

National education, Ireland : letter from the Right Hon. Chichester S. Fortescue ... to the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland, on the organisation and government of training and model schools : together with the answer of the Commissioners, and other statements and documents referring thereto.

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2.
NATIONAL EDUCATION, IRELAND.

LETTER

FROM THE

RIGHT HON. CHICHESTER S. FORTESCUE, M.P.

LATE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND,

TO THE

COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

IRELAND,

ON THE

ORGANISATION AND GOVERNMENT

OF

TRAINING AND MODEL SCHOOLS.

TOGETHER WITH

THE ANSWER OF THE COMMISSIONERS,

AND

OTHER STATEMENTS AND DOCUMENTS REFERRING THERETO.

PUBLISHED BY THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED AT A PUBLIC MEETING OF
THE FRIENDS OF UNITED NATIONAL EDUCATION, HELD IN
BELFAST, ON TUESDAY, THE 15TH JANUARY, 1867.

BELFAST:

PRINTED BY ALEX. MAYNE, CORPORATION STREET.

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ALFRED H. HARRIS

1884

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF THE LAND OFFICE

OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

FOR THE YEAR 1884

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NATIONAL EDUCATION, IRELAND.

I.

Return to an Order of the Honourable the House of Commons, dated 19th July, 1866, for "Copy of any Correspondence between Her Majesty's Government and the Commissioners of National Education (Ireland) on the subject of the Organisation and Government of Training and Model Schools."

1. *Copy of Letter, dated 19th June, 1866, from the Right Hon. C. S. Fortescue, M.P., Chief Secretary for Ireland, to the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland.*

IRISH OFFICE, 19th June, 1866.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,—I am desired by his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant to inform you that her Majesty's Government have had under their careful consideration several important questions connected with the operation of the National System of Education in Ireland to which they desire to call the attention of the Commissioners, with a view to the adoption of certain alterations which they believe would produce great public advantage.

The first point which they request the Board to consider is that of the Training of Teachers in Model Schools. It was originally laid down by Lord Derby, as a condition of the employment of teachers, that they should have received previous instruction in a Model School, which was accordingly opened in Dublin in 1833. But the Commissioners of Education having thus one Normal School only, and having a large and increasing number of teachers to train, were forced to adopt a very limited course of instruction—a course which, at first, was spread over three months only, and which has never exceeded five months; and, notwithstanding this effort to extend, however imperfectly, the influences of training as widely as possible, it appears that there are still in the National Schools 4,309 untrained teachers out of a total number of 7,472. It is, of course, known to the Government that the District Model Schools assist in supplying competent teachers; but the number

which they are able to send out does not, it appears, exceed ninety annually, while in thirty-four out of sixty school districts into which the country has been divided, no Model School has been established. It is, accordingly, ascertained that between the Training School in Dublin and the District Model Schools in the country, the number of persons prepared annually for the office of teacher is only about 400, whereas the number of new teachers, principals, or assistants annually required is about 900.

The Government view this state of things with much concern, and are anxious to apply a remedy to the incompleteness and inadequacy of the present training system; but considering the hostility felt and expressed in some quarters, and especially in the Roman Catholic community, to the principle of exclusive State management in the case of Model and Training Schools, they are not prepared to undertake the extension of such Schools under exclusive management. The Government prefer to stimulate private enterprise and private zeal to supply the wants which exist, and they, therefore, propose to encourage the establishment of Model Schools under local management. The following is the outline of the plan which the Government would propose for the consideration of the Board. A Model School under local management would consist of two parts:—

1st. The domestic establishment, which should have accommodation for at least fifteen resident pupils, and which should in every respect be suitable to its purpose as a part of a training institution.

2nd. The school-house, which should be of a superior character, and capable of accommodating at least 150 pupils.

The domestic establishment should be erected from funds derived from private sources. The school-house may be built either from private funds, as in the case of ordinary non-vested National Schools, or partly from private funds and partly from the Parliamentary grant, as in the case of vested National Schools. In the former instance, the school must be called a Non-Vested Model School; in the latter instance, a Vested Model School.

To the erection of a vested Model School-house the Commissioners would contribute in the same proportion of expense as in the case of ordinary schools. The management and general direction of a vested Model School would be vested in trustees, who, subject to the Board's approval, would appoint the teachers, and would have the absolute power of dismissing them. The heads of the school should exhibit qualifications for the proper training of students in the art of teaching and the organisation of schools.

The day school must be open to pupils of all denominations, and must be conducted exactly upon the principle of an ordinary National School. A course of study by students in training would be laid down by the Board. For each student who should pass a satisfactory examination a grant should be made by the Board. The Government would look to the Board for advice as to the

amount of such grant, and also for the suggestion of all regulations of detail necessary to carry into effect the plan which I have described.

Her Majesty's Government, in the next place, strongly recommend a revision of the arrangements for the reception of the teachers in training in force in the Normal Establishment in Dublin, with the view of providing, if possible, an ampler and more practical course of instruction for a larger number of teachers. They desire, also, to observe that there is a marked distinction between the position of students residing for a considerable time as boarders in a Training Institute or Model School and that of day scholars attending an ordinary school—a distinction which accounts for the fact that objections are often entertained, especially by the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church, against sending teachers or pupil teachers to an institution where their domestic life is not based, like the family life of a home, upon identity of religious belief.

It appears to the Government that the double object of meeting such objections, and of providing the means of retaining a larger number of teachers for a longer period in training, might, to a great extent, be attained by permitting teachers or pupil teachers, at their own desire, or that of the managers of schools by whom they are sent up for training, to board and lodge out of the official establishment. In such cases teachers and pupil teachers should receive an allowance in lieu of board and lodging, and arrangements could be readily made for their reception in private boarding-houses sanctioned by the Commissioners. If a precedent were needed for such an arrangement, I find that in the Scotch Presbyterian Training Colleges there are no official residences for the teachers in training, who, by means of an allowance from the College, provide board and lodging for themselves.

The Government are further of opinion that, considering the nature of these institutions, in which the Commissioners stand, to a great extent, towards the teachers *in loco parentis*, and in which large numbers of children of different religious denominations are drawn together without that local supervision, either lay or clerical, which the patron or manager affords to an ordinary National School, some special provision should be made for the religious instruction and supervision of the inmates, and with this view they recommend the appointment of chaplains in connexion with the Central Training and District Model Schools upon the following conditions:—

The Commissioners, upon the recommendation of the bishop or other authority of the Church to which they belong, should appoint as chaplains resident clergymen of each denomination. The chaplain should have control, subject to the rules of the Board, over the religious instruction of the teachers in training and pupils of his own denomination. It would be especially his duty to watch over those teachers who, under the last proposal, should

reside out of the official establishment. The Commissioners should require his certificate as a condition of granting or continuing their license to a boarding-house for the use of teachers of his own denomination. He should be remunerated by a capitation grant for the teachers in training and the pupils of his own Church, his total income not, however, exceeding some fixed amount. Every teacher of a Model School would, as at present, be appointed by the Commissioners, subject to the possession of a certificate as to faith and morals of the chaplain of his own religious denomination. Finally, I am directed by his Excellency to inform you that her Majesty's Government are desirous of drawing the attention of the Commissioners to the important principle upon which the remuneration of the teachers of schools supported by the State has, with such marked success, been recently regulated in England and Scotland; I refer to the principle of State payments being apportioned to the ascertained results of education. The Government do not urge upon the Commissioners the general adoption of this principle as an immediate change in the Irish System. They propose its early introduction in certain cases where it might properly be tried at once, as in that of the Model Schools, to be followed by its gradual development, not necessarily in the precise form which it has assumed in England, but with such modifications and adaptations as the Commissioners, profiting by English experience, with their knowledge of the wants and circumstances of Ireland, may recommend. I may add, that I should hope that, as one effect of the change, the incomes of meritorious teachers would thereby be improved.

