

a capitation grant for private schools in which religion was taught. He did not think, speaking for himself, that either side expressed the sentiment of the community. Indeed, he did not think the people were prepared to depart from any one of those three great principles. So soon as a favorable opportunity presented itself for taking up the Education Bill again the Government would be pleased to give the fullest consideration to the representations which the deputation had been good enough to put before him.

Private Schools and Scholarships.

A Deputationist—Regarding our request respecting scholarships a good deal might be done by regulation.

The Premier said the matter of scholarships was before him. He had given it a good deal of consideration, and he was not averse, nor did he think his colleagues would be averse, to throwing open the whole of the scholarships to full public competition. (Applause.) That was based on the ground that anything which extended beyond the primary system of education and was given in the way of prizes, or anything of that kind, should become a reward for merit, and that being the case those prizes should be open to all who could and would compete for them. It was in that frame of mind that the Government would consider the new regulations.

Mr. O'Loughlin—I think, Mr. Premier, you were the first Minister to throw them open.

Mr. Denny—I think you will have the whole House supporting you.

Mr. O'Loughlin—It seems a fair proposal.

The Premier said he had the greatest admiration for the work done by the private schools of the State, whether by the denomination represented that morning, by the Lutheran Church, or by the Church of England. They were each doing great auxiliary service to the State system, and when it came to awarding prizes they should all be considered.

In reply to Archdeacon O'Neill, he promised to consider the matter of having the children at private schools examined by the State medical officers who visited the public schools.

The Register
September 29, 1914

EDUCATION SYSTEM.

CATHOLIC FEDERATION PROPOSALS.

PREMIER'S REPLY.

A deputation from the Catholic Federation waited upon the Premier (Hon. A. H. Peake) on Monday regarding the question of education.

The Hon. L. O'Loughlin (Speaker of the House of Assembly) said they had attended to represent the views of the Catholic Federation regarding the Education Bill. They had thought that as the measure was not to be brought forward just now there might not be much need for them to speak, but on reconsideration they had decided that it would be just as well to place their views before the Government.

—Requests and Reasons.—

The following statement was handed to the Premier:—“As citizens who, while paying for the education of their own children, are also as taxpayers contributing their share in the State expenditure on education, we protest against the carrying into effect of many of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Education, which would add doubly to our already unjust burden and enormously increase that of the general taxpayer. During the last 10 years there has been a great increase in the cost of State primary education, while the number of children attending the State primary schools has diminished considerably. 2. We are opposed to the proposed elaborate scheme of higher education, because:—(a) It will interfere with private enterprise, which has already established private schools and colleges. (b) It will tend to accentuate centralization and increase the tendency on the part of the young, already too pronounced, to take up avocations which will call them to the thickly populated centres rather than to the agricultural and pastoral areas so much in need of development. 3) All the needs of higher education can

be adequately provided for by existing educational establishments—the University, the existing high schools, the private secondary schools, the Adelaide School of Mines, and kindred schools throughout the State—by a system of scholarships open to the students attending all schools. 3. A State monopoly, or an unbending uniformity in education, is undesirable, and a grave injustice to those who cannot conscientiously accept it.

—A School Tax.—

"We hold, with John Stuart Mill, that a school tax is that part of a man's income which he should use for the education of his child, and that the only excuse the State has for taking it from him is that in his hands it could not pay for such an education, but in the hands of the State it could. Furthermore, since Catholics cannot conscientiously accept any system of education which excludes definite religious training from the school, any expenditure of public revenues on such a system is unjust to them. Sir Henry Parkes in 1875, speaking of the Catholics, said:—'As long as we appropriate the revenues of the country for the purposes of education, we have no right to apply them in a way that will exclude a large proportion of the population from the benefits of the expenditure.' Also, we would quote Professor Findlay, of the Manchester University:—'Where a separate group in a neighbourhood exists holding views of religion and life quite distinct from the majority, and numerous enough to provide children for a school, it is an act of tyranny for the State to impose an alien culture on the children. In any event the pressure of the majority outside the school will exercise some influence over the young, and the State has no right simply because of its dependance on a majority vote to stamp out the individuality of dissent, either of a dissent which adheres to old creeds, or a dissent which proclaims a new evangel. The test of the claim which such a minority makes is its willingness to make sacrifices for that which it holds dear. If the patrons of such institutions are willing to put their hands in their pockets, if the teachers are willing to sacrifice some part of their emolument, or if the parents are willing to forego some advantages in secular instruction for the sake of those greater things in creed and conduct which they cherish, under such conditions it is the clear duty of the statesman not to crush but to lend a generous hand in maintenance.

