

To place the issues still more unfairly before the voters the present national system of education is not to be given a place on the ballot-paper. Why? It is treated in effect as if it were not. If the question is put to the people Parliament must see to it that the issues are fairly stated, thus: (1.) I vote for the national system of education, free, secular, and compulsory. (2.) I vote that the clergy be given the right of entry into the State schools during school-hours to give sectarian teaching. (3.) I vote that all State-school teachers be compelled (without a conscience clause) to give general religious teaching in State schools. Those who desire the Australian system could vote for (2) and (3).

*Injustice No. 7.*—It is proposed that the people should be asked to vote on the introduction into the schools of a religious text-book that they have not yet seen—that is not yet compiled. In 1904 the local opponents were fairer. In the preface of the Bible-in-schools Text-book (specimen lessons), as approved by the Wellington Bible in Schools Conference of that year, we find these words: "Inasmuch, however, as there exist but one or two copies of the text-book as adopted by the conference, it has been widely felt, not only by opponents but by friends of the movement as well, that it is necessary in some way to make the people who will have to vote on the question acquainted with its contents." If in 1904 this was necessary why not in 1914?

*Injustice No. 8.*—It is proposed to give the clergy power to appoint substitutes. This places the clergy above the headmasters, School Committees, and Education Boards. These will have no choice but to accept the clergy's nominees whether the latter be suitable or unsuitable. Is this done so that, as so frequently happens in New South Wales, the clergy may hand over the sacred privilege for which they are now fighting to ill-informed and poorly paid catechists?

*Injustice No. 9.*—It is proposed that children shall be segregated according to the religious beliefs of their parents. Can any one imagine a more cruel thing than to make the children, who belong to a denomination numerically weak, the "peculiar objects" of their playmates? The next thing will be a classification of children on the basis of the wealth or professions of their parents. Why should children be subjected to this refined form of persecution? Can it be in the interests of the children, of the State, of the Church, of morality, or of religion?

*Injustice No. 10.*—It is proposed that the expense of teaching this State form of religion shall be paid for by all, even by those who conscientiously object to the doctrines so promulgated. This was the cause of the "passive resistance" movement in England, and New-Zealanders would do well not to introduce it into this country. There can be no doubt that even among the advocates of the Bible-in-schools platform there is the feeling that if this scheme is introduced justice will demand that the denominations that cannot conscientiously accept the form of religion put into the schools shall be given denominational grants. The grants may be refused for a few years, but in the end justice must be done. The Rev. Dr. Bevan, for many years the leading Congregational minister in Australia, said, "If we have Bible-reading and Bible lessons in the schools given by the State I do not see how we can resist the claims of our Roman Catholic citizens. If we satisfy the Protestant conscience in this way we shall have to satisfy the Roman Catholic conscience also." No amount of special pleading can fairly escape this conclusion.

*Injustice No. 11.*—But overshadowing all these injustices there is the one that proposes to decide a matter of conscience by a mere counting of heads. That a question of conscience is involved is shown clearly by the presence of a conscience clause for parents and by the confession of the Bishop of Wellington that the real issue is the kind and method of the religious education of the children. Are we living in the Middle Ages or the twentieth century? For thirteen centuries the principle of majority rule in religion obtained in Europe. During all this period the dominant or majority church, with all the powers of State behind it, sought to impose its form of religion upon the minority. The inevitable result was persecution, conflict, and bloodshed that blasted not only the social and political but also the religious life of Europe. Fools, we are told, learn by their own experience; wise men by the experience of others. Which are New-Zealanders to be? While our armies are fighting for the principle that right ought to be might, Parliament is asked to accept the odious doctrine that might is right—against which we are now struggling. Parliament has the power but it has not the right, and experience has shown that ultimately the appeal to mere numbers is a two-edged sword. The day came when the Churches that championed it bitterly regretted their ill-advised advocacy of this principle. Does any one imagine that any religious body would urge the right of the majority in matters of religion unless it had nothing to lose? Would the combine of Churches advocate it now if the Roman Catholics were in the majority? Does the Anglican Church advocate it in regard to Welsh Disestablishment? Do the Protestants advocate it in Ireland? Of course not. These Churches in New Zealand have become possessed with the gambler's spirit, and are crying "Double or quits." to the degradation of morals and of religion.

The Rev. Mr. Patterson was struck on his arrival in this country with the fact that "clergymen in New Zealand seemed all political propagandists and talked nothing but politics." Now they wish Parliament to pass over the justice of their demands and let the people settle a religious issue under the most unfair conditions that these "political propagandists" have devised. If some Churches have so far forgotten their measuring-rod we feel confident that Parliament has not.

The present circumstances cannot fail to suggest the historic and dramatic occasion when was made the same demand that the constituted authorities should break their vows to see justice done and allow the crowd to decide the issue. Members of Parliament are being asked to play the part of Pilate. With all reverence we should adapt the words of Holy Writ. We hope it will never have to be recorded that "when the members of Parliament saw they could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, they took water and washed their hands before the multitude, saying, 'We are innocent of the destruction of this just system of national education. See ye to it.'"

It is a plebiscite that is demanded. If the Government, or Parliament, or the combine of Churches wishes to change our system of representative Government they should do so by means