

# NATIONAL EDUCATION

AND THE

## PRINCIPLES OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT

*AS APPLICABLE THERETO*

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GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY IN RESPECT TO EDUCATION.

OF all the social questions which have lately agitated politicians, perhaps there is not one involving so many difficulties as that of National Education.

The subject is essentially a religious one, for all avowed unbelievers, respecting Christianity, are agreed upon the adoption of a purely secular system.

Before stating our views, in detail, as to what National Education should be, we would offer a few remarks respecting the principles upon which governmental interference is sanctioned or discountenanced in the Bible.

Writing, as Christians, we recognise the fact that at one period of the world's history, there was a Theocracy—a government directed by God Himself—with minute instructions as to what religion should be practised, all others being interdicted.

This system was based on the infallibility of Him who prescribed it. But Israel failed to discharge its trust, and the governors of that nation unrighteously made use of the arbitrary authority—conferred upon them for the maintenance of truth—as a means of enforcing idolatry and error upon the people; thus causing confusion. God's remedy under these circumstances was, for a time, to take away governmental power from Israel, and place that nation under the arbitrary dominion of a Gentile power; but, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the first Gentile monarch thus appointed to rule, never could be supposed to have had any commission from God in respect to the arbitrary maintenance of true religion, being himself a heathen and an idolater. He nevertheless, had his commission from God himself to govern arbitrarily. See the Book of Daniel, chap. ii. v. 37 and 38; also, Jeremiah, chap. xxviii. v. 6 and 8.

The dominion commenced in Nebuchadnezzar, has continued up to the present day through several empires—the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman, called in the Bible “THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES.”

Nebuchadnezzar and his successors were God's ministers; but for social purposes only, that is to say, “for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well” (1 Pet. ii. 14). Such was the Gentile commission as described in the New Testament. We believe that the Theocracy will again be resumed, and, under infallible directions, will be carried out in a more perfect and arbitrary manner than ever. But these future prospects are beyond our present purpose, which is, to exhibit the right of existing governments in respect to the enforcing of religion, and the

ordering of National Education; for whatever we may have been accustomed to think to the contrary, the right to persecute on account of religion, and the right to enforce religious education upon the people, rest on exactly the same Scriptural authority. If there is no Divine authority for the one, under the Christian dispensation, neither is there for the other.

Man has at all ages shown a disposition to persecute, from the days when Nebuchadnezzar enforced the worship of his golden image, by the use of his burning fiery furnace, to the present time. Each persecuting party, in its turn, begged the question (as we all do), that his system of religion was the right one, but the persecutors, whether heathen, Catholic, or Protestant, overlooked the fact that God had not given them, or any one of them, a commission as governors to discriminate between a right and a wrong form of religion, so as to justify persecution.

There are certain propositions most true in themselves, which are constantly made the basis of false inferences. It is true that every man ought to adopt, believe in, and practise the most pure form of religion; but it is false to assume that a righteous government should use its powers for the enforcement of such an object. To admit this use of governmental powers, would be to justify the rigorous, religious persecutions perpetrated in past ages. Another proposition equally true is, that every child ought to be instructed from infancy in the pure worship of the true God. Education, without religion (so far as spiritual things are concerned) having an evil tendency; but it is false to assume from this, that any government has a right to assume the office of discriminating a

right from a wrong system of religious education, against the judgments of the parents or natural guardians of children. Of course, if government and parents are all of the same opinions upon religion, there can be no violation of principles in government affording aid to parents and natural guardians in carrying out what all are agreed in thinking a desirable object.

THE IRISH NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION : ITS  
MERITS AND DEFECTS.

None will be found to deny that the present system of National Education in Ireland has not answered the purposes for which it was intended.

Let us now inquire wherein it has failed to answer the description of what a National Scheme of Education should be, as to secular or religious instruction.

The books published under sanction of the Commissioners are models of their kind; the rules for management are many of them admirable; the plan of secular teaching could hardly be improved. The principles to be inculcated in the pupils, as set forth in the rules, are worthy of all commendation. In the first part of the rules we read—"Many men hold erroneous doctrines, but we ought not to hate or persecute them. We ought to seek for the truth, and to hold fast what we are convinced is the truth; but not to treat harshly those who are in error. Jesus Christ did not intend His religion to be forced on men by violent means; He would not allow His disciples to fight for Him." Nothing can be sounder than the principle set forth in this extract, which is enjoined to be hung up in each school.