The Lord Lieutenant invites the immediate consideration of the Commissioners to the proposals herein contained, and requests to be favoured with their views thereon as soon as possible.—I have, &c.,

(Signed),

C. S. FORTESCUE.

The Commissioners of National Education.

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2. *Copy of Letter, dated July 2, 1866, from the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland to the Right Honourable C. S. Fortescue, M.P., Chief Secretary for Ireland.*

OFFICE OF NATIONAL EDUCATION, July 2, 1866.

SIR,—We have had the honour to lay before a Special Meeting of the Board of National Education your letter of the 19th ult. We are now directed to inform you that the Commissioners have considered the proposals to which their attention has been invited by the Lord Lieutenant, and, without binding themselves to the

adoption of any particular details, they beg to express their general approbation of those proposals, and their readiness to co-operate with the Government in carrying them into practical effect, keeping always in view the fundamental principles of United Secular Education.—We have, &c.,

(Signed),

JAMES KELLY, }
WM. M'CREEDY, } *Secretaries.*

The Right Hon. C. S. Fortescue, M.P.,
Chief Secretary, Irish Office, London.

II.

*Statement in Reply to the Letter of the Right Hon. C. S. Fortescue, M.P.,
on the Organisation and Government of Model Schools, &c.*

The Committee appointed at a public meeting of the friends of United National Education, which was held in Belfast on Tuesday, the 15th January, 1867, have had their attention directed to a letter, dated 19th June, 1866, addressed by the Right Hon. C. S. Fortescue, late Chief Secretary for Ireland, to the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland. This letter was printed in return to an order of the House of Commons, dated 19th July, 1866. It deals with the subject of the Organisation and Government of Training and Model Schools, and with the principle upon which the remuneration of Teachers of Schools supported by the State ought to be regulated.

The Commissioners, in their reply, dated July 2, 1866, "without binding themselves to the adoption of any particular details," "express their general approval of the proposals made, and their readiness to co-operate with the Government in carrying them into practical effect." The Committee are deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of the subjects referred to in this correspondence, and of their bearing upon the Educational interests of the country, and they feel it incumbent upon them to lay their views before both the Government and the public.

The first point to which, in this letter, the attention of the Commissioners is called is the Training of Teachers in Model Schools. They are reminded that "it was originally laid down by Lord Derby, as a condition of the employment of teachers, that they should have received previous instruction in a Model School," but now, after the lapse of thirty-five years, "there are still in the National Schools," it is stated, "4,309 untrained teachers out of a total of 7,472." In this statement there is no

distinction made between principal teachers and assistants. The *principal* teachers alone could be expected to have been trained. At the end of 1864 they numbered 5,863. A few of the *assistants* have been trained, but the mass of them are virtually *in course of training*, and many of them would afterwards find their way into the Model Schools. These assistants numbered, at the same date, 1,609, and should have been deducted from the total of untrained teachers, to give a fair view of what the Normal and Model Schools have effected in this department.

The letter proceeds to say that "it is, of course, known to the Government that the District Model Schools assist in supplying competent teachers, but the number they are able to send out does not, it appears, exceed ninety annually." On this point the Committee observe that, if the statement here made be correct, a very remarkable change must have passed over the Model Schools since the date of the "explanatory paper" of the Commissioners (6th February, 1864). In that document, printed by order of the House of Commons, the Commissioners say that, "to keep up the requisite number of teachers, about 700 new teachers must be supplied every year, and of these the District Model Schools only furnish about 130." In 1864, these schools were said to furnish every year about 130 new members, and the Committee believe that even that statement greatly underrated their capacity; but, in 1866, "the number, does not, it appears, exceed ninety annually." The explanation of this serious and sudden deterioration of the Model Schools is not far to seek. Toward the close of 1863, an order was issued by the Commissioners, which took effect early in the following year, directing *a large reduction to be made on the staff of candidate teachers in all the Model Schools*. This was accordingly done, and thus a large number of these young persons were sent to their homes, and all the sanguine hopes they had been induced to cherish cruelly extinguished. The amount thus saved went to the payment of first-class monitors, chiefly, if not exclusively, in Convent Schools; and when this policy of repression, as regards Model Schools, has produced its natural and inevitable results, the authors of it persuade the Government to complain that the Model Schools are doing, and can do, comparatively little for the training of teachers! The Commissioners labour to produce inefficiency and incompleteness, and, when they have done so most effectually, the Chief Secretary is instructed to mourn over the results!

In the letter of Mr. Fortescue, it is stated that, "between the Training School in Dublin and the District Model Schools in the country, the number of persons prepared annually for the office of teacher is only about 400, whereas, the number of new teachers, principals, or assistants annually required is about 900." In 1864, according to the statement of the "Explanatory paper," just quoted, "about 700 new teachers must be supplied every year;" but here, in the letter of the Government, they rise to "about

900!" And once more new teachers, principals, and assistants are most conveniently grouped together to magnify the want, and so to depreciate the capabilities of the Normal and District Schools to meet that want!

The Committee are convinced that, with suitable encouragement, the Dublin Model School could train 400 teachers annually, and the District Model Schools 300—the whole number actually required. Dr. Patten, Head Inspector, in his report for 1862, says—"During 1861, thirty-three males and thirty females left the Belfast Model School, prepared to take charge of schools as principal or assistant teachers; and, in 1862, the number was still larger, as many as seventy-six having left for a similar purpose." This is what one Model School was able to accomplish before the staff of its pupil teachers and monitors was reduced about *one-third*; and what, then, might have been accomplished by all the Model Schools of the Board?

But the Government view the state of things as represented to them "with much concern," and what do they propose? "In thirty-four out of sixty school districts, into which the country has been divided, no Model School has been established," and what more simple or natural than that the Board should be asked to proceed to have Model Schools established in some of these districts, and thus larger provision made for the training of teachers? If the Model School System be a good one, and the present number of these schools be insufficient, others ought to be created. But nothing of the kind is proposed. "Considering the hostility felt and expressed in some quarters, and especially in the Roman Catholic community, to the principle of *exclusive State management* in the case of Model and Training Schools, they are not prepared to undertake the extension of such schools under exclusive management." On this statement, the Committee observe, that it has never yet been proved that the Roman Catholic *people* have any hostility to the Model Schools, and the Education given therein. On the contrary, they have continued till the present hour, in the face of very great difficulties, to take advantage of this Education for their children, and the hostility referred to is manifested mainly, if not exclusively, by those who hold that the Church and not the State has a right to the entire direction and control of the Education of the people, and it is in the interests and at the bidding of these parties that the changes sought are being made. Protestants of all denominations are satisfied with the present Model School System, and desire its extension. It follows that the plan now proposed can be meant only for the encouragement of Conventual and Monastic Seminaries.

And what is this plan? The Government "prefer to stimulate private enterprise, and to encourage the establishment of Model Schools under local management." Such a Model School, it is said, should have a domestic establishment with accommodation

for fifteen resident pupils, and a school-house capable of accommodating at least 150 pupils, the domestic establishment to be erected from funds derived from private sources, and the School-house from private funds, or in whole or in part from a parliamentary grant.

The Committee view this proposed revolution in the Model School System with most serious apprehension. If these proposals be carried out, they will be the destruction of United Education in Ireland. Those making them may profess to maintain the principles of United Education, but they are in reality doing all in their power to subvert them. The changes sketched in this letter are specially adapted, not to say designed, to convert the schools of the religious orders of the Church of Rome into Training and Model Schools. In Convents the domestic establishment stands ready for the purpose described, and also the school-house capable of accommodating 150 pupils. And can these Convent Schools ever become Model Schools in the proper sense of the term? "The chief objects of Model Schools," according to the statement of the Commissioners in their rules and regulations, "are to promote United Education, to exhibit the most improved methods of literary and scientific instruction to the surrounding schools, and to train young persons for the office of teacher." These objects Model Schools under local management, and especially Convent Schools, cannot accomplish. Their teachers are exclusively of one denomination. In their very dress they represent sectarianism in its most distinctive forms. The schools are attended by Roman Catholic children alone. Roman Catholic teachers alone could be trained in them, whilst the teachers of these schools themselves are neither trained nor classed, and are, therefore, not competent to undertake the training of others.

