

time be made for a special portion of the Asylum being set apart for inebriates.

Gentlemen,—The various branch railways authorised by you last session have been contracted for at rates which, looking at the advance in the price of labor and materials, may be considered satisfactory. You will be asked to sanction further important branch lines this session, among which may be enumerated the following:—From the main line, up the Valley of the Waiho, across the Taieri plain to Outram, to the Tokomairiro and Kaitangata coal field, through the island of Inch Clutha, and to Tapanui, and to the Night-cap coal fields. It is hoped that the whole of these branches may be completed as soon as the main lines, to which they will act as important feeders. Instead of forcing land into the market to pay for these lines, I would propose that power be applied for to the General Assembly at its next session to raise money on loan for their construction upon the security of specific blocks of land.

Last year, as you are aware, a Bill was passed through the House of Representatives authorising, subject to your approval, an extension of the Lawrence line to the Dunstan, the money to be raised upon specific security in the shape of a block of land contiguous to the line; this Bill, however, was thrown out in the Legislative Council. I shall be glad to know your opinion relative to the proposed extension, with a view to further action in the matter. My own opinion is that in many respects the line in question should be regarded as a main trunk line, opening up, as it will, the whole interior of the province.

The very large increase of traffic on the Southland line renders it absolutely necessary that a considerable expenditure should be at once incurred on additional plant, on storage, and on extension of the wharf at Campbelltown. It will also be requisite to reduce the gauge from Campbelltown to Winton to 3ft. 6in., and to assimilate the rolling-stock thereto, for which expenditure you will be asked to provide.

The additional pier accommodation now in progress at Port Chalmers will, it is believed, when completed, largely increase the traffic on the Dunedin and Port Chalmers line. As it is, the returns during its first year, which were estimated at \$22,000 have amounted to \$21,553, while the expenditure has exceeded the estimate by \$4,166; of this amount a considerable proportion ought, strictly speaking, to be charged against the capital account, being for outlay incidental to the making of a new line, until it has become consolidated and got into working order.

There are various other matters bearing upon the public interest in different parts of the province to which I might be expected to allude, and to which I should be glad to refer; but, as in common with the questions to which I have directed your attention, these must be submitted to your consideration specifically during the session, I shall refrain from doing so, and for the same reason I would suggest that the usual reply to my address may be dispensed with.

Gentlemen, I now declare this Council open for the despatch of business.

MR BARTON AND DR. MORAN.

THE following letter, with reply thereto, has been published in the daily papers. We give them intact, and leave our readers to form their own opinion of Mr Barton:—

MR BARTON TO THE ELECTORS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'OTAGO GUARDIAN.'

SIR,—I was not aware that the official declaration of the poll was to be made on Saturday last, and consequently did not attend on that occasion. This might seem an unimportant matter on which to ask a portion of your space; but I do so not so much on my own account as that I have something to say to the electors that may guide them in future political struggles. I am told, alike by my friends and opponents, that I was beaten rather by Dr Moran than by Mr Wales and the party who supported him, and I have satisfied myself that the Catholic voters of this city recorded a block vote against me, their numbers being, to the best of my information, close on 400. If this is correct, then the Protestant voters (who do not vote at dictation, but according to their opinions) were divided as follow:—

Barton	541
Wales	229

Protestant majority ... 312

During the contest I was told by many influential Catholics that the Catholic vote would be considerably divided, the larger number, as they believed, being in my favour. The same identical gentleman, after my defeat, told me that the Catholic party had given a block vote against me, and would do so at every election where I presented myself. Some of my supporters have informed me that certain leading Catholics went about among the Protestant electors representing that I am myself a Catholic, and my family bigoted Catholics, while at the same time it was represented to certain Catholic electors that I am a renegade Catholic, and had wantonly and grossly insulted the Catholic body. I learn, also, that whenever, in the course of their canvass, they met a warm supporter of mine, they stated that my friends need not exert themselves—that I was quite safe, as the great bulk of the Irish Catholics had determined to support their countryman.

I must here stop to say that I am a Protestant, and that none of my name ever was Catholic. I am not only a Protestant, but I am the nephew of an Archdeacon and cousin of a Dean of the Church of England, and my father was not only a Protestant but an Orangeman. Therefore a grosser falsehood could scarcely have been uttered than the assertion that I am either a Catholic or a renegade from that faith.

