

1878.
NEW ZEALAND.

PETITION OF 329 ROMAN CATHOLIC INHABITANTS OF OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND.

Presented to the House of Representatives 16th August, and ordered to be printed 22nd August.

To the Honorable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives.

THE RESPECTFUL PETITION OF THE UNDERSIGNED, ROMAN CATHOLIC INHABITANTS OF OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND.

SHOWETH,—

THAT the system of free, compulsory, and secular education established by law in this colony inflicts on them serious grievances.

That it appears to them most unjust and impolitic to compel them to help to maintain this system, which they are convinced can only lead to the great injury of the colony, and under which their own schools are refused aid from the public funds, in consideration of the secular knowledge they impart.

That their conscientious convictions compel them to withhold their children from frequenting public schools, and render it necessary for them, at great expense and sacrifices, to provide Catholic schools.

That Catholics have established, and are supporting throughout the colony, Catholic schools.

That no Government or Legislature is justified in assuming the rights and duties of parents, and taking on itself the education of children.

That the State has no right or authority to do more in this matter than insist on parents giving their children such an amount of education as is likely to prevent them from growing up dangerous subjects.

That, considering, therefore, your petitioners have established and are supporting many excellent Catholic schools, that they will not send their children to public schools, and that, in common with their fellow-citizens, they pay taxes and discharge all the other duties of good citizens, they cannot but regard the refusal of Government to aid their schools as evidence of a determination to persecute them, on account of the efforts they are making to give their children a Christian and Catholic education, and rear them up to be intelligent and dutiful Catholic subjects.

That your petitioners, therefore, appeal once more to the justice and wisdom of your Honorable House to afford them redress, by devising such measures as shall put their schools on a footing of equality with all other schools supported or aided by the State.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

+ P. MORAN,
And 328 others.

By Authority: GEORGE DIDSBURY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1878.