All must admit that the practical working of the system has been most beneficial to the masses of the Irish people, whether Catholic or Protestant. Nevertheless, however practically beneficial, and however near to perfection the system appears in theory, experience has demonstrated that defects exist in the system, which make it indefensible.

First, there is a defect in principle.

The rules relating to the "fundamental principle" are as follows:—(See *Rules and Regulations*, p. 1, sec. vi.)

"I. The object of the system of National Education is to afford *combined* literary and moral, and *separate* religious instruction, to children of all persuasions, as far as possible, in the same school, upon the fundamental principle, that no attempt shall be made to interfere with the peculiar religious tenets of any description of Christian pupils.

"II. It is the earnest wish of Her Majesty's Government and of the Commissioners, that the clergy and laity of the different religious denominations should co-operate in conducting National Schools."

I ask, in reference to these rules, how can the members of the National Board themselves act harmoniously in carrying out the principle asserted? viz.:—the *affording* of religious instruction to children of all persuasions, whether right or wrong, which, as a consenting member of the National Board, each is bound to do.

There is an absurd idea in the minds of some men, and it has found its way into the fundamental rules of the National Board, that when parties of different religious opinions are brought together for a specific purpose, there may, or ought to be, an amalgamation of religious principles. But this

cannot take place where religious zeal exists. It is contrary to reason, it is contrary to experience, and to the "Lesson" directed by the Commissioners to be "strictly inculcated" on the pupils, viz., "To seek for the truth, and to hold fast what we are convinced is the truth."

All who promote, co-operate, or teach in National Schools are thus understood to have a laxity of principle which the pupils are instructed to avoid. I ask, how can *zealous* clergymen, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, co-operate in conducting schools, the "fundamental principle" of which is stated to be—"That no attempt shall be made to interfere with the peculiar religious tenets of any description of Christian pupils?" Why, the paramount object of each clergyman is to inculcate his own religious principles. Their zeal leads to a continual counter-working, yet the National Board asks them to co-operate in promoting a system of education which affords equal facilities for the inculcation of truth and error.

If the rule of the National Board had been worded thus:—"That no attempt shall be made by the agents or employées of the Board (in the exercise of their official authority) to interfere with the peculiar religious tenets of any description of Christian pupils," it would not be liable to the objection suggested above.

To the credit of Roman Catholic clergymen, they have, from the beginning, acted contrary to the *principle* of the National system. They never co-operated with Protestant clergymen in teaching the "heresy" of the Protestant faith. They made use of the system only so far as it accorded with their own principles; and in time, they caused to be ejected from it every element of which they themselves did not fully approve.

The Rev. William Fraser, of Paisley, was sometime since employed to examine the chief educational establishments in the United Kingdom, with a view to devising a system of National Education suited to Scotland. In his report, referring to the National System of Ireland, he says—"The theory [of a combined literary, but separate religious education] in Ireland, as elsewhere, has completely failed. *Limited and guarded compromise has invariably become unlimited concession.*" "In their school exercises the pupils may quote freely from Byron, Shelley, or Voltaire, but hesitate to draw a line from the sweet singer of Israel. To establish a principle in Political Economy, they may quote freely from Blackstone and Adam Smith, but not from the higher and older legislation of Moses. They may refer at will to the ethics of Socrates, but must be silent as death on that purest and loftiest morality given by Him who spake as never man spake. In the class-room and lecture-hall the Bible can be permitted no recognized authority."

We shall notice other defects of the existing system when treating of what National Education ought to be.

#### PARENTS, MINISTERS OF RELIGION, AND CIVIL GOVERNMENTS—THEIR DISTINCTIVE DUTIES.

As the natural guardians of their own children, parents are the parties on whom the duty of attending to, and directing the education of such children primarily devolves. The leading of their minds, before they are capable of thinking and judging for themselves, into a proper course of thought and action, both for time and for eternity, is the exclusive privilege of parents, and ought not to be controlled

by any temporal power. All free education provided by the State is intended to supply the deficiency of means in comparatively indigent parents to accomplish the duty which they thus owe to their children.

The duty of governors and legislators is, to attend to the social interests of the community. If they be Christians and under the influence of the grace of God, they should not forget that *they do not derive any of their authority to govern from their Christianity*. It is possible they may be succeeded in their dominion by unbelievers, whose authority as "*the ministers of God,*" for the purposes for which government was instituted, is not a whit impaired by their wanting all knowledge of Christian principles.

