

BIBLE-IN-SCHOOLS

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE AND CANON GARLAND.

(By J. Caughley, ex-President N.Z.E.I.)

Since the defeat of the Bible-in-Schools and Right-of-Entry League's campaign, Canon Garland seems to have lost his head, and has made reckless statements about the Educational Institute's actions in this matter.

Canon Garland has stated in various papers that 'every delegate to that conference had been supplied with copies of Bishop Cleary's and Professor Mackenzie's pamphlets opposing the movement, but no statement from the other side had been placed before them.' This is quite incorrect, both as to fact and to the inference contained in the statement.

The League had quite the first word with the teachers. A pamphlet of some thirty pages, issued by the League, and containing eulogies of the scheme, was placed in the hands of every teacher in New Zealand several weeks before the institute met. It was posted by the League to every teacher and all the delegates to the annual meeting had received one. How can Canon Garland say that 'no statement from the other side had been placed before them.' Bishop Cleary's and Professor Mackenzie's pamphlets were sent to the institute meeting by the authors. Canon Garland had already sent his to the teachers weeks before. The opposing pamphlets were placed in the porch, and any teacher who chose could take one. As Canon Garland's pamphlet had been placed in the hands of every teacher first, we could not refuse to allow a delegate to take one of the other pamphlets if he chose to do so.

Canon Garland has therefore given an entirely false impression of the attitude of the institute in this matter.

Canon Garland has also stated that the resolution against the League's scheme, carried at the annual meeting, merely represented the opinions of the delegates and not those of the body of teachers.

Again, he is woefully astray. Notice of the motion opposing the League's scheme was given in October. Everyone of the nearly 3000 members of the institute had a copy of that notice of motion, and every member had the opportunity of attending a meeting in his own district to discuss that motion. Nearly every one of the thirteen district institutes opposed the League's scheme, at their district meetings in November or December, and supported the notice of motion. Not one district supported the League; two districts left the matter in the hands of their delegates; but each of these two meetings was hostile to the League. No teacher, before these district meetings were held, had received any hostile pamphlets. They had Canon Garland's, and yet they voted solidly against the League.

In Auckland a deputation from the Bible-in-Schools League waited on the Teachers' Institute, and put their case fully before the teachers. When the deputation retired, the district institute, after hearing only the League's case, put by its own people, and without any guidance from any leaflets against the League almost unanimously carried the strongest motion condemning the League's scheme, and sent the notice of motion in for the annual meeting. Here the League had all the hearing, and were signally beaten. After the district institutes had voted separately, their delegates went to New Plymouth in January, and in support of the almost universal condemnation of the League's scheme, they voted against that scheme by a majority of 32 to 7.

To sum up, the League's statement of their case was first in the teachers' hands, and was by far the most widely distributed. After having only the League's case put before them, eleven out of the thirteen district institutes opposed the League's scheme, and the other two, though a majority was opposed, deferred to the feelings of some of their number, and made no pronouncement. The delegates went to New Plymouth armed with the votes of their institutes. The two opposing pamphlets referred to were sent by their

authors, and were put where members could take one if they wished. The seven delegates who favored the League all spoke at full length, the president purposely overlooked a breach of the standing orders to enable the best of the League's advocates to speak as fully as he pleased. What more could Canon Garland desire? Yet he, who declared he was willing to 'trust the teachers,' cannot conceal his chagrin because they condemn the League's scheme.

Let the above thorough, fair, and democratic consideration by the Teachers' Institute be compared with the way the church courts have committed whole denominations in support of the League. Canon Garland and Dean Fitchett boast that 75 per cent. of the people of New Zealand are behind the League. The Presbyterian Church is committed to the League on the vote of its assembly only. The presbyteries only gave a general approval of a report on the Australian system. The report condemned some of the features of that system. The matter was not referred to the sessions or congregations, and even yet the congregations have not been consulted. This is contrary to Presbyterian law and the pronouncement is illegal. Yet Canon Garland claims the whole denomination. The denominations represented by the League in Queensland comprised over 70 per cent. of the people. Yet on the referendum for Bible in schools not half of the electors on the roll voted; and the proposal was carried by 26½ per cent., or slightly over one-fourth of the electors.

We challenge Canon Garland to show that any recognised body of people, supporting the League, has consulted its individual members with the same completeness as the Educational Institute has done.

MR. A. R. ATKINSON'S OPEN LETTER TO CANON GARLAND.

Mr. A. R. Atkinson has addressed the following letter to Canon Garland, the organising secretary of the Bible in State Schools League:—

'Sir,—Your most devoted admirer will hardly venture to congratulate you upon your performance on Sunday last. The formidable artillery with which you had hoped to destroy me proved far more terrible in the recoil than in the attack. Twenty-four hours after the smoke had cleared away it was patent to everybody that the only harm done was to those whom you sought to help. The men—and the cause—behind the guns had suffered severely; the man in front of them was able to leave the field unscathed by the attack and even fortified by the public sympathy to an extent quite out of proportion to his intrinsic merits.

'This singular outcome of your leadership occasioned no little surprise. The public was amazed to find that an attack engineered in the interests of religion should have been distinguished by such a combination of studied delay and perverse precipitation; by so callous a contempt for the rights of the person attacked; by so startling a disregard of the obligation to ascertain the truth of a grave charge before clothing it in the most impressive manner possible with the authority of a sacred calling. My office is within a few chains of yours, and they are both on the telephone. I am personally well known to most of the members of your executive residing in Wellington. A five minutes' interview or a five minutes' talk on the telephone would have cleared the matter up completely, and revealed the prodigious mare's nest on the brink of which your detective zeal was hovering. But, no! The swords of the faithful were thirsting for the blood of a heretic, and they must not be denied. It was possible to wait a week in order to make the execution the more impressive, and to realise the pious aspiration of Laertes—'to cut his throat i' the Church.' But it was not possible to spend five minutes in checking the accuracy of an intrinsically absurd report which rested on the uncorroborated authority of one newspaper out of three, and was contradicted by the record of the official stenographer.

'But the cup is not yet full. The last and crowning act in your glorious triumph of Christian strategy has still to be told. It was on Monday that the reports