On the other hand, in the administration of a Mixed or Non-sectarian plan of Education, it is essential that teachers should have a considerable course of training in an institution where this system is to be found in its highest perfection. In the existing Model Schools, both teachers and pupils are of various religious denominations. The idea of United Education is in them a pleasing reality. Young teachers of different denominations are for a considerable time trained together. Thus they imbibe principles of toleration, mutual forbearance, and respect. It is necessary in such a system that the Training Schools should be under the Commissioners' supervision and control. In no other way can that unity and uniformity in training be maintained which are essential to success. The Model Schools are under the charge of trained and classed teachers of known ability and tried excellence, and they are thus in every respect preferable to schools under local management, as training institutions for young candidate teachers.

In any case, these "local Model Schools" would spring up, not

where they are most wanted, but where they could most effectually damage existing institutions. The plan is virtually to set up rival schools, supported out of the public funds, and under exclusive and sectarian management; and when these would have impaired the usefulness of the present Model Schools, the injury done to the latter would be used as an argument for getting rid of them altogether.

The next point referred to in the letter of the late Chief Secretary is the necessity of a revision of the arrangements for the reception of teachers in training in the Normal Establishment in Dublin. It is recommended that teachers and pupil-teachers be permitted to board and lodge out of the official establishment, receiving an allowance in lieu of board and lodging, and that Chaplains should be appointed in connexion with the Central Training and District Model Schools.

In regard to the former of these points, it is surely reasonable to ask—Why, after the country has been put to large expense in the erection of a boarding establishment, it should be given up as useless? Has any evil been proved to have arisen from united boarding and training? On the contrary, have not leading officials from time to time testified to its eminent advantages? In the report of the Commissioners *for last year* the following statement occurs:—"The establishments in which the teachers, both male and female, attending at our Training Institution, are boarded and lodged, continue to be efficiently conducted. The inmates have been distinguished, as heretofore, for the general correctness of their conduct, for the maintenance of order and discipline, for the exercise of kindly feeling toward each other, and for the careful observance of their religious duties." Is the Government of the country prepared to undo a system working so admirably—to foster sectarian separations and animosities, and virtually to suggest measures for preventing the people, and especially the youthful teachers of the people, from having friendly and kind intercourse with each other? Any Statesman who imagines that he will pacify this country by handing the youth of it over to be educated, and the candidate teachers in it to be boarded and lodged by the religious orders of the Church of Rome, makes, we believe, a most serious mistake; and it is manifest that to board Roman Catholic teachers "out of the official establishment" just means to board them in convents and monasteries, and thereby to support these institutions at the public expense.

Reference is, indeed, made to the "Scotch Presbyterian Training Colleges, in which there are no official residences for the teachers in training;" but these Colleges are under a Denominational and not a Mixed System; and, in any case, the circumstances of the two countries are so different that institutions and arrangements well adapted to the one may be entirely unsuitable for the other. Besides, the proposed change will never remedy the supposed evil. The parties objecting to united boarding and lodging

will object also to the teachers going to professors of other persuasions than their own, and to their sitting on the benches with Protestants, just as they object to pupils going to Model Schools. In fact, the objection is not against the teachers living together so much as against their being under professors appointed by the Commissioners and not by themselves.

With regard to the proposal to appoint "Chaplains" for the Central Training and District Model Schools, the Committee regard such appointment as wholly unnecessary; as likely, if carried out, to entail large expense upon the State; and as tending to the introduction of religious rivalries and animosities. To place the teachers in private houses, and to pay "Chaplains" for them, would subject them to the control of the clergy and weaken the legitimate influence of the Commissioners and the professors; who are supposed to be preparing them for the public service, and not for the purposes of ecclesiastical domination. Farther, to insist, as is proposed, that "every teacher of a Model School must possess a certificate as to *faith and morals* of the *chaplain* of his own religious denomination," is to give such chaplain a veto on all appointments, which he will take care so to exercise that none but parties subservient to his ends shall be employed as teachers. It is not enough that a man should be of irreproachable character, but he must be sound in the "faith," and so certified, not by a clergyman, but by "the chaplain of his own denomination"! This is a power so liable to be abused and so tyrannical, that no man should be entrusted with it. Besides, the proposal is utterly inconsistent with a United Non-Sectarian System of Education, such as Parliament professes to maintain in Ireland, and the practice, begun in Model Schools, must ultimately be extended to all the National Schools throughout the kingdom.

The Committee regard, with much concern, the proposal to change the principle upon which the remuneration of teachers in Ireland has hitherto been regulated. It is daily becoming more difficult to procure teachers for National Schools. This arises chiefly from the fact that they are not sufficiently remunerated. Many of the present teachers have expended much time and labour in securing a high classification, and now to turn round upon them and to apportion their payments *solely* according to the "ascertained results of education" would be unfair, and calculated greatly to discourage a most deserving and important class of individuals. These "results" have all along been taken into account by Inspectors, but upon the "class" of the teacher the amount of his salary has mainly depended. To change this system would be to put the untrained and unclassified teacher, who has indolently declined the necessary study, on a level with the individual of highest qualification and class. The Committee would gladly co-operate with the Government and the Commissioners in endeavouring to induce the people to contribute more liberally for the education of their children, and it is mainly, they consider, in

this direction an improvement should be sought. Of the total sum of £39,135 18s 2d contributed, under the head of "payments by pupils," in National Schools over Ireland, during the past year, Ulster contributed £16,092 15s 1d, and the Committee believe that that sum could and ought to be largely increased.

In conclusion, the Committee express their decided conviction that, if these changes, made and threatened, are permitted to be carried out, the destruction of the present system of United Education in Ireland is inevitable. It is the best boon the Parliament of Great Britain ever conferred on this country, and it is earnestly hoped that neither Parliament nor the public will permit the system to be insidiously subverted by those who, at the same time, profess to keep always "in view the fundamental principles of United Secular Education."

A D D E N D U M.

It appears from the Commissioners' Report for 1865, that they have trained in Dublin, from the commencement of their proceedings to the 31st of December, 1865, no fewer than 7,247 teachers, though there were at the same date only 3,385 trained teachers in the service. Where have the other 3,862 teachers gone to? They cannot have all died, nor yet have become incapacitated by old age. It follows that they have renounced the service for other occupations. This conclusion is shown to be the true one by statistics in the Report of the previous year, from which it appears that 41·6 per cent., or nearly one-half of the teachers, have been *less than five years* in the Board's service. If nine hundred new teachers are required annually, it follows that one out of eight teachers deserts the service annually, and that the average period of service is only eight years. What is driving the best teachers of the Board away? Want of confidence in the *stability* of the system; want of confidence in its *administration*; *inadequate remuneration*, aggravated of late years by an unjust mode of paying salaries by *quarterly* averages, which has operated so injuriously and harshly as to have engendered the utmost discontent, and to have driven away some of the most useful teachers. No extension of training establishments will avail, unless means are adopted to attach trained teachers to the service. Payment, as proposed, by capitation grants, will chase away multitudes of the present teachers, whilst one of the best authorities has stated that the introduction of the Denominational System into Ireland would close "half the rural schools in the kingdom." It would, at the same time, deprive the children of Protestant parents, residing in districts where they form a small minority, of all secular education, except on terms opposed to conscientious conviction.

III.

PUBLIC MEETING IN BELFAST.