Christian men should govern as holding a commission in common with unbelievers. While acting as governors or legislators they should never do anything contrary to their individual faith as Christians; when they act peculiarly as Christians, they place themselves on a level with the Christian community. They should remember the distinctive nature of the two characters, though united in the same individual.

The divine commission of our modern governments has primary relation to the social interests of men; and in order to this end, their duty as such, is to check immorality, blasphemy, and disloyalty; the means at their disposal are—*laws, prisons, the sword, and coercion*.

The commission of the Christian minister is to promote the eternal interests of men; to preach the Gospel to every creature; to parents as well as children; his sphere of action includes every human creature within his reach; the means at his disposal

are—the *Word of God, persuasion, argument, and good example*. If the governor, being a Christian man, wishes to co-operate with the Christian minister, let him, in doing so, lay aside his public power, and confine himself to the means at the Christian minister's disposal; but let him not attempt, even for a good purpose, to coerce the consciences of men by the use of the power which God gave him for social purposes only.

If there be countries where there is an established Church, the Government having ostensibly a religious character, and the mass of the people being of the same creed, there the secular education which all governments are bound to afford, might, without coercion, be combined with religious instruction. If there are dissenters from the national creed, they should be accommodated with the secular portion of the national system, leaving them to provide as they please for the religious instruction of their children.

In Ireland the Government is mixed, or, to a great extent, Protestant; that is, the Queen and a large majority of the members of both Houses of Parliament are pledged to the Reformed Faith. Now, a great majority of those who need a free education are Roman Catholics, therefore a complete and liberal system of secular education should be established, with as much general, moral, and religious instruction, consistent with the fundamental principles of the Reformed Creed, as could be added without coercing the judgment, or offending the prejudices, of reasonable Roman Catholic parents and children. Convenient times might be appointed for further religious instruction, when the clergyman, or some other person approved of by the parents, might attend to impart knowledge in the

specialties of the Roman Catholic faith; but the master appointed by the State should, in that capacity, only be present to maintain order, and see that the rules of the school are observed.

On the one hand, legislators should remember that it is unwarrantable oppression for the Government to compel the people to learn a religion which they deem false. On the other hand, it is inexcusable laxity of principle, which can only arise from the practical absence of all religious feeling, for Governments, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, to aid in the furtherance of a creed which they deem to be soul-destroying.

*The same principles which will lead a Christian man of any denomination to promote the teaching of true religion, ought to prevent his co-operating in the giving of instruction contrary to what he believes fundamental truth.*

#### SENTIMENTS OF ROMAN CATHOLIC LAYMEN RESPECTING CLERICAL INTERFERENCE IN SECULAR MATTERS.

We regard it as one of the most glaring popular fallacies of the age,—one which prevails to a wonderful extent in England, as well as among the Irish Protestant gentry,—that the Roman Catholic masses of the Irish people wish to be ruled or directed in secular matters by their clergy. Our large acquaintance with Irish Roman Catholics of various classes enables us to say that, while the masses are devotedly attached to the Roman Catholic faith, and desirous in matters purely religious, to be solely guided by their pastors, they, nevertheless, in secular affairs, wish to be permitted to act without the interference of clergy, on their own intelligence, now considerably matured. They wish that priests should

not interfere with them in any matter purely secular or political, whether it be the election of a Poor-law Guardian, a Town Commissioner, or a Member of Parliament; and although at this day less a practical question than others,—owing to the arbitrary course adopted by the Legislature in respect to National Education,—the people would be well pleased to see the secular department of their children's education more under lay control than it has hitherto been. There appears not a shadow of doubt of the fact that if the judgments of the intelligent Roman Catholics,—those who are interested in National Education,—were consulted, they would at once unhesitatingly abolish the present uncontrolled authority of Patrons and Managers, and have their place supplied by Committees of five, or seven, of themselves, such Committees of Management to be of the same religion as the pupils. A system of Education based on these principles would please the people of Ireland vastly more than that at present in use under the National Board.