—Royal Commission Recommendations.—

"4. If the recommendation of the royal commission are embodied in the proposed Education Bill, and those affective private schools are adopted, we claim that those schools be placed on an equal footing with the State schools, and be given an equal share in all rights and privileges. (a) We ask that denominational representation on the advisory council be proportional to the number of children attending efficient schools, and also that denominational private schools be proportionally represented on any committee appointed thereunder for the purpose of fixing examination standards and appointing examiners. (b) We claim that if private schools submit to examination for efficiency and are declared efficient, adequate remuneration be given for the secular education imparted. (c) If a grant is given to the Kindergarten Union, every school which does a like kind of work efficiently should be similarly recognized and subsidized by the State. (d) That teachers training for private schools have extended to them at the Teachers' Training College the same privileges as those accorded teachers training for the State schools, and that this be expressed in the Education Bill. (e) That private schools claim equal rights in the matter of equipment, provision for physical culture instruction, general school requisites, medical inspection, or any other benefits supplied by the State. (f) That efficient private schools have the right to give leaving and other certificates of equal value to those of the State schools to pupils passing an examination of a similar standard.

—Entrance to Civil Service.—

"5. With regard to entrance to Government service, we prefer that the competitive system of examinations be continued, but if this system be discontinued we claim that all certificates issued by efficient private schools be of equal value to those of State schools in qualifying for entrance to the State Civil Service, police force, railway traffic service, Federal Civil Service, and teaching service. 6. That in the event of application for examination for efficiency by private schools the examiner be chosen from competent persons unconnected with the State Educational Department. 7. We object emphatically to the recommendation that the

Director of Education prescribes regulations for students from other than State schools who wish to enter State secondary or technical schools. To quote John Stuart Mill again—"Though a Government may, and in many cases ought to establish schools and colleges, it must neither compel nor bribe any persons to come to them, nor ought the power of individuals to set up rival establishments to depend in any degree upon its authorization." In all such cases we claim an examination independent of the Education Department, which is in the position of a competitor.

8. We claim that all scholarships should be thrown open for competition to all children of citizens of the State.

—Scholarships.—

"In respect to the matter of scholarships, we bring specially under notice the Queensland scheme, which, with the advice of the Executive Council, the Governor of that State has approved, and which will come into operation as from January 1, 1915, viz., 'A scholarship with a currency of two years will be granted to every candidate who makes not less than 50 per cent. in the annual scholarship examination, and the scholarship will be available at any State high school, technical high school, grammar school, or other secondary school approved by the Governor in Council. The scholarship will be extended for two years if the holder secures an approved pass in the Queensland junior public examination, and for a further (or fifth) year if the holder secures an approved pass in the Queensland senior public examination.' 9. We further claim that in all examinations carried out in connection with scholarships the papers should be set, and the examination conducted by an examining body, independent of the Education Department, in cases in which the pupils of State and private schools compete against each other. We also object to the Education Department prescribing the standards and framing the regulations for such examinations. Such a procedure would unduly handicap students who are not trained under the system of the Education Department."

Archdeacon O'Neill (President of the Catholic Federation), Mr. F. F. O'Neill (Secretary), and Mr. C. H. Danvers supported the requests. Included among the others present were Messrs. Denny and Travers, M.P.'s.

—Legislation and Finance.—

The Premier thanked the deputation for having forwarded to him a typewritten statement of their request. He was pleased to receive them, as he was to receive any body of electors who considered they had matters of importance and concern to the State or themselves to lay before the Government. They knew, from the intimation to Parliament, that it was not the intention of the Government to proceed, this session at least, with the proposed Education Bill. The causes of that were well

known to every taxpayer, and had operated to prevent progress not only with that measure, but also with others, as the Civil Service Bill, Police Superannuation Bill, and the Bill for the appointment of another Judge. All those measures had had to be put in the one category of legislation which involved a great deal of public expenditure, which the State at the present time was unable to bear. He noticed it had been stated in the press that the Government would have done well to have gone on with those Bills, and to have suspended the Acts, but the Ministry did not think it wise to spend the time of Parliament upon measures which could not be put into effect.

—The Education Commission.—

No doubt they had studied closely the report of the Education Commission, and from the statements of Archdeacon O'Neill he gathered that they were not pleased with the recommendations. In settling the measure—because in respect of the proposed Bill the matter had been pretty well settled—he had found it necessary, after consultation with his colleagues, to greatly modify many of the recommendations.

—The Government's Ambition.—

He regretted that they could not proceed with the Bill, because they had to recognise as a Government that it was their duty to see that the State should not be behind other States in the Commonwealth regarding educational matters. At present South Australia was somewhat behind in that respect, and the Government had aimed at getting abreast, if not in advance, of the States whose systems the commission had examined. He noticed in reading their requests that reference was made to John Stuart Mill. He was afraid he had thought Mill was dead, as people had departed so far from him in these later years. To hear him quoted as an authority came as a reviving and refreshing breeze from the south or some other quarter.