

and State in another land that they swing to the opposite extreme, and stand for the more or less complete exclusion of religion from schools conducted by the State in these countries. But, after over thirty years' experience of the secular system, the greater body of Christians in New Zealand would, I think, welcome a change which would result in the introduction of some measure of religion into the daily school-life of the child. Catholics do not believe in the right or competency of the civil government to teach religion, and they would not tolerate such teaching by it to their own children. They would, however, be more than willing to see useful measures of Biblical instruction and religious training imparted to non-Catholic children in the public schools. At the same time they have, of course, opposed specific wrongs (detailed in two previous articles) which have been done, or proposed to be done, to Catholics by the operation of certain defective schemes of non-Catholic Biblical or religious instruction in the public schools. The Catholic position in this connection, as the present writer understands it, is substantially as set forth hereunder.

IV. A SUGGESTED SCHEME.—(1) The public schools to remain secular, as at present, except for those children whose parents desire for them some measure of religion in the school. (2) The public school system to legalise Bible-reading or Bible-teaching, or religious instruction, suited to the conscientious requirements of parents desiring it. The details to be formulated by the non-Catholic churches in groups, or in any other way that may to them seem good. This is a matter for them to arrange. Such forms of religious instruction, etc., to be given only to those children whose parents express a desire for the same. A suitable conscience clause and other suitable protection to be likewise provided for teachers. In all cases in which the teachers decline to impart Biblical instruction, etc. (as above), arrangements could, no doubt, be made for the same by volunteer or paid helpers at far less cost than Catholics would be willing to pay for the religious education of their children. Catholics would thus give non-Catholics—both Protestants and secularists—much the best of the bargain—(a) Catholics would be willing to see a non-Catholic programme of religion, legalised (as above) as part of the State school day; they ask no such privilege for themselves; (b) they would leave the school day of secularists, and of others desiring it, as secular as they please; (c) Catholics would, to a very large extent, be willing to surrender to non-Catholics—for such religion or non-religion as these might desire—the public schools, for the erection of which Catholics have contributed heavily, and, as will be seen later on, they ask not one penny piece from non-Catholics in return.

3. Those that like it could accept a secular school day. The bulk of the rest of non-Catholics would probably accept some or other form of Bible-reading or Bible-teaching, etc., on inter-denominational, or pan-denominational, or denominational lines, according to a system or systems of their choice. Catholics, as a matter of conscience and religious principle, could no more accept this than they could accept a purely secular system; and they would object to be taxed for the maintenance of either. Ever since 1877 the Catholic conscience has been exploited for the benefit of the general taxpayer. We are carrying on our school system, not for social or domestic reasons, but from sheer motives of a compelling conscience. Every year comparatively poor Catholic parents are compelled, as a penalty for putting their conscientious belief into practice, to pay some £40,000 for the education of the children of non-Catholic parents, who are usually better fitted to bear that burden. In any and every non-Catholic scheme of religious instruction in the public schools Catholics would, as a broad principle of justice, expect to be relieved (as both Catholics and Protestants are in parts of Canada) of the burden of supporting a system which they cannot in conscience accept.

4. Catholics would accept any fair arrangement of school finances. This might take the shape of (a) a capitation grant based on secular educational results, as attested by State inspectors; or (b) payment of teachers' salaries; or (c) any other equitable arrangement; (d) Catholics do not ask, and have never asked, for so much as a bronze penny from the pockets of non-Catholics for Catholic schools, but they strongly feel that they are entitled (as is the practice in the province of Ontario and Quebec) to a fair equivalent of what they themselves annually contribute to the upkeep of the State system, and for which they get but little return; (e) Catholics do not ask, and have never asked, for so much as a penny piece of State contribution towards the cost of the religious instruction and training imparted in their schools. In this respect their demand is identical in principle with the State system for the reform of inebriates which is carried on by the Salvation Army on Pakatoa Island, New Zealand. Religion is a chief factor in the raising of those hapless people above their dead selves, just as it is chief factor in the training of Catholic