The cause, or pretended cause, of this priestly hostility to me is as follows:—It will be within public recollection that shortly after Bishop Moran came here he complained of certain paragraphs in our public school-books which he thought were calculated to diminish, in the children of Catholic parents, the respect due to their own priesthood. It seemed to me that if such were the case Bishop Moran would have

just cause of complaint, and I expressed this opinion to persons who conveyed it to Dr Moran. The result was that he desired an interview with me, and at that interview he stated his grievance, and asked me in what way he could best obtain a fair hearing before the Provincial Council, of which I was then a member, informing me that all his congregations throughout the country warmly coincided with him. My advice was that a petition should be drawn up and sent to each of the congregations for signature, and that each of them should be presented to the Council by the members sitting for the respective districts. I heard no more of the matter for a long time. But one night in the Provincial Council I was told by a member that an evening or two before, during my absence from the Council, a great number of Catholic petitions had been presented, and that one which should have been presented by me had been duly presented by another member. On the evening when these petitions were presented I was in the Magistrate's Court, in the inquiry in Reichelt's case, the Court sitting throughout the evening, as well as the day, for a number of days.

Some time after my interview with Bishop Moran his partisans in the Council brought forward a motion affecting the subject of his alleged grievances, and proposing changes in our education system. This motion went beyond what I felt I could conscientiously support and I accordingly did not support it, although I would have supported a motion for an inquiry, and for the removal of any causes of just complaint.

Some time afterwards I was informed by Mr C. E. Haughton that Dr. Moran complained that I had insulted him by declining to present the Catholic petition he had forwarded to the Council Chamber. I at once called on him, to explain how it was that I had been unable to present the petition, and to assure him that it had been presented though not by me. I reminded him that he had given me no notice, and assured him that I never heard of the petition till after it had been presented. To my surprise he declined to accept my explanation, and rising from his chair he went over a list of names hanging on the wall, and pointing to one written a little way down, he said, "Mr Barton! There is your name. We, Catholics, are not strong enough to put in a member of our own, but whenever you or any of the other gentlemen named on this paper come forward to contest any constituency, we will show you that we are strong enough to keep him out!"

My non-presentation of the petition under the above circumstances is the ground put forward by Catholics (since the election) for their opposition to me; but my own belief is that the real ground is my well-known views on secular education, and my desire to uphold our liberties, whether assailed by priest or layman.

Before this election came on I was aware from what I had seen in the TABLET, that the Bishop's hostility to me still remained; nevertheless, I refrained, during the contest, from any allusion to the subject, from a feeling of reluctance to raising the No-Popery cry. I have been watching the struggle now going on in European countries, and I gather that the real object of the Ultramontanists is to keep their own flock unthinking, and uneducated, and to do what they can to retard the education of others in all respects in which education would fit them to guard the liberties they possess, or increase those liberties with wisdom and moderation. We, Protestants, know that no free country that ceases to struggle for this class of education will long retain its liberties, however democratic its institutions may appear to be. To use the word of an eminent French writer, "Ultramontane Catholicism—and since the promulgation of the decrees of Infallibility there is no other—is bent on making itself master, in order to cut up by the very roots the liberties which the Church condemns."

The danger our constituencies are in from that party is greatly increased by the darkness of their workings and the crookedness of their paths. Protestants will yet have a severe struggle to maintain the right, won through so much blood and persecution, to have education without bigotry. But they must fight. Happily, in these countries as yet, the Roman priesthood can only rule the elections through the apathy of Protestants. Once we awake to the fact that the Catholics vote in a block against any candidate who will not further their schemes, and thus that a pressure can be brought to bear sufficient to force every Ministry to yield more or less to their demands; then the spirit of the country will be aroused, and the bare suspicion of Catholic support will defeat any candidate, and overthrow any Ministry. I observe that Mr Stafford has lost an election in Canterbury province, and some of the newspapers account for the defeat of so eminent a man by stating that the Catholic support received by him alienated the Protestant electors. If this be so, Canterbury is awaking. The Dunedin election was the converse of Mr Stafford's case. Here the Catholics, by concealing their true alliance, and pretending a connection with me, put in my opponent.

I take this opportunity of thanking the electors who voted for me, and I hope the contest, however barren in the results to me, may not be without its uses to them. I believe that every eligible Catholic in Otago is on the electoral roll. I hope the Protestants will at once follow their example. Shall those who are working to undermine liberty, be the only persons who carefully secure the right of voting?—I am, &c.,

GEORGE ELLIOTT BARTON.

DR. MORAN'S REPLY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'OTAGO GUARDIAN.'

SIR,—You will much oblige me by publishing a few words of explanation from me in reference to a letter from Mr George Elliott Barton which appears in your issue of this morning.

As to the number of Catholic voters in this city, which I am surprised to hear is so large, and the part taken by them in the late election, I have nothing to say, inasmuch as I am completely ignorant on those points.

In the second place, I took no part whatever in the election. I did not canvass; I did not ask any man for his vote for either of the candidates; I did not harangue a public meeting; I did not record my own vote; yet Mr George Elliott Barton holds me responsible for