A LARGE and influential meeting of the friends of United Education was held in the Music Hall on the evening of Tuesday the 15th of January, 1867. Among those present were—David Taylor, Esq., Mayor of Belfast; Rev. John Macnaughtan, Rev. J. Scott Porter, Rev. Dr. Bryce, Rev. Dr. M'Cosh, Rev. Dr. Murphy, Rev. Dr. Knox, Rev. Professor Porter, Rev. L. E. Berkeley, Lurgan; Rev. Wm. Johnston, Rev. John Moran, Rev. J. W. McKay, Rev. C. J. McAlester, Holywood; Rev. George C. Smythe, Carnmoney; Rev. G. H. Johnston, Hillsborough; Rev. Joseph Barklie, Carnmoney; Rev. John Meneeley, Rev. J. Mecredy, Rev. R. J. Lynd, Whiteabbey; Rev. G. Bellis, Rev. R. J. Fleming, Rev. Joseph Mackenzie, Malone; Rev. J. Greenlees, Rev. Dr. Coulter, Rev. Alexander Gray, William Mullan, Esq., John Lytle, Esq., J. P. Corry, Esq., James Lindsay, Esq., James Hamilton, Esq., Robert Boag, Esq., W. McNeill, Esq., W. Bell, Esq., Samuel Cunningham, Esq., Henry Matier, Esq., Robert Carson, Esq., William Gilbert, Esq., S. Mulligan, Esq.; Dr. H. M. Johnston, Dr. MacCormac, Dr. M. McGee, Surgeon Browne, Robert Lindsay, Esq., Robert Porter, Esq., Thomas McKnight, Esq., John Arnold, Esq., J. R. Neill, Esq., James Campbell, Esq., R. McCullough, Esq., W. S. Darkin, Esq., Nicholas Oakman, Esq., &c.

Rev. Dr. M'COSH moved that the Mayor of Belfast be called to the chair.

Rev. J. SCOTT PORTER said that if this had been a meeting called for any sectarian or party purpose, he would not have desired to see the Chief Magistrate of the town presiding over it. But inasmuch as they had met in order to advocate the cause of United Education for the youth of Ireland, of all churches and creeds, an object in which the social, moral, and intellectual interests of the whole community are largely involved, he had much pleasure in seconding the motion.

The chair was then taken by DAVID TAYLOR, Esq., J.P., Mayor of Belfast.

The MAYOR said—Ladies and gentlemen, I have much pleasure in occupying the chair on this occasion, and I can say that I thoroughly sympathise with the gentlemen who have originated this movement. I am glad that we have an opportunity, in this public manner, of protesting against the innovations which are contemplated on the system of united education which has existed in Ireland for so many years, and which has given so much satisfaction. I believe the system of united education is the only means that will effectually harmonise with the feelings of a country which has been so much divided, and that it has been found to work satisfactorily in Ulster. I hope that the result of this meeting will be to assist the friends of united education in Ireland. On these topics I will not occupy your time at present, for you will be addressed by gentlemen who have given to the consideration of this subject their time and attention. (Applause.)

Rev. Mr. MACNAUGHTAN, amid applause, submitted the following resolution:—"That we adhere to the principle of United National Education in Ireland, that we believe the united system to be eminently suited to the condition of this country, and that we rejoice in its continued success." The reading of that resolution would show them that the statements he had to make, and on which he would be followed by his friend, Mr. Mullan, were only preparatory to what would more

properly be the object of discussion that evening—namely, the changes proposed to be made in a system which they believed had been working admirably and well. He proposed to lay before them some facts and statements that might form the basis for argument. It was quite well known that the System of National Education, spoken of in the resolution, had been made the subject of much controversy since it was originated in this land. It had been condemned by petty journalists as a failure, and had been assailed by High Churchmen on the one side, and Roman Catholic prelates on the other, as an invasion of Church rights. No charge had ever been substantiated against the system, and its friends had often demanded a rigid inquiry into the working of it. If a single case of proselytism had been discovered it should be brought to light. They had again and again demanded that something tangible should be brought forward by those who wished the system changed, but they had failed to get any such charge; yet, on various sides they found the system condemned, and parties who seemed to know very little about it manufactured newspaper paragraphs, founded on the assumption that the system of united education had proved to be a failure in the land. After some investigation into the matter, and a patient inquiry into it, he had come to the conclusion that if anything had been a success in the legislation for Ireland for the last hundred years it had been the System of National Education. (Hear, hear, and applause.) When he first came to this country he had some prejudice in his mind on the subject; but after examining into the working and principles of the system, he had come to the conclusion, not that it was the very best system of education that could have been devised, but it seemed to him to be the best system that could have been established, considering the state and the differences of parties in this sadly divided island. The more he looked at it the more he had been persuaded that all these statements about the defects in the National System were mere myths. If there had not been in the very heart of that system the elements of success it could not possibly have stood against the hate and the hostility to which it had been subjected. The system had been based upon good and wise principles, and it seemed to be admirably adapted to the country in which they lived. The statements he was about to refer to were made when there was nothing of prejudice existing in the minds of men—when the system was not assailed as it had been since that time. On this account, he believed, the opinions then expressed were all the more valuable. The Commissioners in 1833 began with 789 schools, with 107,042 scholars in attendance, and then thought that, if they could get up to 5,000 schools, with an attendance of half-a-million of children, they would be on the highway to have Ireland made a thoroughly enlightened and educated country. What was the progress of the system? Why, in 1865, they had 6,372 schools—(applause)—with 922,084 children on the rolls; and this, although the population, on account of the famine, had been reduced nearly three millions. (Applause.) Yet, in the face of a great fact like that, they were told, by men who were ignorant of the state of things, that the system had proved a failure. He wondered what such men would call success? If this were the ratio at which failure was to go on, he trusted these prophets would have their prophecies fulfilled more and more every year—(applause.)—and if they got on from 6,000 to 10,000 schools, and from nearly a million to a million and a half of children on the rolls, he supposed the cry of failure would become louder and louder. (Loud applause.) There was another test which they might apply to try the success of the system, namely—Had the schools succeeded in gathering together scholars of different religious opinions? He need not say that

the aim and intention of the united system of education was to harmonise the different sections of the community—(hear, hear)—and to allay those feelings of animosity which had been the curse of the land, and had degraded it in the eyes of the civilised world. (Hear.) Had the system succeeded in bringing together children of different religions in the same school? Let them look how that question was solved by examining the attendance at the schools. During the last quarter of the year 1865, in which great hostility had been shown to the system because of alleged failure, there were in attendance in the schools in Ulster 33,000 Episcopalians, 120,000 Roman Catholics, 72,000 Presbyterians, and 4,000 connected with other denominations. Take, now, the Province of Munster, where the Roman Catholic population vastly outnumber the Protestant, and what is the attendance at the schools? There were 3,400 Episcopalians, 179,000 Roman Catholics, and 413 Presbyterians. In Leinster, there were attending the schools 4,600 Episcopalians, 144,000 Roman Catholics, and 650 Presbyterians. In Connaught, there were 3,182 Episcopalians, 106,000 Roman Catholics, and 441 Presbyterians. In the same way, if they took the Model Schools, which had especially been the subject of serious attack, they would have a test by which to try the system. Taking the last quarter of the year 1865, the number of pupils on the roll of the Model Schools was 11,866, and the average daily attendance was 8,048. What was the religion of these children? There were 3,412 Episcopalians, 4,596 Roman Catholics, 3,053 Presbyterians, and 825 belonging to other denominations. (Applause.) He didn't know in what other way they could substantiate the fact that the schools were a success than by the numbers, by the mixing of different denominations together, and especially by their union in the Model Schools—that department of the system that had been exposed to the fiercest and most determined antagonism. But again, they might take the testimony of the Commissioners themselves on the subject of the success of the system, particularly the testimony given at a time when in the Board there were Roman Catholic prelates and Roman Catholics high in the confidence of their own Church. For example, in the report of 1836, when Dr. Murray was a member of the Board, and signed the reports, this testimony was given—"It thus appears that the system has already been very generally adopted under the auspices both of Protestant and of Roman Catholic clergymen, and of Protestant and Roman Catholic laymen." In the report of the year 1837 he found this statement—"With these facts before us, we think we may congratulate the public on the extraordinary success that has hitherto attended our labours. Centuries have elapsed since the State attempted to provide education for the poor of Ireland; but its efforts were failures, although great expense was incurred, until the present National System was established." (Applause.) In 1839 he found this statement in the report of the Commissioners—"The benefits which it (the system) is diffusing through the country, the cordial support which it receives from the Roman Catholic clergy in general, whose flocks compose so great a portion of the poorer classes, and the rapid progress it has already made, and continues to make, notwithstanding the obstacles which passion and prejudice have opposed to it, lead us to conclude that it is eminently successful." The report further said—"It has been earnestly embraced from the first by the Roman Catholic clergy and laity in particular, and been hailed by the poor as one of the greatest boons Government has ever bestowed on them." In 1842 a somewhat similar statement was made—"The Committee are mistaken in supposing that Protestants and Roman Catholics are not mixed, and extensively mixed, in the several National Schools. Union

