

teachers,' it will be sufficient to quote the specific declaration of such a keen educationist and recognised authority as Dr. Gallagher, Bishop of Goulbourn, who affirms that the Catholic teachers within his vast jurisdiction positively 'hate the lessons.' (4) The Catholic attitude of entire dissatisfaction with the system in operation in New South Wales has been again and again expressed by members of the Australian hierarchy, the late Cardinal Moran and Archbishop Kelly, in particular, having made very explicit and emphatic declarations on the point. We quote Archbishop Kelly's latest utterance on the subject, which should settle the question once and for all: 'I am speaking to Australians in general, said his Grace, in an address delivered on April 23, 'and I say that it (the N.S. Wales system) is most objectionable to Catholics, that it is in itself unstatesmanlike, and that from a religious point of view it is nothing better than a delusion, a mockery, and a snare. . . . Our legislation that our Catholic children, when they are compelled to attend public schools, should not be present at these lessons continues. Catholic parents would fail in their duty if they did not see that their children were absent from these lessons. Therefore, it is false for anyone to say that the Catholics of New South Wales are content with the present system of Bible lessons and religious instruction imparted in the name of secular instruction.'

### The Conscientiously Objecting Teachers

Those who know the fine band of Catholic men which Dean Holley has the good fortune to have around him in Wanganui will not be at all surprised at the success which attended Bishop Cleary's meeting in that beautiful and wide-awake town the other evening. The interest shown in the meeting—as the result of their efforts—may be summed up in the following brief sentence from the local *Herald*: 'The Opera House was altogether inadequate to accommodate the big crowd that turned up to hear his Lordship.' A feature of the gathering was the interest shown in the lecture and the part taken in the subsequent proceedings by local Protestant members of the teaching profession. The mover of the principal motion, Mr. Jas. Aitken, was the headmaster of the Victoria Avenue State School, a Presbyterian, and a Sunday School teacher of forty years' standing. The vote of thanks to Bishop Cleary was also moved by a teacher, Mr. J. K. Law, headmaster of the Aramoho State School, whose brief speech contained one of the most weighty and significant utterances that have yet been made in the course of this controversy. As reported in the *Wanganui Herald* of May 30, he 'stated that he was voicing the convictions of eighty per cent. of the teachers when he said that he conscientiously objected to the obligation of imparting the League's lessons being placed upon his shoulders.'

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We hope that Bible in State Schools League advocates will fairly face this statement. Their ablest apologists, Dean Fitchett and the Rev. Isaac Jolly, have contended that there was no need for a conscience clause for the teachers, the latter going so far as to say that while some teachers were opposed to the 'general religious teaching' because it meant an additional subject to the syllabus he had never met or heard of a teacher who conscientiously objected to giving these lessons. Well, here is one teacher, name and address given, who has publicly stated that he does so object, and that in this attitude of conscientious objection he represents an overwhelming majority of his fellow-teachers. What is the League going to do about it? Here is no imaginary bogey or purely theoretical difficulty, but an actually existing situation, and a concrete, practical question of moral right and moral wrong. The *Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith as Held by the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand*—compiled by the Rev. P. B. Fraser and endorsed by the Presbyterian General Assembly—declares (p. 28) that 'liberty of conscience is the inalienable right of every man.' What is the League going to do in regard to this 'inalienable right' of the teachers? Either it must modify its proposals and grant a conscience clause to

the teachers, or it must abandon its own Christian principles and play the tyrant. If it persists in adhering to the latter alternative—to which, indeed, it is now practically committed—fair-minded electors will know what to say to the proposal.

### Otago Teachers' Opposition: 'Explosive Unanimity'

That Mr. Law was not over-stating the position when he claimed that in opposing the Bible in State Schools League's proposals he represented 80 per cent. of the teaching profession throughout the Dominion is evidenced by the stand taken by the Otago teachers at the annual meeting of the Otago District Institute held at Dunedin last Friday. After an interesting discussion, lasting over an hour, the Institute unanimously reaffirmed the deliverance adopted by the annual conference of the N.Z. Educational Institute, the motion being put in this form: 'That the Otago Educational Institute, while recognising the value of Bible teaching and religion, are opposed to the Bible-in-Schools League's programme.' According to the *Otago Daily Times* report, the motion 'was agreed to unanimously, and with acclamation'; while the *Evening Star* described it as being carried 'with explosive unanimity.'

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The speeches on the question reached the high level which was to be expected from a body of educationists of such recognised standing as the Otago Institute. To begin with, they were uniformly courteous and temperate in tone. The speakers, without exception, expressed their personal reverence and regard for the Bible, and their high sense of the necessity and value of religious instruction. That is, in itself, significant, as showing that their attitude on the question was not dictated by a blind or biased conservatism, or by any love of secularism as such. If a scheme were brought down free from injustice and from tyranny of conscience it was made clear that it would have little to fear in the way of opposition from the teachers. But the League scheme now before the country notoriously fails to conform to these conditions; and not a solitary voice was lifted in its favor. The points of objection that were emphasised in the Dunedin discussion were that the League's proposals meant the introduction of sectarianism into the schools, that they were an invasion of the rights of conscience of the teachers, and that they involved notable injustice to Catholics and other dissident taxpayers.

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That the teachers object to the violation of their rights of conscience, as proposed by the League, was made unmistakably evident. 'Mr. Tyndall,' says the *Otago Daily Times* report, 'contended that the point was not secularism or denominationalism, but the right of private conscience, and that, he said, was the mistake in the platform of the Bible-in-Schools League.' On this aspect of the question, Mr. P. J. Duggan, the deservedly respected Catholic headmaster of Windsor State School, who moved the motion which was ultimately adopted by the Institute, made a manly, straightforward, and altogether admirable speech. 'He respected,' he said, 'the conscience of every person, and believed the Bible was worthy of the highest veneration, but what was the position of a teacher if this question was brought to issue? He might have to walk out of his school rather than teach something he disagreed from on conscientious grounds. He had thought that sort of thing ended in 1828. Yet, now in this democratic country they wanted to introduce the very question that caused fighting for 200 years. He believed that they all regarded the Bible as the finest source of morality, from which even an atheist would derive benefit. But the League's means of attaining the end of having the Bible in the schools put a hardship upon the teachers. Again, they had been told that the Catholics were satisfied with the Bible reading, and the fact remained that there was more work going on in New South Wales in the way of building Catholic schools than anywhere else. If they wanted to drive the Roman Catholic children out of the schools, let them conform to the Bible-in-Schools League's programme.' On the subject of the teachers' rights of conscience, Mr.

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