

less, a feat that none of the modern machines has attempted.' This was in 1709. The *Journal des Savants*, No. 17, 1874, recognises that Father Gusmao is 'truly the inventor of aerial navigation, the balloon discovery of the Montgolfier Brothers (also Catholics) being more than half a century later than Father Gusmao's demonstration. According to the *New York Tribune*, both at Lisbon and in the National Library at Paris are to be found descriptions and drawings of the machine invented by Father Gusmao.

## THE SECULAR PHASE OF OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM

### A DISCUSSION

(By the Editor of the *New Zealand Tablet*.)

The following article on the above subject—the ninth of the series—appeared in the *Otago Daily Times* of March 6:—

#### IX.—'WHO FIRED DOWN THE FLAG OF RELIGION IN OUR SCHOOLS?'

#### PART II.—NEW ZEALAND CATHOLICS AND THE 'FREE, SECULAR, AND COMPULSORY' ACT OF 1877.

In 1877 the Hon. C. C. Bowen, Minister of Justice, introduced into the New Zealand Parliament a bill to abolish aid to denominational schools, to make education free, compulsory, and (for a few minutes only, at the opening of the schools) religious. Part IV., section 85, subsection 3, of the bill ran as follows:—'The school shall be opened every morning with the reading of the Lord's Prayer and a portion of the Holy Scriptures. With this exception the teaching shall be entirely of a secular character, and no child shall attend at the reading herein provided for if his or her parents or guardians inform the committee or teacher, in writing, that they object to such attendance.' This 'religious clause,' as it was called, was thrown out in Parliament, various amendments thereto were negatived, and the entire public school system of New Zealand has ever since remained, legally, purely secular. From the first, Catholics objected to this religious clause, on specified grounds which will appear at the close of this article. Their attitude in regard thereto has been, however, made the object of grievous misrepresentation by an anonymous writer, 'R.W.' (whose identity is becoming more and more widely known day by day), in the course of an article in the *Otago Daily Times* of February 2, 1909. And here again his sole quoted authority was the Rev. C. S. Ross's *Education and Educationists in Otago*.

1. FIRST MISREPRESENTATION.—According to 'R.W.' the Rev. Mr. Ross describes Catholics as, in effect, making 'war' upon, and 'firing down,' 'the flag of Christ' in the public schools of New Zealand—that is, carrying on a campaign having for its immediate purpose the exclusion of Christ and Christian teaching from these schools. But the Rev. Mr. Ross neither says nor suggests such a thing.

2. SECOND MISREPRESENTATION.—The whole trend, effect, and obvious intent of 'R.W.'s' article of February 2, 1909, was this: That the Catholic opposition to the religious clause of Mr. Bowen's bill was merely part and parcel of their 'war' against Christ and Christian teaching in the schools, and in favor of a purely secular system of public instruction. But (a) the Rev. Mr. Ross ('R.W.'s' sole quoted authority of February 2) nowhere asserts, or even suggests, such a thing. (b) The Catholic bishops, clergy, and laity were wholly opposed to the purely secular system of 1877. This was most abundantly demonstrated at the time by petition, by speeches and resolutions at Catholic public meetings, by direct episcopal pronouncements, and by an almost continuous dropping fire of leading articles by Bishop Moran in the *New Zealand Tablet*, in which he vowed 'undying opposition' to the secular system as (among other things) 'godless,' 'the popularisation of a shallow atheism,' and tending to 'the demoralisation of the rising generation.' (See, for these various matters, the *New Zealand Tablet* of May 25, June 1, August 3, August 17, September 14, September 28, November 16, and November 23—all of 1877.) One professing Catholic in Parliament caused a scandal by advocating the secular system, but in the *New Zealand Tablet* of November 16, 1877, Bishop Moran described him as 'in reality no Catholic,' but a 'Secularist,' and exhorted Catholic electors to 'record their votes against him.' In the House, on August 28, 1878, the member here referred to practically admitted that he was 'a bad Catholic.'—(*Parliamentary Debates*, vol. XXVIII., pp. 540-1.) (c) Catholics have, by their separate school system, manifested in the most convincing way the depth and intensity of their hostility to a system of public instruction divorced from religion. (d) Their grounds of opposition to the religious clause in the Bowen Bill will be stated further on. (e) In the *New Zealand Tablet* of July 20, 1877, Bishop Moran supported the demand of the Anglican body in Dunedin for permission to the clergy 'to be allowed to