between them would probably by this time have been general if it had not been opposed by prejudices which are now going away; and as the clergy of all communions must at length see that the system of education tending to union is the only one the State is likely to support, we sincerely hope they will think rather of securing the benefit of such a system to the poor of their flocks than of attempting to have another substituted for it." This report was signed by Archbishop Murray and A. R. Blake, who were known to be Roman Catholics. With these facts before them, how could it be said that the system was a failure? It was wonderful that the system had stood the shock of opposition it had encountered. (Hear, hear.) He found a curious similarity in part of the hostility to which it had been subjected. He found that its leading antagonists at present were the Roman Catholic prelates, and they gave forth as the ground of their opposition that it interfered with their right to control the education of their people, and tended to evoke a spirit of "false independence," as they called it. Strangely enough, he found in the earlier parts of the opposition made by the Church Education Society to the National System that among their objections they laid great stress upon this,—that they could not co-operate with the friends of the National System, because, if they did so, it would deprive the clergy of the Established Church of their right to regulate the education of the country. He denied the existence of any such right. (Applause.) He denied it as a matter of fact. He denied it as a matter of policy. No such right had existed, save in the time of persecution, when there were statutes in existence contrary to the liberties of those who thought it their duty to dissent from the Established Church of the land. No such right was assigned, either by God or the law of the land; he believed the State was the party that had the right to regulate the secular education of the country—(applause)—and, in the exercise of such a right, the State had devised and put into practice the system of National Education. He did not wish to commit the meeting to the opinion, but, whatever men might say or think about "godless systems of education," his mind was coming rapidly to the point of deciding and determining for himself that the National System of Education should, as largely as possible, if not exclusively, be restricted to mere secular elements of education—(applause)—and that the different Churches should, in their own way, attend to the religious education of the young that belong to them. (Applause.) While they appeared, under the influences of the Church Education Society on the one hand, and the Roman Catholic prelates on the other, to be drifting into a system of denominational grants, which would be ruinous to the welfare and best interests of this great land, the attempt to drift them into that tideway would rouse up the stout-hearted and the leal-hearted men who strongly loved their country, to take their stand for the secular system of education. (Applause.) Such were his sentiments. He did not wish to commit the meeting to them; but he did wish to commit them to a decided opinion in opposition to the unfounded, unproved statements about the system having been a failure; and he trusted that in this community especially, till men would meet the facts he had advanced—face them honestly, and face them completely—they would not be misled because some man behind a curtain held up his hand and said, "The National System is a failure, and the sooner you get rid of it the better." He had great pleasure in moving the resolution. (Applause.)

WM. MULLAN, Esq. (ex-Mayor) said it gave him great pleasure to be called on to second the resolution which had been moved by Mr. Macnaughtan. The line of argument which that gentleman had adopted

left little for him to do in commending the resolution to the attention of the meeting, but he had been, from the very origination of the present system of education in Ireland, one of its advocates and supporters, and, therefore, he could come before a Belfast audience and say that it deserved their confidence. When it was first introduced it was upon the great broad principles—which sunk altogether the question of creed or party—that there should be no tampering with the sacred right of religion, and that the parents and guardians of children should have the power to direct the character of their scholastic training. He remembered, and many of the gentlemen present remembered, when a Roman Catholic could not be a school-teacher. That law is passed away. Many of them remembered the system of education which prevailed at the Kildare Street Society, and the jealousy and distrust with which it was regarded, and the opposition it met with. Some of them may have remembered its utter unsuitableness to the country and the people, and to the great functions which it had to discharge; but it was succeeded by a system great, broad, and comprehensive in its design, and which has succeeded in effecting an incalculable amount of good. (Hear, hear.) The introduction of the present System of National Education in Ireland was hailed by the Roman Catholics with gladness. He remembered the late Roman Catholic bishop of this diocese, Dr. Crolly, speaking loudly and warmly on its behalf, as well calculated to confer upon the Roman Catholic population the opportunity for education which they were longing for. (Hear, hear.) That system was now being tried. It was before the nation and the country for almost an age, and he would now ask by whom was this system assailed and attacked but by those whom it originally sought to benefit, by providing combined secular and separate religious instruction? It offered the only guarantee to the parent that the child would not be tampered with in its religious faith, while the agent of the State would discharge the educational duties for which he was appointed. The system had been in existence for many years, and where had been the sustained charge of proselytism calculated to destroy the confidence of parents? Where has it been said that the principles upon which the system rested have been abused? But it is now sought, by the most insidious and flagrant means, to introduce denominational instruction for a system which has conferred such inestimable benefits on the country. (Hear, hear.) The great Earl of Carlisle said, upon one occasion, with regard to the principle of united education:—"I do then continue to think it most desirable that, in our great Imperial community, where its citizens are to play united parts and discharge united functions—to live, in short, a united life—the preparations for it should be laid in a united education." That was the principle on which he (Alderman Mullan) believed the whole system rested, that had been provided, fully and essentially provided, to the children of the families throughout the country. What the system had accomplished for Ireland was to be witnessed by any living man; and after ages would tell its effect on men who had sat at the same desks and forms, and who, while they held different religious opinions, felt a respect for those differing from them in religious opinions in after times. (Applause.) The efforts which were now being made were directed to bring the child from under the control of its parent or guardian, and to place it under that of the clergy; and he asked them, was there any statesman of the Empire prepared to grant a separation for the religious parties in Ireland? (Hear, hear.) He would like to hear either Mr. Disraeli or Mr. Gladstone making such a proposal to the House of Commons. He thought that the great basis of an educational system should be to respect the rights of conscience, and he considered that, as

good and loyal citizens, who enjoyed the blessings of civil and religious liberty, they should not bind themselves to any other principle. He (Alderman Mullan) regarded Mr. Fortescue's letter as singularly dishonest and insidious, and as calculated to disturb the present system of National Education in Ireland. He regarded the statesman who made such a proposal as entitled to little respect, but entitled to their supreme contempt. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN put the motion, which was unanimously adopted.

Rev. L. E. BERKELEY moved the next resolution, deprecating the changes suggested by Mr. Fortescue, in his letter of the 19th of June, as being destructive to the system of National Education, and opposed to the best interests of the country. He wished to say, by way of preface, that he regarded this question as immeasurably exalted above every question of party politics. (Hear, hear.) Every attempt to make political capital out of the question, wherever it might be made, he accounted not merely despicable in the extreme, but highly criminal; and in any observations he should make on the conduct of the late Government he was influenced by the interests of truth and of his country, and not by the desire to serve any political purpose or party. (Hear.) He wished to call attention to the fact that the late Government was defeated in the House of Commons, on 18th of June, on an important motion; and, as it afterwards proved, had then resolved to resign. Well, on the 19th June—the day following—Mr. Fortescue wrote his letter, or rather, he appended his name to it, for it must have been prepared a considerable time previously. He did not believe that Mr. Fortescue prepared that letter himself, at least all the calculations must have been furnished to him by the Education Office. Thus they found that at the time when the reins of office had fallen from Earl Russell's hand—when it was the duty of his Government only to do what was absolutely necessary, and not to do such work as the letter proposed—when his Government did not represent the country, but merely held office till their successors could get into harness, the Secretary for Ireland put his name to an important document interfering with a great State institution. This was just of a piece with what had been done all along. No statesman—no man pretending to be a statesman—rose up to say we will destroy this system; but a number of men, imagining themselves statesmen, went slyly, secretly, insidiously to work, and tried to undermine the system, or did what amounted to the same thing. Such conduct was not consistent with their ideas of British statesmanship—(hear, hear)—and their ideas of fair play. But there was something more on this subject. No sooner had the new Government come into office than the Commissioners of National Education came forward with a little supplemental estimate, asking it to be passed before the end of the Session. The object of this estimate was to carry out the intention of Mr. Fortescue's letter; but, fortunately, the reply of the Government was that there was not time, and so that matter rested till the present time. Coming now to the famous letter, as it had been called, of Mr. Fortescue, what did they find? They found the Government expressing a desire to have trained teachers, and regretting there were so few trained teachers in connection with the system. In connection with the Board there were 4,309 untrained teachers out of a total of 7,472 teachers. This statement most ingeniously classed together principal and assistant-teachers in such a manner as to deceive, because assistant-teachers were virtually in training, and many of them would find their way to the central Model School, there to be fully trained. In the statement he referred to, the principal and 1,609 assistant-teachers were classed together for the purpose of magnifying

