

session, and, indeed, for next session also if the Government are to be consistent. For after definitely informing the public that they 'are in favor of retaining the present national system of free, secular, and compulsory education,' it would be obviously an act of inconsistency if the Government were to introduce or to support a referendum measure which is demanded with the express object of doing away with one of the above-named features of the existing system. After the close of next session—that of 1914—there will be a general election; and, apart from the inconsistency of the proceeding, the Government will hardly be likely to take up the referendum proposals—which have aroused such a large measure of opposition throughout the country—on the very eve of an appeal to the electors. On the other hand, if referendum legislation is not introduced next session—so as to enable the suggested plebiscite to be taken at the same time as the general election is being held—it may be safely predicted, for obvious reasons, that it will not be introduced at all. It is, of course, open to any private member either in this session or in the next, to introduce referendum legislation on his own initiative; but in the absence of Government assistance he would not have the slightest chance of carrying the measure through. Moreover, so far members have evinced a distinct unwillingness to get themselves mixed up with the present agitation. It is the custom at question time in the House, when members are keenly interested, to discuss fully and freely any answers given by Ministers which are considered to be unsatisfactory; and it was noticeable and significant that on the occasion of Mr. Massey's answers to the two questions presented on the subject of education not a member was found to utter a word of objection or dissent. Nevertheless, although all the omens are at present thus entirely favorable, it behoves us to be prepared for all possible eventualities; and to that end we again urge upon all who are in charge of petition forms to press on with the work of obtaining signatures, so that the Catholic petitions may be fully signed and all in readiness to be presented whenever the time may be deemed opportune.

ABOUT SIGNING PETITIONS

The petition which is being organised by the Bible in State Schools League asking Parliament to pass legislation enabling a referendum to be taken on the League's proposals is being freely and rightly met by counter-petition. As our readers know, two petitions—carefully framed and properly authorised—voicing the Catholic objection to the League's scheme, are in circulation; and, as we are informed, non-Catholic petitions, also voicing—though on more or less different grounds—strong opposition to the League's proposals, are also in course of signature. It is in every way right and proper that all sections of the community who resent the unjust and tyrannical proposals of the League should give formal expression to their opposition by way of Parliamentary petition. But it is obviously desirable that, as the various petitions are based on the particular principles of those who frame them, each such petition should be kept distinct and separate; and the signatures should in each case be strictly confined to those who hold the principles embodied in the petition. For this reason it is absolutely essential that those who are in charge of the Catholic petitions should on no account accept any other than Catholic signatures to the petitions. To non-Catholics desiring to sign—and, to our knowledge, there have been hundreds who were eager to do so—the answer must be given that it is a purely Catholic petition, based upon purely Catholic principles, and that their better course is to sign their own petition, based upon their own principles. So far as we know not a single non-Catholic signature has been taken; but if by any chance any non-Catholics have signed the Catholic petitions their names should be carefully struck out before the forms are sent to Wellington, or if the forms are already sent, such names should be forwarded to the Federation Executive in order that they may be struck out.

For the same reason it is absolutely imperative that Catholics should on no account sign any other petition on the Bible-in-schools question except the properly authorised Catholic petition. As Bishop Cleary puts it in the urgent circular printed on page 23—to which we hereby draw our readers' most earnest attention—by signing any other petitions Catholics would be unwittingly giving support to principles which they and all true and loyal Catholics repudiate. In this connection we repeat the injunction which has been already stressed by Bishop Cleary: If any Catholics have unwittingly signed any of the petitions referred to, let them at once notify those concerned that their signatures were given under a misapprehension, and that these signatures are revoked. We have made our position as Catholics perfectly clear from first to last of this agitation; and we are determined to do all that is humanly possible to prevent that position from being obscured or compromised.

Notes

Our Short Story

We draw attention to the original short story in this issue by a Dunedin Catholic young lady, who writes under the pen name of 'Nora McAuliffe.'

The Grey Election

Canon Garland has recently completed a tour of the West Coast, but apparently without any visible result. 'All three candidates,' writes our Greymouth correspondent, 'are opposed to the proposals of the Bible-in-Schools League, so that Canon Garland's mission to the West Coast has borne little or no fruit so far. In fact, the League, in these parts, seems to be as dead as the proverbial dormouse.'

A Strike Incident

The St. Patrick's Day edition of the London *Times* records the following incident in its examples of Irish humor. During the great railway strike of 1911 in Ireland an amateur engine-driver, in pulling up at a country station, took the train a long way past the platform, and then backing the train went as far again beyond the platform at the other end. 'Stop where ye are,' shouted a Dublin playboy among the strikers' pickets; 'we'll shift the station for ye.'

DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

A social, in aid of the funds of the local stall at the forthcoming bazaar, will be held in the Sacred Heart Schoolroom, North-east Valley, on Friday evening.

There was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Joseph's Cathedral on Sunday from the last Mass until after Vespers. In the evening there was the usual procession, followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

There were 110 essays sent in by school children in connection with the Winter Show. The competition was divided into two classes, for each of which four prizes were offered. The judge in his remarks on the essays says:—Many of the essays not placed were remarkably good, so much so that I have asked to be allowed to present a special prize, and this I award to Tasman O'Brien, 'Christian Brothers' School.

The half-yearly meeting of St. Mary's branch of the H.A.C.B. Society, Port Chalmers, was held in the new schoolroom on Monday evening, June 30. The president (Bro. McEntee) was in the chair. After the transaction of routine business, the following were duly elected officers for the ensuing term:—President, Bro. W. Wood; vice-president, Bro. W. Mead; secretary, Bro. W. Woltersdorf; treasurer, Bro. J. Connolly; warden, Bro. T. Mackie; guardian, Bro. J. Flynn, jun.; sick visitors, Bros. J. Connolly and S. King;

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