

I ascertained only last evening, made abundantly clear, and the advertisement corrected.—I am, yours faithfully, R. G. SELLAR.

'7. St. Joseph's, July 28, 8 a.m. Dear Mr. Sellar, —Although Bishop Cleary is now aware that Dr. Gibb's address is to be in no particular sense a reply to his, and that your advertisement will be amended accordingly, he is still willing to cancel important engagements and accept your invitation to be present, provided that there be given an independent guarantee that he may ask questions and that the Dr. in his replies shall observe the rules of debate.—Yours faithfully, P. J. POWER.

'8. Hawera, 28/7/13. Dean Power, Hawera. Dear Sir,—In reply to your letter of to-day's date, I have to state that I am not authorised to determine Dr. Gibb's methods or to give any undertaking on his behalf.—I am, yours faithfully, R. G. SELLAR.'

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In this connection we may mention that Dean Power has issued a pamphlet on the subject of Dr. Gibb's lecture, which we hope to reproduce in our columns. As we go to press we learn that a similar 'runaway' exhibition has been made by the Rev. Isaac Jolly at Paeroa, full particulars of which will be given in our next issue.

### The Government and the Referendum

Judging by the answer given by the Prime Minister to the comprehensive deputation which waited upon him last week the Government have firmly nailed their colors to the mast in regard to refusing a referendum on the so-called Bible-in-Schools proposals. We quote the Press Association report of the interview:—

'A very large deputation, representative of the New Zealand National Schools' Defence League, Women's Christian Temperance Union, New Zealand Teachers' Institute, various churches, and organised Labor, waited on the Prime Minister at noon to-day (August 9). The points made by the delegation (as expressed by Mr. A. R. Atkinson) may be summarised briefly as follows:—

'That the neutrality of the State on all religious matters was essential.

'That this principle would be violated by the programme of the Bible-in-Schools League.

'That Parliament could not evade its responsibility by granting a so-called referendum.

'That it had first to determine whether the particular issue was a proper subject for a referendum.

'That this issue, which would violate the religious neutrality of the State, and allow a majority to dictate to a minority in a matter affecting rights of conscience, was not a proper issue for submission.

'That in particular a referendum granted next session, presumably for a poll two or three months later, would put the defenders of the Act under an enormous handicap, since the Bible-in-Schools League would be already organised, and that no time would be afforded the Defence League to prepare its forces.

'Mr. Atkinson finally emphasised the full facilities under the present Act, which—with the exception of Nelson and a few other places—the churches had refused to use.

'In reply, Mr. Massey said: "I would like to say how very glad I am to meet this large and very representative deputation and to hear the views of the speakers on this very important question." Reference had been made to what was called a political agitation and to the operation of the Bible-in-Schools League. He wanted the deputation to thoroughly understand that the Government had never been approached unofficially or officially, directly or indirectly, by the League with the object of influencing it on the matter of the Bible in schools or of taking a referendum. The

question had been raised in the House in the form of a query to him (the Prime Minister) by Mr. T. M. Wilford, asking whether it was intended by the Government to introduce legislation this session to enable a referendum to be taken on the matter of Bible lessons in schools. The answer he gave was that the Government did not intend to introduce legislation this session to enable such a referendum to be taken. He (Mr. Massey) had not the faintest idea of what was in Mr. Wilford's mind, but his question was a straight one and he had given it a straight answer.—(Hear, hear.) Then the deputation asked the Government what attitude it intended to take on this matter next session. That question seemed a little unfair; but he could tell them that the matter had never been considered by the Cabinet yet in any shape or form. If they wished to find out the Government's mind he thought the proper thing was to think of the attitude of individual members of the Government. "If you do not know my attitude on this question you ought to," declared Mr. Massey. "I stood for free, secular, and compulsory education before I entered Parliament twenty years ago, and I stand for it now."—(Hear, hear.) Probably he was not as good a Christian as he ought to be.—(Laughter.) It was not a joking matter, but he believed in the Bible and he stood for the Bible every time. He was utterly opposed to what might be called sectarianism in the schools. He thought he had good reason for saying that so long as the Government remained in power nothing would be done by the Cabinet which would not be consistent with the principle of free, secular, and compulsory education in the Dominion.'

### DIOCESE OF DUNEDIN

The annual meeting of St. Joseph's Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society will be held in St. Joseph's Hall to-morrow evening.

His Lordship the Bishop, who is to assist at the consecration of the Most Rev. Dr. O'Shea at Wellington on Sunday, left for the north by the Victoria on Tuesday.

Mr. R. Fraher, who has been connected with the Dunedin office of the Bank of New Zealand for some years, has been appointed manager of the Naseby branch of the bank.

A most enjoyable euchre party in aid of the local stall at the forthcoming bazaar was held in the Sacred Heart Schoolroom, North-east Valley, on last Friday evening. The lady's prize was won by Mrs. McCleary, and the gentleman's by Mr. P. Gorman.

There was a fair attendance at the meeting on Monday evening of St. Joseph's Men's Club. The programme consisted of a 'question box,' which provided interesting and instructive subjects for discussion. On next Monday evening it is hoped there will be a large attendance, as the programme—brief lectures by members—will be an attractive one.

Our readers are reminded of the production of the celebrated comedy-drama, 'A Bit o' Blarney,' which takes place in His Majesty's Theatre on Wednesday and Thursday evenings of next week. The proceeds are to be devoted to the furnishing of the St. Vincent de Paul Stall at the forthcoming bazaar. This delightful Irish play has been in active rehearsal for some time by leading local talent, and a finished performance is practically assured.

Senior Sergeant King, who had been stationed in Dunedin for some years, has been transferred to Timaru. Prior to his departure, he was presented with a beautiful Mosgiel rug as a token of goodwill by the members of the local police force. Sergeant O'Connell, in making the presentation, spoke of the high esteem in which Senior Sergeant King was held by his comrades, and expressed regret at parting with him. Several of his brother officers also referred in eulogistic terms to Senior Sergeant King's qualities as a man and an officer, and all joined in wishing him every success.



**J. T. COOPER**

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