

be carefully noted by every Catholic who may be called upon to discuss this question with his non-Catholic fellow citizens. 'There are,' said His Grace, 'over 12,000 pupils in our primary schools in New Zealand, so that in teachers' salaries and working expenses alone the Catholic body saves the State at least £50,000 a year. In the archdiocese of Wellington alone during the last ten years the Catholics have spent the sum of £25,000 in the erection of primary school buildings, without counting the cost of the land upon which these buildings stand, and in the archdiocese alone we save the State an annual outlay of from sixteen to twenty thousand pounds a year on primary education. While in regard to secondary education during the same period of ten years the Catholic body in the archdiocese has spent in the purchase alone of land and the erection of secondary school buildings thereon, no less a sum than £48,000. Add to this the cost of the annual maintenance of these secondary schools, and you will see what monetary sacrifices our people are making in the cause of Catholic education. During the last 30 years since the present education system has been in existence in New Zealand, we have saved the State in primary education (working expenses alone) no less than the sum of £1,100,000. This does not include money expended on lands and buildings, and repairs of same.' And the Catholic claim—and the determination of Catholics to fight until the claim is acknowledged—are thus fearlessly and forcefully expressed: 'Catholics have never asked and will never ask one penny from the State to help Catholic propaganda, or as a remuneration for teaching Catholic doctrine. But Catholics, in the name of justice and fair play, do demand equal wages for equal work, they demand that as they educate half the Catholic children of the Dominion, in their own schools and at their own expense, and spare the taxpayers thousands, and, in the long run, millions, of pounds, they should have the money they spare the Government and the taxpayers refunded to them for the secular knowledge, up to the Government standard and under Government examination, which they impart to at least half their children in the Dominion. They should not be fined and oppressed for imparting one item of education beyond the secular curriculum required by the State, when that item is the most important of all to form the very citizens of whom the State and society at large stand most in need; namely, men and women who will be God-fearing, law-abiding citizens—men and women to be relied upon as uncompromising foes of everything dishonest and corrupt—who can be depended upon to support only a clean and pure administration of public affairs. Until the day dawns when this galling grievance, this crying injustice, is removed and their just claims acknowledged and granted, they are determined to maintain the struggle in the cause of God and of religion.'

It was only natural that the weighty utterance of the head of the Church in New Zealand should have attracted considerable attention from the daily press; and we have become so accustomed to their blind worship of the secular system that we knew exactly what to expect in the way of criticism and of comment. Yet, though we have long ceased to experience or to express surprise at it, the attitude adopted by the editors of our larger dailies on this question of religious education is, thoughtfully considered, a truly amazing spectacle. Individually, the editors of our large dailies are men of the loftiest civic and national ideals, and of high religious principle; yet where this great question—involving the most momentous issues—is concerned, individual Christian principle is thrown to the winds, and the religious education and the whole religious future of the youth of the Dominion are sacrificed on the 'shallowest' and 'flimsiest' of mere expediency! We have described the considerations of expediency that are usually advanced as 'flimsy' and 'shallow' deliberately and advisedly, because experience, in England, Canada, Germany, Holland, and many other countries, has shown to demonstration that the supposed disastrous consequences—in the way of disintegration of the national system—do not in fact follow from the recognition of the special claims of specific religious bodies. Here is a specimen of the sort of thing the dailies are content to advance as 'argument' against the Catholic claim:—'The State,' says the *Otago Daily Times*—a paper which, after the exhaustive and illuminating treatment which the subject received at the hands of Dr Cleary, in its own columns, ought certainly to have learnt better—'provides education of one kind and if any denomination wishes to give its children education of another kind it should be prepared to do so at its own expense.' The contention would hold if those only who used the State system were compelled to contribute the money which pays for its maintenance and upkeep. As everybody knows, the position is otherwise; and the true statement of the case would be in these terms: 'The State provides education of one kind—and takes Catholic money for the purpose,—which kind Catholics never have accepted and never can

conscientiously accept.' Under the circumstances the obviously fair and just thing course would be for the State to say to Catholics: 'We are sorry you cannot accept the education we have provided, but we cannot, as a matter of common honesty, charge the Catholic body for a commodity which, however willing we may be, we do not in fact supply. We therefore refund to you your quota of contribution to the general education fund. Educate your children as you will, provided that in every standard the State requirements in respect to secular efficiency are complied with.' The one New Zealand daily which has shown itself open to reason, and has risen to something of a statesmanlike view on this great question, is our influential contemporary, the *Dominion*. In the course of an eminently sane, fair-minded, and thoughtful article on the subject—the full terms of which appear elsewhere in this issue,—our contemporary says:—'When it is urged that "every denomination will have to be put on an equal footing" in the matter of grants, we are perfectly ready to agree to this, and we feel sure the Archbishop also will agree, provided that every denomination has first put itself on the same footing in the matter of providing the schools to justify the grants. Our attitude upon the equity of the position is that which we stated on February 16 of last year when discussing the proposal that the Junior National Scholarships should be open to the pupils of Catholic schools and tenable at Catholic secondary schools. We then said that "so far as the Catholic schools are concerned, their separation from the State is surely not an argument for the penalising of those who support them," and also that it is not the fault of the Catholics that they have done what the other denominations can do if they choose. . . . We wish to say in conclusion that we are anxious only to keep an open mind, and that he is no friend of education, of religion, or of the State who will bring heat or disingenuousness to the discussion of this most difficult problem.'

There at least is openness of mind and breadth of view, and freedom from that narrow fetishism in regard to our secular system, by which the great majority of our dailies are so completely obsessed and which renders its victims absolutely impervious to any new line of thought or any new idea on the subject.

The importance of the Archbishop's reference to the education question, and the significance of the occasion, were enhanced by the pointed and outspoken remarks made by Mr Martin Kennedy. Mr Kennedy never uses words lightly, and may always be taken to mean just what he says. When, therefore, he intimates that a start has been made in the direction of making Catholics something of the power which on this vital question, they ought to be, the statement may be taken at its full face value. Any movement which aims at the vindication, and ultimately at securing the satisfaction of, Catholic claims, should, it seems to us, place before itself the following three-fold objective: (1) There must be organisation—that is, primarily, amongst Catholics, so that such steps as may be decided on shall be capable of being promptly and effectively carried out; (2) there should be educative work—i.e., amongst non-Catholics—by public addresses, letters to the press, distribution of literature, etc., with the view of rallying all the forces of religious education, and of bringing our non-Catholic fellow citizens face to face with the Catholic position as it really is, and with all that can be said on its behalf; (3) there must be political activity. Mr. Kennedy was uttering words of practical wisdom as well as of simple truth when—speaking, as he put it, 'neither as Liberals nor as Conservatives.'—he reminded those present at the gathering that 'if one-seventh of the population were organised there was no reason why they should not be able to turn any Government out.' It is true, perhaps, as he suggested, that something might be done in the way of supporting members in the House who would be favorable to us; but in these days, when we are governed not by Parliament, but by Cabinet, efforts made in the direction of heckling and worrying individual candidates and members are for the most part labor in vain and energy wasted. If we had in the House of Representatives to-morrow a majority of members favorable to our claims, unless the Government were pledged to support us, it could effectually and permanently block any measure introduced in our behalf by the simple process of keeping it at the bottom of the Order Paper.

These are, however, matters of detail, the discussion of which may well be left till the movement has taken definite form and shape. All that is necessary for the present is to emphasise the fact that the psychological moment has arrived for taking practical action; that the utterance of His Grace the Archbishop has been received by Catholics everywhere with gratification and delight; and that any further call that may be made will be made to a loyal and responsive people.

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