Patrick's College, Wellington, have proficiency certificates and are entitled to free places, and yet, because they elect to avail themselves of the elementary British liberty of going to a college that accords with their conscience they are forced to forego £10 15s 11d a year.

Scholarships.—The Education Department has conceded that certain Catholic secondary schools should be registered as schools at which scholarships could be held, but owing to the limited number of such schools we consider some special arrangements should be made to meet our requirements. The Education Department holds that a scholarship shall be taken out at the nearest secondary school, or that, at least, the board allowance should be deducted from the scholarship. That simply means that if one of our scholars won a scholarship where there is another secondary school between his residence and the nearest Catholic secondary school he would have the board allowance cut off or would have to go to the other school. To attend the other school would, of course, prevent the child from receiving a religious education, and is altogether contrary to our ideal in the matter of education.

School Journal.—This is a publication by the Education Department, and as it contains reading matter and various hints about school work, it is considered, if not essential, at least very necessary for effective school work by the teachers. It is supplied free to all public schools, but the Catholic schools have to pay one penny per copy for it. The Minister of Education says that to give this free to our schools would be making a grant to them. We contribute one-seventh of the cost of this publication, and by providing and maintaining our own schools we save the State over £100,000 per annum, and yet our request to be placed on the same footing as the public schools as regards this journal is refused.

Council of Education.—Direct representation on this body has been conceded under the Act to male and female teachers and to various representative bodies, but not to the teachers in the registered schools. One would think that the council was intended to represent all educational interests in the Dominion and not only the public schools. The Act provides for the compulsory attendance at school of all children up to a certain age, and as attendance at our schools is held to be a compliance with the Act, it is only reason-

able that the large number of children attending the schools and the schools attended by them should have representation on the council.

Medical Inspection.—The Education Act provides that 'there may be appointed as officers of the Department a chief medical inspector and such other medical inspectors of schools as may be deemed necessary,' and further, 'the manager of any registered private primary school may apply to the director for medical inspection of the school and of the pupils thereof, and the director may arrange for such inspection accordingly.' The Act distinctly lays it down that all registered private primary schools and the children attending them are entitled to medical inspection. But we cannot get this inspection for our schools. No reason is given, but the excuse has been made that owing to the war the Government cannot get sufficient medical men to do the work. This can be called nothing but an excuse, because when the representatives of the Catholic Federation asked the Minister of Education if the names of medical men who are willing to make the required inspection were submitted would the Government appoint them for that purpose and pay them on the scale that they pay their own inspectors? the answer was *No*. The Minister not only had the power to grant this request, but it was his duty to grant it and so carry out the will of the people as expressed in the Education Act. Is it not desirable that the children of Catholics should grow up strong and healthy? Are we to be allowed to pay our share of the medical fees and be denied the right to participate in the advantages? This is a matter which should interest the whole of the people of the Dominion, as it is opposed to the principles of justice and liberty. Our boys have responded nobly to the call for volunteers for the defence of the Dominion and the Empire, and yet the Minister only quibbles with us when asked that our boys shall get the same treatment as the boys they have to stand shoulder to shoulder with in the trenches in the defence of justice and liberty.

Swimming Lessons. Grants are made to the public schools for the purpose of having the children taught swimming and life-saving, but the children attending our schools are not allowed to derive any benefit from this grant. Why should any distinction be made between the children attending the public schools and those attending the Catholic schools? Apparently it is immaterial whether the Catholic child can save his life or that of his neighbor or not. This can have nothing to do with the question of secular education. The grant would not be made to the Catholic schools, but to a public body in order to have all children taught to swim. The 14,000 scholars attending our primary schools have just as much right to receive the benefits of medical inspection and swimming lessons as the children attending any public school. There is no race suicide amongst Catholics, and therefore it is only a matter of a little time when Catholics will form a much greater proportion of the population of the Dominion than one-seventh as at present. There can be no gain-saying the fact that it is the duty of the State to do everything possible to enable the whole of the children to grow up strong and healthy without any consideration as to whether they attend a public school or a Catholic or other private school.

Year by year we have shouldered the burden of the education of Catholic children, in addition to bearing our proportion of the cost of providing and maintaining the public schools. To-day we maintain at our own expense 180 primary schools staffed by 647 teachers, with an attendance of 14,000 scholars. The cost per child in the State schools for the year ending March, 1916, was £6 18s 2d, so our schools last year effected a saving to the State of £97,000. Sacrifice is the greatest proof of sincerity, and the history of the last forty years is unimpeachable proof, not only of our sincerity, but also of our determination to have our children educated on the lines we believe to be right. I trust that when the disabilities under which we are laboring are brought before the democracy of the Dominion, and the matter discussed without passion or prejudice, the sincerity of our actions and the justice of our claims will be realised and those disabilities removed.