the want and of depreciating the capacity of the Model Schools. Besides, monitors and pupil-teachers in the district Model Schools were virtually under training—but this fact was also overlooked. Going further into the letter, it is there stated that 900 new teachers were required every year. In a paper which the Commissioners presented to Parliament two years previously they said that 700 new teachers were required every year. At the end of two years it seemed that the requirement had risen to 900. But the number of schools had increased by 200, and the proportionate increase of teachers would have been 23 or 24; but notwithstanding, Mr. Fortescue stated that not 724, but 900, new teachers were yearly required. What was the reason of this? If 900 were required, teachers must be deserting the service of the Commissioners at a marvelously rapid rate. He believed this was the fact, because there was a feeling of instability about the whole system—(hear, hear)—and respectable, well-educated teachers naturally sought other situations likely to be permanent. It is said in the letter that 900 were required, while the central and district Model Schools produced only 400, the district Model Schools producing just 90. Why, in the paper presented to Parliament in 1864, the Commissioners stated that the district Model Schools produced 130 teachers annually; and now, at the end of two years, Mr. Fortescue tells us they produce only 90. He (Mr. Fortescue) did not say they *could* not produce more, but that such was their present rate of production. If the number continued to decrease in the same ratio, they would soon have none. What had the Commissioners done on this point? In 1864 they set about reducing the number of pupil-teachers and monitors by about one-third—their order took effect in the beginning of 1864—and now, after the number of teachers had been thus reduced, the Commissioners come before the public and say “our District Model Schools only produce 90 teachers annually, and we must get more.” This is disingenuous in the extreme, and ought not to be tolerated by an enlightened public. (Applause.) Let them ask any teacher of a Model School what they were doing about the training of teachers. The likelihood was that he would be unwilling to answer—(laughter)—for the fact seemed to be that teachers were afraid to answer questions, because there was a sort of inspection at head-quarters which they dreaded. But if an answer were given, it would be to the effect—“We cannot get teachers to be trained; and several monitors have been sent about their business.” Under these circumstances it was marvellous that gentlemen of education and position came forth and said that the District Schools were not doing their business. The Belfast Model School in the year 1862 produced 76 teachers—(applause)—and how many might they not expect the other 24 schools to have produced? He believed that the gentlemen who concurred in the letter were acting in concert, whether they meant it or not, with persons for whom in many ways he had a high respect, but for whose opinions of education he entertained no respect—in concert with Roman Catholic dignitaries, who, in last January, had presented a statement to Sir George Grey stating as follows:—“Next came the Model Schools, of which the Commissioners of Education are the patrons, and over which the Catholic bishops and clergy have no manner of control as to teachers, books, or anything else, and to which, as being far the most objectionable part of the system, Catholics do give, and will give, the most determined opposition. But one thing can be done with these schools—do away with them altogether. Nothing else will satisfy the Catholic bishops, clergy, and people. A regard to public economy, too, calls for their suppression. If money was lavishly expended upon the erection of these buildings, the many thousands annually spent on their maintenance is so

much thrown away. Nor is this all. The worst in the eyes of Catholics remains to be told of them. Not only have they been erected in despite of the remonstrances, but they are maintained in defiance of the authority of Catholic bishops in their respective localities, and every effort is strained on the part of the teachers in those schools, and other officials of the Board of Education, to incite Catholic pupils, and the parents of Catholic pupils, to schismatical acts of insubordination against Catholic priests and Catholic bishops. On this account no small degree of unpopularity, even of odium, attaches to these Model Schools, and is reflected from them upon the whole system. Nothing remains but to do away with them altogether. But then, it may be asked, what is to be done with the buildings? Is the money expended on their erection to be so much lost? No. These buildings might be turned to various useful purposes; some of them might be turned into training schools of a denominational character, others might be converted into reformatories, others utilised in some other way. Whatever becomes of them, the having squandered money in erecting them is no reason for wasting more in maintaining them. A portion of the money spent in maintaining them could be applied to far better purpose, in supporting training establishments of Catholic teachers, male and female, a thing of the very first importance. The teachers who are destined not only to instruct the minds but to mould the moral nature of the youth of Ireland themselves pass through no wholesome discipline, are formed by no moral training that would fit them for their important duties. Catholic training establishments are not merely desirable, they would be a national benefit; and the money expended in maintaining the Model Schools could not be turned to better purpose than the support of such establishments." What would the public say to that? He ventured to say that no statesman would accede to that demand; but, virtually, they did the same thing in a sly, insidious way, by setting up rival institutions, by crippling Model Schools, by depriving them of the power of training teachers, and then going before the public, and saying they didn't do their work, and other institutions must be established. Another curious fact was this—In '64 the Commissioners said the Model Schools were never intended as training institutions. At that moment it was among their regulations that one of the objects of these schools was to train teachers. All this while, too, the Government was professing friendship to the system; in reality it was doing everything to damage the system by its conduct. The very day Mr. Fortescue signed that letter, Lord Kimberley received a deputation from the Assembly on the subject of changes in the system, and the deputation came away full of the idea that, in accordance with a previous declaration of his Excellency, "there was not the slightest intention to disturb the principle of the National System of Education in Ireland." (Hear, hear.) These things destroyed all confidence in public men; and if British statesmen were to stand before the world with clean hands they must wash them of such business as this he was describing. The virtual destruction of the system was very unfortunate at a time when the Wesleyans, who had previously stood aloof, were led, by assurances of friendship on the part of the Government to the system, to join with others in partaking of its benefits, and when an influential declaration by Episcopalians was made in favour of the system in answer to a charge of their enemies to it. This declaration, which was presented to Government, was signed by 2,754 Episcopalians, including the Primate of all Ireland, the Lord Justice of Appeal, forty-five noblemen, five bishops, 146 deputy-lieutenants, 636 justices of the peace, 733 clergymen, and

