

formity with their conscience, to get their system of religious training, Bible-reading, introduced into the schools, and Catholics, it is unnecessary for me to say are against the godless system and are showing their sincerity to the extent of spending over £100,000 each year on separate schools. As therefore the educational system of New Zealand is not national, how does our National Government, that supposedly represents all the people, reconcile its attitude in regard to Catholic schools with its democratic professions? I venture to say that this meeting will bring nearer the time, now not far distant, when the Government will come to see the reasonableness, justice, and necessity of changing its opinions on this question as it has done on a few others. As a Catholic I would willingly co-operate with any religious body, whose aim is to give every denomination the right of having their children taught in their own form of belief, by using the money collected from all for educational purposes. Then the present secular system could be made use of by those who believe in secular education, and those who uphold Christian education would not be forced to use non-Catholic schools or pay double in supporting schools of their own.

Throughout the ages religion and education have gone together. Their severance was brought about by French enemies of religion, in order, as they said, to kill Christianity; and we see to-day the result of non-Christian education in France in the prevalence of race suicide and the shortage of manhood that is now so vitally affecting the continuance of the race. If religion has some pernicious, some stultifying influence on education, or if it be a useless adjunct, then let it be discarded, but if, on the other hand, we adopt the belief and practice of Christendom from the earliest time and maintain that religion is an essential part of true education, then it must be maintained in the schools come what may.

But it may be said we can give our children religious training in the home, and surround them with a Christian atmosphere. How many can truthfully lay claim to having the time or the inclination to commence instructing the little ones after a day's work, and even if that were possible why subject the child to different influences in the school and in the home? It is generally admitted that the home, the school, and the church go together in the moral upbringing of the child, and the school can undo all too easily the work of the other two. In fact, if Christianity is to be excluded from the formative period of life, and from the school which has the most vital influence on character building, why not cut it out altogether?

Some again tell us that religion would be a good thing to teach in the schools, but it is not the duty of the State to teach religion. Well, if that be so, why not entrust the duty to those who can teach it, and give capitation to all denominations that can show a sufficient number of pupils to establish school centres, thus allowing those who for conscience' sake are supporting their own schools, whilst contributing to the upkeep of the State schools, that meed of justice to which they are entitled?

I now come to the fault that we are trying to break up the educational system. This hobby of breaking up the secular system if simple justice is rendered to those whose conscience debars them from using the public schools has been repeated so often that it is now used whenever the educational system is criticised, like that blessed word Mesopotamia, forgetting the fact that our public educational system is being constantly reformed, enlarged, expurgated, modernised, grouped, and divided till the only staple point remaining is its godless secularism.

As Catholics we ask a just share of the money which we ourselves contribute for the secular education given in our schools, and we will be most pleased to have the Government inspectors see that the money has been

truly earned. The Government pay, and justly pay, the Salvation Army for the upkeep and secular services they render at Pakatoa; but no Catholic suggests that this money is paid by the Government for the propagation of the Salvation Army, or for the Christian influences, pious instructions, and self-sacrifice on the Salvation Army staff of that institution.

The religious schools are part of the State system in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and even Germany, also within the Empire they are subsidised in New Foundland, Quebec, Ontario, and Great Britain. In Great Britain over 53 per cent. of the schools are denominational. In fact so steady is the growth of these schools, that as far back as 1891 Mr. Chamberlain said: 'To destroy denominational schools is now an impossibility, and nothing is more astounding than the progress they have made since the Education Act of 1870. I had thought they would die out with the establishment of the board schools, but I have been mistaken, for in the last 23 years they have doubled their accommodation and more than doubled their subscription list.'

The *Round Table*, one of the soundest British quarterly magazines, in its September issue pays a great tribute to the schools of Britain in the following terms: 'The war has indeed revealed great shortcomings in detail in the English educational system, especially in the higher branches, but on the whole it has been a vindication of its essential soundness, and has proved us a nation not only sound and strong in character, but far more adaptable both in soldiering and in industry than either we or our enemies suspected. The bravery of our volunteers and the success of our new army in France are heroic tributes not only to our homes, but to our schools.' And we in New Zealand have to remember that over half these schools are denominational schools. Why cannot we receive the same treatment here in this 'God's own country,' as in the countries I have mentioned. The ex-pupils of the Catholic schools in New Zealand cost the Government not one penny for their education, but when the drums beat to war, they contributed their full proportion to the Dominion Army, and nobly upheld the honor of their schools in storming the heights of Gallipoli, in holding the Empire's waterway at the Suez Canal, and in crushing the flower of the Germany Army in the advance on the Somme.

We are working all together to build up a grand and glorious nation, and we see before us the sad results obtained by divorcing religion from the schools of the nation in the supine materialistic spirit which has made America in this world crisis a by-word among the nations. They have no God in their schools, they have pursued for decades a system of heartless money-grubbing, and to day when civilisation shrieks for help, and honor, justice and even humanity itself seem likely to be crushed under the heels of the Kaiser's hordes, America abandons its blood relations across the Atlantic, and, sacrificing its national spirit for the almighty dollar, crucifies its manhood on a cross of gold.

My Lord, Rev. Fathers, ladies and gentlemen, I have every confidence in the justice and fair dealing of our non-Catholic fellow-citizens, and I feel that it only requires a proper understanding of the Catholic claims on their part for us to receive full justice. The eloquent and gifted speakers who are going to address you this evening will do a great deal towards helping forward this fuller understanding of our position, and the enthusiasm, the earnestness, and the solidarity of this vast assemblage will let our parliamentary representatives know that the time has come for them to commence the study of Catholic educational claims with all seriousness.

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