

873. It is a failure amongst the class who most need assistance?—Laying stress upon what it ought to do, I say it is a failure.

874. If the system of granting State aid were begun, do you think it might be best brought in force in the large centres?—I conceive only in those centres.

875. And in the scattered districts the present system would have to be worked?—Yes.

876. The secular subjects taught in the aided schools should be up to the State standard?—Yes; the aid should only be given on ascertained results by State Inspectors.

877. And the teaching of dogma in such schools would be a separate subject?—Quite so; the State would have no knowledge of that.

APPENDIX.

ABSTRACT OF PETITIONS.

From Roman Catholics.

RECEIVED by Legislative Council, 59 petitions, containing 7,294 signatures; received by House of Representatives, 62 petitions, containing 9,293 signatures: total 121 petitions, 16,587 signatures. Prayer: That your petitioners are conscientiously opposed to the system of public education established in this colony. That they have, in consequence, established Roman Catholic schools, and maintained them at their own expense. That, under the circumstances, they feel themselves aggrieved at being compelled to contribute towards the maintenance of a system of education from which they derive no advantage, which puts them at a great disadvantage, and which is practically the cause of their being subjected to double taxation. That they are persuaded that, if they are to be treated as justice and equity dictate, their schools should be put on a footing of equality with public schools, or they should be exempted from taxation for public-school purposes. That they respectfully pray your honourable House to take the premises into consideration, and to devise such measures as will secure to the Roman Catholics of New Zealand justice and equitable treatment. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

On behalf of Dunedin Catholic Literary Society.—Received by Legislative Council, 1 petition, containing 3 signatures; received by House of Representatives, 1 petition, containing 3 signatures: total, 2 petitions, 6 signatures. Prayer: That this society, established for the especial purpose of promoting the intellectual culture and higher education of the Catholic youth of Dunedin, is deeply impressed with the injustice to the Catholic body of the present system of education as established under the Education Act of 1877—a system which practically closes the State schools to Catholic children, and in Otago debars them from competing for scholarships, since the Education Boards have, in the exercise of their discretionary power, imposed conditions on the tenure which Catholic parents cannot accept for their children. That, under these circumstances, the Catholics throughout New Zealand have been constrained to establish schools of their own, and feel naturally and reasonably aggrieved that they should be compelled to contribute to maintain a system of State education from which they derive no advantage. That it is entirely a misapprehension to suppose that the agitation for justice and equity in the matter of public education originates with and is confined to the bishops and clergy of the Church. The Catholic laity have proved how deeply interested they feel, and how conscientiously earnest they are, by heavy and sustained sacrifice, as witness the highly-organized schools established throughout the colony, affording a sound elementary education, with careful moral training, to thousands of children. Your petitioners therefore respectfully pray your honourable House to take the premises into consideration, with the view of affording such relief as in your wisdom may seem fit.

From Members of the Church of England.

Received by Legislative Council, 2 petitions, containing 1,858 signatures; received by House of Representatives, 2 petitions, containing 1,888 signatures: total, 4 petitions, 3,746 signatures. Prayer: That your petitioners are convinced that any fully satisfactory measure for education by the State should contain a provision for grants-in-aid being made to schools set on foot by any religious denomination, provided that the attendance and secular instruction in such schools shall come up to the required standards and satisfy the Government Inspectors. Your petitioners are further of opinion that the Education Act should be so amended that provision may be made for the communication of religious instruction in the public schools by ministers of religion, or by persons duly authorized by them, to the children belonging to their respective communions, within school hours. Your petitioners therefore pray that effect may be given to the foregoing representations.

On behalf of the Bishops, Clergy, and Laity of the Church of England, in General Synod assembled.—Received by Legislative Council, 1 petition, containing 1 signature; received by House of Representatives, 1 petition, containing 1 signature: total, 2 petitions, 2 signatures. Prayer (in addition to the foregoing): Your petitioners are also of opinion that Local Committees should be empowered to direct that specified portions of Holy Scripture be subjects of instruction in the schools under their control, the rights of conscience being observed.

From Inhabitants of New Zealand, in Favour of Present System.

Received by House of Representatives, 52 petitions, containing 4,727 signatures. Prayer: That your petitioners view with very great concern the determined efforts that are being made by the Roman Catholics of New Zealand to secure an alteration in their favour of the Education Act now in force in the colony. Your petitioners understand that the Roman Catholics have already petitioned your honourable House, urging that they derive no advantage from the present Education Act as a reason why the Act should be amended as they desire. Your petitioners are convinced such representation of the Roman Catholics, if made to your honourable House, cannot be sustained