give religious instruction to the children of their own congregations in Government schools.' And (f) during the agitation on the Bowen Bill, Archbishop (then Bishop) Redwood and Bishop Moran practically renewed the proposal made by the latter to Otago non-Catholics in July, 1871—namely, on conditions to hand over to them the public schools (built and maintained in part by Catholic money) to teach therein, to non-Catholic children, their own religions or non-religions or religious compromises. As compensation for this surrender, Catholics required fair and suitable opportunities of training their children in accordance with the principles of their faith. The Bishops proposed that Catholics should provide their own schools, at their own sole expense, wherever a sufficient attendance could be secured; these schools to receive a grant-in-aid for State-controlled and State-certified secular instruction only. One other denomination (the Anglican) petitioned for grants on similar lines, and Catholics were, of course, willing to accord to others the rights which they claimed for themselves. (See *New Zealand Tablet*, June 1, 1877, August 31, 1877, September 14, 1877, November 16, 1877, cf. March 22, 1878.)

3. THIRD MISREPRESENTATION.—Throughout his article of February 2, 1909, the anonymous 'R.W.' clearly conveyed the impression that Catholics were the only denomination in New Zealand that opposed the religious clause in Mr. Bowen's bill, and favored the secular system (which, in point of fact, they utterly repudiated). Even if Catholics, as a body, had then stood alone in their opposition to the Bowen religious clause, that circumstance would not, of itself, have put them in the wrong. But 'R.W.' even went the length of garbling and misrepresenting the plain words of the Rev. Mr. Ross, for this and for an allied controversial purpose. Thus 'R.W.' says (February 2, 1909): 'Mr. Ross says it is to the "unceasing clamorings" of ecclesiastics against the old system (where Father Cleary says the flag of Christ was flying) that the country "is mainly indebted for the intensely bald and vigorous secularism which marks the education now in force."' Now, the Rev. Mr. Ross is writing of the Otago provincial system of education, which (as shown in the eighth article of this series) was to a great extent Presbyterian denominational. And this is what the Rev. Mr. Ross actually does say (*Education and Educationists in Otago*, p. 22): 'It came to be viewed with disfavor by the ecclesiastics both of the Roman Catholic and of the Anglican Churches, to whose avowed hostility to it, and unceasing clamorings for public aid to their denominational schools, the country is mainly indebted for the intensely bald and rigorous secularism which marks the Education Act that is now in force.' The references to the numerically powerful and highly influential Anglican Church were here hacked out by 'R.W.' for the obvious purpose of making it appear that it was the small Catholic body, and it alone, which 'fired down the flag of Christ in our schools.' Here is another sample of garbling and misquotation for the same intent: In his article of February 2, 1909, 'R.W.' writes as follows in regard to the provision in Mr. Bowen's bill 'for Bible-reading and prayer at the opening of the school each day':—'How was this clause treated by Father Cleary's clerical co-religionists in 1877? Mr. Ross, in his *Education and Educationists in Otago*, says they treated it with "violent hostility," and pelted Parliament with vehement protests against it, and strongly insisted on its elimination from the bill.' Here is what the Rev. Mr. Ross actually does say (p. 38): That 'the Roman Catholics and the Jews' made 'vehement protests,' etc., against Mr. Bowen's religious clause. The Jews were docked here, just as the Anglicans were docked in the other quotation, for the evident purpose of making Catholics alone guilty of 'firing down the flag of Christ in our schools.' In the next following sentence (p. 38), Mr. Ross grants that 'the weight of number' (but not, he thinks, of 'coherent argument') was against Mr. Bowen's religious clause in the House. And the 'weight of number' there was overwhelmingly non-Catholic.

On February 20, 1909—when the mask of anonymity had fallen off—'R.W.' stated that 'the only religious denomination of any size that attacked the religious clause was the Roman Catholic.' Which is a vastly different thing from the whole trend, purport, and effect of his first article (February 2). But even this new statement requires considerable qualification. As a matter of fact, Anglicans (who were and are by far the most numerous religious body in New Zealand), or at least large bodies of them, were likewise dissatisfied on various grounds with the prayer and Bible-reading clause of the Bowen Bill. Three Anglican clergymen, for instance, attended a meeting of 18 ministers of various creeds held in Knox Church, Dunedin, on Monday, July 30, 1877, to consider Mr. Bowen's bill (*Otago Daily Times*, July 31, 1877). I may state that neither Bishop Moran, nor the Catholic clergy, nor the Jewish rabbi were invited to be present. Archdeacon Edwards and the Rev. Mr. (now Dean) Fitchett strongly declared at that meeting that the religious clause would inflict a grave injustice on Catholics. On Monday, July 16, 1877, a largely attended meeting of Anglican parents and teachers, held in Dunedin, carried 'by acclamation' a motion organising a double petition to Parliament praying for a grant-in-aid to denominational

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