We imagine an objector to ask, “How we can reconcile this assertion with the fact, that in past times all great political movements in Ireland appeared to have been led and directed by Roman Catholic priests?” We answer; that while the great masses of the Irish people were absolutely uneducated, they required some leadership, and in times now past, the priests were the only Roman Catholics in whom the people placed any confidence. Since the passing of the Emancipation Act, the Roman Catholic gentry of Ireland, and men of property, have generally shown a greater disposition to take the side of men of their own class and social position, rather than that of their co-religionists of an humbler class. The national system of educa-

tion has already produced a very large and influential class of Roman Catholics, who in politics sympathize with the people, and such men, who are found in every locality, are really more than the priests, the political and social leaders of their ignorant co-religionists. The people are aware that there is an ecclesiastical influence, of a cosmopolitan character, in operation, which is not always identical with the supposed social and national interests of Ireland. Perhaps the element of lay influence in politics does not always appear to be what it really is; for the sacerdotal character of a priest gives him, in respect to politics, a position of independence in society which the people are sometimes (and only sometimes) willing to make use of.

Our opinion on this subject may be illustrated by a comparison of elections for seats in Parliament with those for seats at the Poor-Law Board, or the Town's Council. Elections of Poor-law Guardians (which occur annually) are often the result of inveterate contests between the candidates. Landlords as a rule never interfere in such elections, and, therefore (solely because property influence is not so used), priestly interference is never heard of. The people wish to be left to themselves in such matters, of which the priests are well aware, and act accordingly.

But the case is often otherwise with regard to elections for members of Parliament. The landlord class often make strenuous efforts for the return of candidates who are not always such as the mass of the people would choose. In these cases not only is the leadership of priests tolerated by the people, but they are glad of such aid, having no objection that there should even be some appearance of ecclesiastical

control, as affording them excuse for voting to please themselves. Such ecclesiastical influence, however, would indeed be thought very little of, if exercised (as it rarely is) contrary to the feelings and wishes of the intelligent section of the lower orders.

We shall notice one more popular fallacy, respecting mobs. It is commonly supposed by casual observers that the very ignorant, noisy, and often drunken section of a town mob—those whose action is most prominent, and who appear to exercise most intimidation—are acting purely on their own impulses. The truth is, that such persons have often no independent political thoughts of their own; they are led by other men much more intelligent than themselves, who generally stand by in silence, but who, nevertheless, practically hold the apparent actors in thorough subjection.

On the whole, the reader may rest assured, that whenever he witnesses active influence on the part of either priests or mobs, it is the result of a less prominent popular influence, namely, that of the educated section of the humbler classes, excited to action by the exercise of some other strong, but unpopular influence.

#### DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION CONSIDERED.

Among the remedies suggested for amending defects pointed out, and for silencing the complaints against the National Board, one much advocated is, that separate grants be given to different denominations of Christians, commonly defined as *Denominational Education*; but such a system would, to an intelligent Christian, involve a violation of principle, therefore he cannot, by his vote, or any other direct agency, co-operate in it. As a Roman Catholic

priest, for instance, he may say, "I should be glad to see men instructed in the Protestant faith, rather than have them left in ignorance of all religion, and grow up infidels; but whatever the result may be, I cannot, though for a desirable end, support a system which my conscience condemns. I must obey the Apostolic injunction, and avoid the example of those who 'do evil that good may come, whose damnation is just.'" To the credit of Roman Catholic priests, there is nothing to be said against them in respect to violation of this sound principle; wherever the anomaly is exhibited, it results from Protestant laxity growing out of practical infidelity, which advocates expediency in the place of principle. If a Roman Catholic were to vote for Denominational Education, he would be directly contributing thereby to the distribution of state funds to one section of Protestants who would, by means of such funds, teach, among other things, that the Roman Catholic religion is almost intolerable, to another section who would teach that the Bible is not true—not the Word of God—and to another section who, in their teaching, deny the divinity of Christ. Men who thus assist by their votes in objects which their judgments condemn will exhibit themselves as inconsistent Christians. Conscientious men may indeed accept grants for a good purpose from any party, public or private: but they will decline to make grants *indiscriminately* for religious Denominational Education. For our own part, while we should be very sorry to see the systematic progress of education without religion, which invariably leads to infidelity; we nevertheless feel persuaded that a false system of religion resists infidelity only so long as it is sustained by prejudice or superstition. When these influences yield to the progress

of education, nothing but true religion—that which is based on Divine revelation, and engrafted in the heart—can save a man from practical infidelity.

