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The New Zealand Tablet.

FIAT JUSTITIA.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 2, 1891.

PROGRESS AND JUSTICE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

THE Catholics of New Zealand provide, at their own sole expense, an excellent education for their own children. Yet such is the sense of justice and policy in the New Zealand Legislature that it compels these Catholics, after having manfully provided for their own children, to contribute largely towards the free and godless education of other people's children!!! This is tyranny, oppression, and plunder.

THE POLITICAL OUTLOOK.



ONLY prophets can foretell the future; and consequently our judgment as to what is to happen when Parliament shall meet in a few days can rest on mere probabilities. Our readers, therefore, will take it for what, in their estimation, it is worth. As yet, no man can tell whether or not Sir H. ATKINSON has a majority, and this renders the future very uncertain. One thing, however, is not uncertain. No party can expect to have a sufficient, a working majority in the House of Representatives. From this, one of two things is inevitable—either there must be a coalition executive, or there must be another general election before long. Coalitions are seldom, if ever, strong Governments, and can be hardly expected to do much more than keep things going. There is no initiative in them; no hope of a go-ahead policy. One thing there is which bars our political way—the country is in straits financially, as things are at present barely able to pay its way, without any margin with which to help either public works or the settlement of the land. Nor are things likely to be more prosperous so long as the present absurd education system continues. The expense of this is so great, and growing greater so fast, that every other interest in the country is suffering in consequence. And for what is all this extravagance and nonsense? Is it not possible to secure a primary education for all children of a school age, without burdening the consolidated revenue to the tune of nearly half a million sterling annually? Where is the necessity or wisdom of insisting on giving a free education to the children of well-to-do people? Where? echo answers. Does it not appear absurd to compel the entire country to provide means whereby the children of strong farmers and independent shopkeepers are enabled to receive education without calling on their parents either to pay fees or school rates? Under the present ridiculous system a farmer with five hundred or a thousand acres, and a shopkeeper with perhaps £10,000 in the bank, is called upon to pay no more for the education of his children than all the single young men and women of the country. And the absurdity of all this becomes more striking when it is borne in mind that the people who pay smart fees for the education of their children in denominational and private schools are, after doing so, compelled to pay as much for the education of other people's children as these other people themselves pay. Anything more irrational, unjust, contemptible and mean it would be impossible to conceive. Politicians are sometimes heard to say that free education is about the only thing the working man gets for his taxes, but what right has he to profit by the money of Catholic working men, who, like brave and conscientious men, pay for the education of their children in Catholic schools. If children are sufficiently educated the Government has no right to interfere in the matter in any way. Government was not established for the purpose of becoming the schoolmaster of the country, but to secure the lives and properties of the people, and help on the development of the resources of the land as a means to the preservation of life and property. If, indeed, children were not being sufficiently educated, as ignorance would be a menace to life and property, Government has the power to compel people to educate their children, and if able, to pay for this education, and if