nearly 1,200 professional men and others. Why did not Mr. Fortescue increase the number of Model Schools to supply the want of teachers, for not the half of the districts in Ireland were occupied? Mr. Fortescue gave, as a reason, "the hostility felt in the Roman Catholic community to the exclusive State management of schools." Now, it had never been proved that the Roman Catholic people—the people—were opposed to National Education. (Applause.) Notwithstanding the denunciations of the priesthood, there were still 5,000 Roman Catholic children attending the Model Schools, which was proof positive that the people were not hostile to the system. It had been contemptuously asked, what had the Northern Protestants to do with the question? Both as a man, and as an Irishman, he claimed a right to discuss any question concerning his fellow-countrymen; and, further, he would say that those who asked the question should remember that the first general, effective movement on behalf of Roman Catholic Emancipation was made by the Protestants of the North of Ireland, assembled at Dungannon, in 1782, and it was disingenuous and ungrateful of those hierarchs, no matter who they were, who turned round upon them now, after they had enjoyed all the benefits of Emancipation, and say, "What business have you, Northern Protestants, with us and our education?" (Applause.) What was Mr. Fortescue's plan? Simply private enterprise—local Model Schools, under local management, with domestic establishments to accommodate 15 residents, and rooms to receive 150 pupils. That was the whole thing. Protestants were satisfied with the present system, therefore it must be intended for Roman Catholics, and he affirmed that it was meant to support conventual and monastic establishments. (Hear, hear.) These new schools were already springing up beside the Model Schools; all was ready; and instead of united education, harmony, and love, there would be sectarianism of the most bitter form. (Hear.) Was this statesmanship? The destruction of Model Schools began in '62, when the Commissioners illegally appointed pupil teachers in the convent school in Dublin, and afterwards passed a resolution legalising their acts, at the time their acts were protested against, and what has since occurred was fully expected if the same course would be pursued. Mr. Berkeley quoted from a report of Mr. Sheridan, a Roman Catholic inspector of the Board, disapproving of, and condemning the employment of, untrained teachers in convents, &c., showing that already bad effects had resulted from their employment. The second part of Mr. Fortescue's letter related to the regulations applying to teachers under training in Dublin, and proposed to allow them to live outside the establishment, giving them a sum of money in lieu of maintenance, instead of keeping them together, and maintaining them as at present. What was the objection to this plan? It simply meant that convents would be supported in Dublin, at the expense of the State, as training places for the teachers. Then, chaplains for the teachers must be provided for those not residing in the central establishment. If any statesman supposed that in this way he would pacify Ireland, he did not envy him his brains, whatever might be the state of his heart. The next point of the letter was, that every teacher of a Model School hereafter was to get a certificate from his own chaplain, before he became a teacher, that he is sound both in faith and morals. Thus it won't do for a teacher to be an upright, honest, well-qualified man, but he must be approved of as sound in faith according to the views of a certain chaplain. He had thought that the Test Act and all domination of that kind had passed away, but here it was back again in a more odious and repulsive form than ever, and if that plan were sanctioned the independence of the

people of the country would be sacrificed. (Applause.) Mr. Berkeley next showed how the capitation scheme—according to which teachers would be paid according to the number of scholars under their care, and not, as at present, according to the class which they attained by examination—would be most disadvantageous to educational progress, and proceeded to state, on the authority of Mr. Vere Foster, that the denominational system in England had been a complete failure. That system had existed for twenty-six years, and yet 11,024 parishes in England and Wales were not provided properly with schools; and a Committee of the House of Commons had reported unfavourably of the working of the system, and recommended changes assimilating it very much to the Irish system. At any rate, he hoped that friends who seemed willing to assent to the introduction of the denominational system into Ireland would ponder the statement of Mr. Foster—that, in his judgment, it “would close half the rural schools in the country.” It would, at the same time, deprive the children of either Protestant or Roman Catholic parents, residing in districts where they form a small minority, of all education, secular as well as religious, except on terms opposed to conscientious conviction. (Applause.) Mr. Berkeley concluded by urging strong opposition to the proposed changes, and sat down amid applause.

The REV. J. SCOTT PORTER, in seconding the resolution, said—Mr. Mayor, the gentleman who moved the resolution which I am about to second made an apology for the length to which he detained the meeting. For my part, instead of accepting his apology, I beg to return my thanks, for he has given a great deal of valuable information, for which we are all indebted, and he has saved me the trouble of going over a portion of the ground on which he has travelled. It is a melancholy thing for me, sinking into the vale of years—it is a melancholy retrospect for me, looking back to the early struggles in which I was engaged in this important question, to see that the efforts which I, with others, made, have been in a great measure neutralised. I remember when I and a few friends—among whom was the late lamented Dr. Crolly, then the Roman Catholic Bishop of this diocese, afterwards Archbishop of Armagh—met in a private room in this town (in the house of my brother-in-law, Mr. Finlay), where a resolution was come to, though, in deference to the opinion of others, it was withdrawn—That we should go forward and hold a public meeting, having for its object the united education of the youth of Ireland, of all sects, denominations, and parties. This was at a time when there was a very hot agitation got up against the National System, then in its infancy. There was no man in that meeting more anxious for such a scheme than Dr. Crolly, and I felt myself encouraged and sustained by the countenance then given by him and other prelates of his church to the principles there enunciated. That system had been happily established. What is the object now? Why that very thing for which the Roman Catholic prelates had petitioned Parliament during successive Governments, for which they had besieged the powers of the State with clamorous cries—education confined to no sect or party—that principle is now about to be abandoned in deference to them. I do not belong to an unchangeable church, but I am unchanged with regard to this question. I am one of those who now, as before, raise my hands on behalf of that object, for which the Roman Catholic clergy and gentry, and public, petitioned so urgently in the year 1832; and it is somewhat melancholy for me, one of those who, I may say, rocked the cradle of the National System of Education—to be called upon, as I fear I may, to shed tears over its grave. (No, no.) He perceived that the meeting did not concur in his

gloomy forebodings, but he felt the alarm he had expressed. A system is gone when its principle is destroyed, and, if the measures now proposed are carried out, in addition to the changes made, we may talk of the National Board and the National System; but the Board is not the Board it was, and the system is so changed that I am afraid the parent would not know its own offspring. Happily, Sir, one of the parents of that system now survives, in the vigour of his intellect, and in possession of political power—I mean Lord Derby—(hear, hear, and applause)—and it is with feelings of a mixed character that I find myself standing here, and expressing the hope and confidence with which I look to Lord Derby as the statesman of this crisis. I am, from political feeling, attached to the party of which Earl Russell is the head; but I must say that that party has been false to the principles which we advocate here to-night. (Hear, hear.) I am one of those who always gave my humble and conscientious vote against the party now in power—the party of which Lord Derby is the head—but, on this question, my hope is in him, and I earnestly trust that Lord Derby will not allow that great work with which his name is associated to be destroyed by the petty intrigues of people in office, and who act with sordid interests rather than for the benefit of the country. But I don't consider that in saying so I am standing in opposition to Earl Russell. (Hear, hear.) I say I am standing in defence of him, for I believe that he has been by his underlings misinformed, misled, and betrayed; and that the honours that have gathered round his name, during a statesmanship of no ordinary length, have been tarnished and sullied by those underlings. I would only say to Lord Russell—Follow your own example of other days. Don't be misled by the cries of those who, for the sake of carrying a county or a borough in Parliament, put the Liberal party and the country in peril. (Hear, hear, and applause.) A good deal has been said of Model Schools, and I need not repeat the testimony of previous speakers on the advantage which they have been to the country. I need only say that I can speak of the Model School of this town in the highest terms of commendation. (Hear, hear.) It is now proposed to dismantle those admirable institutions, and to substitute others for the training of future teachers. These are the conventual schools; and I think them very unfit for the purpose. Some time ago a number of returns were ordered by the House of Commons to be printed containing a report on every convent school at that time in connection with the Board: and while it could not be denied that many of these convent schools were doing a great and a good work in the neighbourhoods in which they existed, still it could not be denied that in the reports many of them were shown to be unfit to be Model Schools. There is scarcely a report in which the education in the convent schools is not spoken of as insufficient. An argument greatly relied on is that these convent schools are attended by a large number of children; but this fact should be borne in mind, that there is scarcely one of them in which the children are charged for their education. In other schools to pay something is the rule, but in the convent schools there is nothing of the kind. In some cases the children get food and clothing, and not only that, but in many cases money payment for attending, and besides are paid for the produce of their industry. The fact of the matter is that in most cases the children are paid for attending those convent schools. Now there is a vast difference between a child paying on one side of the street 2d a week, and on the other side of the street receiving 6d a week. And besides all this the influence of the priesthood is uniformly exerted to swell their numbers, and to keep children away from the