children in Catholic schools. In the case of the Salvation Army on Pakatoa, the religious instruction and devotion is not paid for by the Government. The State does not concern itself with the amount of preaching, exhortation, 'knee-drill,' etc., that the management throws, of its own good will and pious intention, into their work. The State merely makes a capitation grant for the maintenance (of those committed, and for other secular services rendered. It, however, affords facilities of environment for the play of religious influences, in the reclaiming of those 'children of a larger growth.' In like manner, the Government paid the contractors of the Makatote Viaduct for secular results only, and did not bother its head how much they prayed and sang hymns, so long as the work was done according to specifications. Catholics only ask that the State-certified State work of education which they conscientiously do, according to State specifications and State requirements, should be treated in the same way.

5. The Catholic position, as already stated, requires, in practical effect, in these countries, separate schools for Catholic children. (a) Existing schools could be brought into the State system on the Canadian, German, or any other acceptable arrangement described in a previous article. (b) Where further Catholic schools would be called for, the German or Canadian or other suitable method might be followed; a fair minimum attendance (say, 25, for example) might be fixed; Catholic householders, in places where a sufficient attendance could be secured, might be enabled to form themselves into a school district, and elect their own school committee, as under the State system; and separate school buildings to be erected at the sole cost of those desiring such schools, and to be in accordance with the requirements of the education authorities. Any other religious body requiring separate schools to be placed upon the same footing. Such a minimum attendance as that suggested above would give very few additional Catholic schools to this Dominion. Practically only one other religious body would erect schools under these conditions—and, perhaps, not a great number of them. The friendly educational rivalry between the two systems, the bringing of large bodies of spiritually destitute children within the sphere of moral and religious influences, the resultant improvement in moral tone, the quickening of religious life, and the increased educational peace resulting from a settlement of this vexed question would amply repay the State even from the civil and secular point of view.

6. Catholics would freely accord to the Government control in the following matters:—(a) In finance and financial policy—no part of the State payments would pass through the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities; (b) in the programme of secular instruction; (c) in testing and determining the efficiency of teachers and keeping it well up to the level of the State system; (d) in the construction, hygiene, furniture, and equipment of the schools; and (e), generally, in all purely civil and secular matters. The Catholic ecclesiastical authorities claim one right which they never can surrender—namely, the right of effective control in all matters relating to the faith, morals, and religious teaching and training of Catholic children. For any non-Catholic children that might attend Catholic schools there would, of course, be a conscience clause on the positive lines already indicated.

7. Catholics are not tied to any one solution of the religious difficulty in education. Quebec, Ontario, Germany (which is, educationally, the most advanced nation in the world), and other countries of mixed religion have, as indicated in a previous article, systems of public instruction that present, on the whole, satisfactory solutions of the problem. And, no doubt, other fair means out of the difficulty might also be devised. The Governments in these countries have created a monopoly in what is called free education. It is their duty *aut viam invenire aut facere* to devise a solution of the religious difficulty. The civil authority may not (so Catholics believe) itself teach religion. But it is deeply concerned with religion as a teacher of morality, a promoter of good order, the best school of good citizenship. And if it cannot itself give its young citizens the benefits of such religious training, it becomes its plain duty to entrust it to those who can do so, and do so at the best time and in the most effective way.

The long list of prominent advocates of State aid to religious schools includes names of such note as John Stuart Mill and the rationalist historian Lecky, whose testimony, I have already quoted. Grants to Catholic schools were strongly advocated a few years ago in Interim Report No. 55 of the New South Wales Education Commission. In the secular press I content myself with citing the *Otago Daily Times*, which was at one period a cordial supporter of religion in the schools, and of a State-aided denominational system side by side with that of the State. Thus, in a leading article of its issue of July 2, 1880, it said that the opposition then shown to the secular system might possibly result 'in bringing about such a modified system of "pay-