

truth in the story. 'Father' Bowden has no right whatever to that title. He is not even an ex-priest, for he never was a priest. 'At one time,' says the *Catholic Bulletin* of April 13, he was advertising solicitor (i.e., canvasser) for the *Catholic Register* of Kansas City, but he was discharged because of discrepancies in his accounts. He then started a paper called the *Leader*, not the *Catholic Leader*, but it was short-lived. He afterwards became the promoter of a questionable advertising scheme called "Catholic Institutions in Kansas," which also proved of short duration. After these attempts to make a living as a Catholic he joined the Socialists and styled himself, or was styled, "Father Bowden, ex-priest of the Catholic Church." He knew that the title "ex-priest" would insure his exploitation by Socialists and anti-Catholics and in this he was not mistaken. He seems to have been fairly successful in duping those who are always ready to give financial aid to "ex-priests," especially if they can tell a well-coined story about the terrible things which the Catholic Church is supposed to countenance. The *Catholic Register* of Kansas City from which he was discharged has this to say of him: "He is too lazy to breathe and without a semblance of self-respect or pride. We afterwards discovered that his wife and sister did the work that he was being paid for. There is no limit to what he will do to keep from working. He was never a priest, did not study for the priesthood, and as an 'editor' could not compose a two-line society local." This is the 'Father' Bowden concerning whom the *Worker* prints this absurd story. The matter is not, of course, one of any great importance, one way or the other; but since the story has reached New Zealand, it is just as well that the true version of things should be made known.

THE EDUCATION COMMISSION

HIS LORDSHIP BISHOP CLEARY GIVES EVIDENCE

The following is a full report of the evidence given by the Right Rev. Henry W. Cleary, Bishop of Auckland, at last Thursday's sitting of the Education Commission in Auckland:—

'I am here to-day because I know that your Commission is willing to receive any criticism or suggestion that is likely to be helpful in improving our school system.

'I fully recognise how generally meritorious that system is in its methods of instruction, and how fortunate in its personnel. My criticism of it gets back to what, in common with many others, I regard as its fundamental defect. I think I may fairly be taken as representing in this connection, the views of a large section of the people of this Dominion, and, among them, of many who are skilled in the principles and methods of education.

'But first, I desire to point out two surface anomalies in the system, in so far as it affects non-State secondary schools. (1) Maori children are allowed to take out scholarships in private secondary schools, under Government inspection. This reasonable and proper right has not yet been generally extended to the children of white parents. (2) Section 67 (2) of the amended Education Act of 1908 reads as follows in regard to Board and Private Scholarships: "The holder of any such scholarship shall receive the amount of his scholarship only so long as he prosecutes his studies, to the satisfaction of the Board, at a secondary school or its equivalent approved by the Board." I am advised that the "equivalent" school, here referred to, may be interpreted to mean any secondary school, public or private, of an educational standing approved for this purpose by the Board. I am, furthermore, informed that this subsection of the Act is, in practice, so interpreted in the case of two large private secondary schools in this Dominion—one at Wanganui, the other at Christchurch. Thus far, we have been unable to secure the application of this interpretation, under any

conditions, to any one of the many excellent secondary schools conducted by Catholics in New Zealand. However, if the term "equivalent," in this connection, should be deemed to be ambiguous, or if it should not fairly bear the meaning alleged to be attached to it in two particular cases, I suggest that this and the corresponding sections of the Act should be amended as to make scholarships available, as a matter of course and right, at all secondary schools that are open to Government inspection and, educationally, up to the Government programme. This remark also applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to free places. The suggested amendment of the Act would bring New Zealand into line with New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, where both the Government schools and the private schools have mutually benefited by a healthy and generous competition.

'I now refer more particularly to primary schools. It is a sound principle of statecraft that taxes which are levied from all should, in some shape or other, be used for the benefit of all. In the matter of public instruction, we in New Zealand do not follow that golden rule. Our Catholic schools and many other religious schools long formed a part of the State system. We did not withdraw from that system. We were excluded from it by Act of Parliament in 1877. To many of the legislators of the time that measure was a well-intentioned effort to secure what is an absolute impossibility in any system of education—namely, neutrality in regard to religious faith. Now, I wish to direct the particular attention of the Commission to the most serious and radical defect in the public school system. The religious schools were not alone excluded by Act of Parliament from their previous standing as public schools; but they were excluded on what is, in effect, a dogmatic religious test. This test is supplied by sundry views of religion—by sundry religious dogmas—which constitute the foundation of the secular phase of our Education Act. I will here mention only two of these underlying dogmas. The first is this: That religion has no necessary or useful place in school-training. The second dogma is this: That a political majority has the moral right to exclude religion from the place which it has occupied from immemorial ages in education. Take away these dogmas, and you sweep aside the foundation on which the secular phase of our Education Act is based. I will not take up the time of the Commission by pointing out certain other dogmatic views of religion which are also implied in our secular schools system. But we have here what is tantamount to a State creed—a creed of not many articles, but a creed which, within its limits, is as dogmatic as the Agnostic creed or the Nicene creed or the Westminster Confession of Faith.

'Moreover, our Education Act has, in the schools, established these dogmatic views of religion and endowed them at the common expense of all. It has extended no such privilege to the many who cannot in conscience accept these dogmas. In view of the compulsory clauses of the Act, and in the absence, over wide areas, of an alternative system, the only alternatives for dissidents are the following: They must either do violence to their conscientious convictions, or they must pay for the educational system which their conscience demands, and at the same time pay in taxation for the system which their conscience rejects. Here we have, in practical working, what I have already described—a system that, in effect, allots educational taxation on what is, fundamentally, a dogmatic religious test.

'We respect the motive of those legislators who desired to establish a course of public instruction uncolored by religious views—so far as that motive may have been dictated by respect for the religious susceptibilities of pupils. But the legislators have obviously failed to establish a system objectively neutral in all that concerns religion. In fact, objective neutrality, in this connection, is as much an impossibility as a square circle. This impossibility (as I have shown in recent publications) arises out of the very nature of the case; it is evidenced by the declarations of many leading educationists, and by the frank admissions of the standard-bearers of the purely secular system in