We deplore the fact, that the tendency of this age of progress is towards infidelity. Under these painful circumstances we should feel it our duty (like the priest above mentioned) to confine our efforts, in respect to religious instructions, to the advancement of *truth*, leaving to God in His providence to use (for the benefit of mankind) the exertions of others who so mix truth with error, that we cannot co-operate with them conscientiously, and without exposing ourselves to be classed with those who “do evil that good may come, whose damnation is just” (Romans iii. 8). We think it an error of judgment, that the Roman Catholic party should have caused the four National School books of Scripture extracts to be struck off the list of ordinary studies. These books consist of extracts from Genesis, Exodus, St. Luke’s Gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles. They were approved by the late Dr. Murray, Archbishop of Dublin, and they comprise such matter, as that no man who is ignorant of them, can truly be said to be educated, even in a secular sense. The parent, if any there be, who apprehends that such knowledge (communicated through a master of his own creed) would endanger the orthodoxy of his child, does little credit to the faith which he himself professes. We, nevertheless, believe that the conscientious convictions of Roman Catholic parents should be respected on the question of the retention or rejection of these books, and we should be glad to see them enabled to act freely, and in accordance with their convictions.

Some will argue, that whereas Roman Catholics and Jews are now admitted into Parliament, the

Protestant character of the legislature has ceased, consequently the religious instruction of Roman Catholics—why not also of Pagans and Jews?—should be *provided* for by the State. This argument is objectionable. All votes upon religious questions, being matters of principle, should be given by the individual legislator without reference to the result.

It has long been regarded by many religionists as an established principle, that education without religion ought not to be afforded. From the ill-judged combination of this fallacy with an undeniable truth, viz., that all the people ought to be educated, sprang the absurdities which disfigure the present system of National Education.

Truly, every child should receive a religious, as well as a secular education; but while the duty of providing secular education rests under certain circumstances with the *State*, that of providing religious education devolves upon the parents, the clergy, and such others as choose voluntarily to assist in the work.

But there is another and very important objection to Denominational Education, which, if the measure were carried, would make it most distasteful to the masses of the people—to those principally interested in the result—for it would place all control, in respect to the *secular education* of children, *more than ever* in the hands of the ministers of religion; for if Denominational Education were made the law of the land, the course which the Government would be likely to adopt, and indeed the only course which seems open to them under such circumstances, would be to distribute the funds granted by the State to the control of Boards of Trustees, or representatives of each denomination of Christians. In all such boards the clerical element would be certain to pre-

ponderate, for the higher classes of laymen, having no personal interest in the matter, would not interfere. Those of the lower classes would be thoroughly displeased at such a measure, when they came to understand it; but having no mouthpiece, save the priests themselves, and no organization whereby their collective sentiments, on such a question, could be authoritatively expressed, especially when the question was one between themselves and their clergy, with the Government for an umpire, their discontent should be borne in comparative silence.

The people's sense of wrong should be very pressing indeed, before they would raise a united voice against their clergy, in a matter which was to be decided by the British House of Commons. But Government may say, If the Irish people do not really wish for Denominational Education, why do they not say so. We answer simply because, for the reasons just stated, they have no means of publicly expressing their wishes in the matter; but if the question were to be decided by ballot, we feel persuaded that an overwhelming majority of those interested in National Education, would vote for having the secular part of their children's education under the management of local boards chosen from among themselves, rather than have it solely under the control and direction of ministers of religion.

Again the Government may ask: "Why do not Members of Parliament, whose duty it is to represent the feelings and wishes of their constituencies, enlighten the House of Commons on the subject of education?" We answer that many of the clergy are not unwilling to possess the control of the secular, as well as the religious part of education, and candidates for Parliamentary representation, are unwilling to place themselves in antagonism to

the clergy—in a matter in which they have no personal interest, and no fixed opinions of their own to guide them; and, in truth, many of the popular members of Parliament know very little of the *people's* real sentiments on the subject of education.

#### SYSTEM OF NATIONAL EDUCATION RECOMMENDED.

We shall submit the outline of a National System of Education consistent with the principle herein advocated.

