

the Nonconformists in their opposition to the Balfour Act. They had fought against the Act not only because they considered it unjust to be taxed with the cost of teaching denominational religion in which they did not believe, but also in the interests of Protestantism. We are not specially concerned with the campaign of the Nonconformists in what they consider to be 'the interests of Protestantism'. But in the matter of being 'taxed with the cost of teaching denominational religion' to Catholics, the Rev. Mr. Gange has strengthened the lines of his narration, chiefly by way of omission, in a way that amounts to a grievous misrepresentation of the situation. (1) In a sense it is now true that denominational religious instruction is paid for by the State in denominational schools. And in a sense it is also true that, under the Act of 1902, the State has paid directly only for the secular instruction that has been imparted in denominational schools. The question was really decided only so lately as December 14 of the year that has just gone by. In the West Riding case, the judgment of the Master of the Rolls and Mr. Justice Farwell had declared during the past year that, under the Act, 'religious instruction was not to be paid for. The decision was not hailed with delight by the Nonconformist passive resisters, as it deprived them of the pretext for posing as martyrs—at bargain-counter rates. The West Riding County Council promptly began to harass the denominational teachers by reducing their salaries. On December 14 the House of Lords upset (with a qualification) the judgment of the lower court. Here is how an English contemporary sums up the decision of the Law Lords:—

'The Lord Chancellor said the crucial words were those in section 7 of the Education Act of 1902, requiring the Local Authority to "maintain and keep efficient" all public elementary schools within their area. Any school could be kept "efficient" and able to earn Parliamentary grants without religious instruction, and no school need give this instruction. If it was given, however, the word "maintain" required that the Local Authority should pay for it, although in the cases of denominational schools the expenditure would have to be reasonable.'

Apart from this recent decision, Catholics in England, as in New Zealand, are, in their schools, doing a public work, under the aegis of the State, and in accordance with the specifications and requirements of the State, which are enforced by a system of State inspection. Here in New Zealand we merely demand the right of being treated as the State treats the contractor who builds a railway bridge or a police station. The contractor may, during his work, pray till his knees are like those of a camel; he may preach or catechise or sing hymns till he tears his vocal chords to microscopic ribbons. That is his affair, not the State's. And so long as the bridge or the police station is well and faithfully built, according to specifications, he is entitled in justice to his pay. And nobody outside the dismal precincts of Seacliff or Porirua will pretend that the taxpayers' money is handed over to him for the religious work that he carried on in conjunction with his secular task.

(2) The Act of 1870 is supposed to have favored a secular system of public instruction. Yet, under every School Board, instruction is given, on Protestant and sectarian principles, in a Protestant and sectarian version of the Bible. This instruction is of the sectarian sort that is by interested persons mislabeled 'non-sectarian.' It is of the kind which Nonconformists gave in their own schools. Many of these Nonconformist schools were subsequently handed over to School Boards—presumably because the School Boards did, or were deemed to do, in the matter of Biblical instruction, substantially what these Nonconformist schools had formerly done when under Nonconformist

auspices. (3) In the circumstances explained above, it is manifest that Catholics could not, in conscience use the Board Schools, with their daily doses of a jellified residuum of Protestant religious teaching—or, as it may also be termed, a pocket edition of Pandenominational Protestantism. English Nonconformists are, however, apparently well satisfied with that sort of thing. They get the sort of religious instruction, and the attenuated religious atmosphere, that suits their easy-going taste. But they object to Catholics having the religious instruction and the religious atmosphere that meet the demands of the Catholic conscience. In other words, so long as the Nonconformists' conscience is satisfied, they are quite willing that the Catholic conscience shall be outraged. That is the summing up of the position as between Nonconformists and Catholics in England. It is rather significant that some of the ablest and most strenuous opposition to the infliction of a precisely similar wrong upon Catholics in New Zealand, has come from a co-religionist of Mr. Gange. We refer to the Rev. Mr. Hinton, whose speeches and letters on the subject have from time to time been reproduced in our columns.

DIocese of DUNEDIN

The parish schools in Dunedin and suburbs will reopen on next Monday.

The Very Rev. Father Ryan, S.J., is conducting the retreat of the Children of Mary, South Dunedin.

At the recent medical examinations, Mr. J. P. Hastings, a former dux of the Christian Brothers' School, qualified for the degree of M.B. and Ch.B.

The Schools' Relay Race at the Exhibition grounds, Christchurch, on Saturday, proved a walk-over for the Christian Brothers' boys, Dunedin.

Rev. Father Leonard, C.P., preached on devotion to the Sacred Heart in St. Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday evening.

In the course of the retreat for ladies, given at the Sacred Heart Convent, Timaru, the Rev. Father O'Dwyer, S.J., strongly recommended the 'Tablet,' which, he said, should be in every Catholic household in the Colony.

A meeting in connection with the schools' picnic was held in St. Joseph's Hall on Sunday evening, Rev. Father Coffey, Adm., presiding. A considerable amount of business was transacted, and committees in connection with the sports were appointed.

Miss Aileen O'Donnell, a pupil of Rosary Convent, Oamaru, passed the solicitors' general knowledge and matriculation examinations, and Miss Irene Osbourne, a pupil of the Dominican Convent, Invercargill, passed the matriculation examination.

The following students of Holy Cross College passed the recent matriculation examination:—James McMenamin (archdiocese of Wellington), Cyril Molloy (diocese of Dunedin), William Skinner (diocese of Auckland).

Five pupils of the Christian Brothers' School, Dunedin, were successful at the Civil Service examination held in December last. Of the six pupils presented, five passed, four being placed on the credit list. The names in order of merit are: Fabian Spain, George Albertson, Harold Salmon, Humphrey Moynihan, and William Coughlan.

Last week the following Australian ecclesiastics visited Dunedin on their way from Europe by America: The Bishop of Armidale (the Right Rev. Dr. O'Connor), the Bishop of Bathurst (the Right Rev. Dr. Dunne), the Rev. Fathers Shanahan and Marshall (of the diocese of Ballarat), the Rev. Father O'Donohoe (diocese of Maitland), the Rev. Father O'Reilly (archdiocese of Sydney), and the Rev. Father Dunne (diocese of Bathurst). On Friday the party, with their host, the Bishop of Dunedin, paid a visit to the College, Mosgiel, and were much impressed with all they saw there. They left on Saturday for Auckland. The Rev. Father Cognet, S.M., left for Okato on the same morning, after a visit to the Southern Lakes. Father Leonard, C.P., (Sydney), left for the Lakes on Monday morning, and Father O'Dwyer, S.J., returned to Melbourne by Hobart on the same day.