The office and authority of Patron and Manager should be altogether abolished. Every National School should (subject to the control and inspection of the National Board) be under the management of a Local Board of at least five persons. The clergyman of the same denomination as the majority of the pupils, might be a member of this Board *ex-officio*; also the landed-proprietor, or grantor of a free site, should have a seat on such Board *ex-officio*. It would be scarcely fair, and certainly not popular, to refuse either of these gentlemen the *ex-officio* places we propose for them; besides, their intelligent co-operation (particularly that of the minister of religion) would be valued, and respectfully used. It is *authority* exercised by *privileged individuals*, independently of the judgments of those most materially concerned, which the people would wish to have restrained. The residue of the Local Board (at least five) should be elected annually by the rated occupiers, each of whose child or children should have put in a prescribed attendance at such school. The election might be carried out by nomination and ballot, and might take place at the school, the master acting as returning officer.

In the first instance the *elected* Poor Law Guar-

dians might constitute a Board for all National Schools within respective districts, to be prescribed by the Commissioners of National Education; and if this system were found to work satisfactorily, it might be made the basis of some better arrangement.

The Local Board should have power to appoint or dismiss the master, subject to such rules, as to qualification, &c., as the National Board of Education should think proper to make.

All education afforded under such control should be secular, with as much moral and religious instruction combined, as would not be inconsistent with the reasonable prejudices of either Roman Catholics or Protestants.

All education in the specialties of religion should be confined to a time, to be appointed by the National Board of Education, for such; but the schoolmaster, as the servant of the Commissioners, or of the Local Board, should take no part in religious education, save only that if the pupils were wholly (or nearly so) of one denomination, there could be no reasonable grounds why the master, if willing to accept such office, might not be *employed* by the clergyman or parents to teach religion; but, in such capacity, he would, for the time, cease to be the servant of the National Board, and should be *paid* by those who so employed him. If the pupils were mixed, that is to say, at least one-fifth being of the denomination of the minority, the master should be under obligation not to render any service under those who might control the imparting of religious knowledge. We believe that if such a plan as this were boldly carried out by Government, it would be received by the Irish Roman Catholic people with much greater satisfaction, than either the present system of

National Education, or any system of Denominational Education which can be devised.

SUGGESTIONS UPON FINANCIAL POINTS.

Under the present National system every pupil is obliged to make a contribution towards the expenses of his education—we are informed about eighteen shillings a year—and he is also obliged to pay reduced prices for the books used in the course of his education. Small as these pecuniary burdens may seem, we are aware that they have acted injuriously on the poorer classes of pupils. Children have been kept away from school by indigent parents, solely because they were unable to pay the required contributions for books and teachers.

All books and educational expenses of the National system should be absolutely free to pupils. No eighteen shillings a year should be charged for masters, and no reduced prices should be required for books. Substantial and very stringent means might easily be devised for guarding against systematic fraud, with respect to the use of books and stationery; but it is unnecessary to encumber our suggestions with details respecting these means. We would only remark, that if the charging of a price (even reduced) be regarded as a necessary security against fraud, then no reduction whatever should be made in the price of books, for the liability to fraud—if it must exist—will be in exact proportion to any reduction that may be made. The evil of the present system is, that while the comparatively rich, and they only, can possibly benefit by frauds, thousands of the poor are deprived of education by the charging of any price. The increased benefits of an absolutely free education would more than

counterbalance any pecuniary loss which the public exchequer might sustain thereby. We, ourselves, might go so far as to advocate the Swiss system of compulsory secular education, which, of necessity, should be absolutely free to all classes, rich as well as poor; but we apprehend that the time has not yet arrived for the introduction of such a measure.

It is a glaring anomaly in legislation, that a limited owner can make a lease for 999 years of a site, not exceeding five acres, for a denominational school-house, or for a Presbyterian or Roman Catholic glebe, but he cannot make a lease of even half a quarter of an acre for the site of an Irish National school-house, save under such powers as he may otherwise possess, as a strictly limited owner. Even the power of a limited owner to lease for thirty-five years, conferred under the "Land Act, 1870," does not extend to the leasing of a site for an Irish National School.

We would recommend that the provisions of 18 and 19 Vic., chap. 39, entitled, "The Leasing Powers Act for Religious Worship in Ireland, 1855," be extended to all National and other School sites. Powers under this Act extend to the making of a lease by a limited owner for 999 years, at the highest improved value, with strict clauses as to the limitation of uses.

The want of such powers as these is every day felt, the most desirable sites are abandoned, not from the want of will on the part of those concerned, but solely from the want of leasing powers; besides considerable embarrassment and heavy expenses, in respect to the making of title, are thereby often imposed on the managers, agents, and promoters of the National System of Education.

Houses of the Oireachtas