Model Schools. No wonder that the nuns should have a large number of pupils. It is easily, therefore, to be seen what would become of united education if payment to the teachers be made to depend on the capitation clause. A large number of the children would be swept into the convent schools, and the great object of the Model Schools—the proper training of teachers who are to conduct not an exclusive but a united system of education, and the intermixture of different denominations—would be frustrated. Is it fitting and reasonable to send young persons preparing for such duties, to be trained in monasteries and convents, which are strictly denominational institutions, in which from year to year they would never see the face of a Protestant teacher, a Protestant colleague, or a Protestant pupil; where there would be no mixing together of the youth of different denominations, no teaching of mutual respect and forbearance, and whence the pupils would go forth with all their ancient sectarian antipathies in their minds? And is this the way in which the youth of Ireland are to be taught? (No, no.) I hope it will not be the case. I regret the course the late Government took on this question. I regret the successive assaults which have been made on the great principle of united education, and which have been insidiously and covertly made. I regret this last step which was taken, when I believe the Government was virtually out of office, and should have left any measure to be proposed by those in office. This I can call nothing but a trick similar to the charter trick of the Queen's University. (Hear, hear, and applause.) I hope the trick has been so exposed that no Government will, for political purposes of an hour, be found to meddle with the Irish system of education which has worked so well, and that the Model Schools will continue in their efficiency, not merely as they are now, but as they were before any inroads were made upon them. From the beginning to the end of Mr. Fortescue's letter, his cry is bishop—bishop—bishop! clergy—clergy—clergy! church—church—church! while, in my mind, the proper spirit of statesmanship would have dictated the cry of learning—learning—learning! education—education—education! teaching—teaching—teaching! That is the principle which he should have adopted. I hope that, when the Colleges of Scotland, the Universities of England, and the parochial schools of Scotland are being taken from under ecclesiastical control, education in Ireland will not be subjected to clerical controul whether exercised by one persuasion or another. (Loud applause.)

The resolution was put, and passed unanimously.

Rev. J. W. M'KAY moved the next resolution. He wished to say, if that meeting had been convened for the purpose of furthering the interests of any mere sect or party—if the object were to raise any fierce or senseless "No Popery" cry—if the design were to violate any man's conscience, by depriving him of any religious right—he, for one, would not be found that evening on the platform. (Hear, hear.) But the object of that meeting was one in which every member of the community should feel an interest—it was to endeavour, as far as they now could, to conserve a system which, whatever might be its defects, provided, and perhaps it might still be said to provide, on a broad and liberal basis, for the education of the people. It was not necessary for him to refer at that time to what had been so fully brought out in the addresses that had already been delivered as to the system of United National Education. They did not contend for any mere theory or for any scheme to which it might be objected that it was Utopian in its nature. The system had a history; it had been tested by opposition—tested by

the experience of its working—tested by its results; and whatever might be the outcry of those who stood aloof from the system, there was no grating jar—there was no obstructive or injurious friction in the internal arrangements and operations of the system itself up to a certain point; and he must be wilfully blind to facts and figures who, in the face of such an army of both, would venture to deny the success of the system. But it seemed strange that an attempt should be made to destroy it; and must they not say, as had been said, insidiously made—made by those entrusted with the administration of the system, when its success was so manifest that a desire was expressed to have its advantages carried out and extended by the introduction of an intermediate system, based on the same principles. (Hear, hear.) One of the most numerous, most intelligent, and most influential meetings on the subject was held in the City of Cork, when he was stationed there some years ago—a meeting largely and well attended both by Protestants and Roman Catholics, for the purpose of promoting intermediate education; and what was the language of Lord Fermoy, who presided on that occasion? He said—“I am in a position to say, that there is not a statesman in Great Britain, whether in office or aspiring to one, who will lend himself to shaking the system of mixed education. (Hear, hear.) ‘It is not upon the cards,’ to use a familiar expression, that a single leading man who will any day take office in the Government is not firmly convinced that the welfare of England as well as Ireland is deeply involved in fostering and protecting this movement.” That was the opinion of Lord Fermoy eight years ago, and there were many who thought really, come what would, whatever changes might take place, British statesmen would endeavour to maintain, under all circumstances, what has been a boon to the inhabitants of Ireland. And it was on that very ground that some who doubted at first of the success of the system and its permanence, at last gave their adhesion, trusting to the consistency, the honesty, and the good faith of those who were to administer it. For his own part, he never thought the religious body to which he belonged were right in standing aloof from the system in the beginning; but of this he was certain, that, coming in with good faith, and trusting to the consistency of those who administered the system to do so impartially, they must now feel that they had been sadly deceived. Why had these changes been introduced? The question had been—had it led to any express dissatisfaction on the part of the people? (No, no.) Had parents ever complained that their rights were unduly tampered with in carrying out the system of united education? Most emphatically they said, No. (No, no.) No such thing. There had been, in point of fact, an attempt to surrender the rights of parents in this country, by making concessions to those who, sustaining no parental relation whatsoever—(hear, hear)—assumed the right to direct and control the choice of parents in relation to the education of their children—(applause)—or perhaps, more properly speaking, seeking to deprive parents of all liberty of choice as to how their children should be taught. The true position to be taken was the broad national position. It did seem strange that the Government of this country should, at the very time when it least of all seemed necessary they should do it, go backward in the face of the movement that was proceeding in an opposite direction altogether on the Continent of Europe. As to the reference in the letter of Mr. Fortescue, or, rather, the reply to it from the Commissioners, that, while conceding some of his views, they should still keep in mind the fundamental principle of united secular education, what was the meaning of that? If it meant, as it seemed to imply, that they would

maintain united education—though the religious element should go altogether—though an entire separation were made between the two branches of instruction, religious and secular—they were resolved to keep that in view, and to maintain the fundamental principle of united education—then he might be able to understand it; but it was manifest the very opposite of that had been insidiously done. He had been trying to find out some analogy by which it might be illustrated, but he could scarcely find one. He remembered one time in the country being attacked by a rough dog, when the stick he had in his hand was rather slight, and the dog seemed so ferocious in his conduct that he could not reach any stone so as to engage the animal in that way. He remembered, however, having read somewhere or other that it was a fundamental principle in the management of dogs to fix your eye steadily upon them, and present a direct front; so he fixed his eye upon the dog, and kept going backward. The dog did not come into close quarters, and by-and-bye, having kept the dog and the fundamental principle in view, he (Mr. M'Kay) got out of his reach, and they parted company altogether. (Hear, laughter, and applause.) He could not understand in what other way the Commissioners had been keeping in view the fundamental principle of united secular education. (Laughter and applause.) They had looked upon it as a kind of thing they would not wish to embrace, and had endeavoured to keep going backward and backward until they parted company altogether. (Loud applause.) Something might yet be done, but if there were no means of arresting this backward progress, whereby the system might be maintained even as it is, there should not be further changes—(hear, hear)—and he, for one, was prepared to go into any agitation whereby they might place the system on a purely secular basis. (Applause.) Mr. M'Kay concluded by moving the resolution which he read.

Dr. BROWNE confessed he had very little faith in any Government so long as they committed themselves to a back-stair influence. There was no question whatever that, in the prospect of the general election in this country, which would be contested, the late Government did, in the year 1865, lend themselves to this most iniquitous proceeding, and he could not say he had such faith in the existing Government that they would not do likewise. He, for one, would say he had no faith whatsoever in any Government guided by the interference of the clergy of any denomination. Unless the people were aroused to do their duty, he thought the present Government would follow in the course of the preceding one. If any change were made, the people would have cause to curse those who did away with a system that has hitherto been one of the greatest blessings ever introduced by any statesman into this country.

The motion was put, and passed unanimously.

Mr. MACKNIGHT moved the appointment of a committee to take action in the matter. He hoped the gentlemen appointed to act on it would meet often, keep watch and ward over the system, and put themselves in communication with other towns, with the view of organising meetings through the country. (Applause.)

Mr. ROBERT LINDSAY, in seconding the resolution, said that, before the period at which Mr. Cardwell was Chief Secretary, the Board of Education was remarkable for the absence of anything like party spirit. No religious denomination claimed or had any ascendancy in it, and it was conducted with a fairness that did not call for even a complaint for many years; but when the Roman Catholic clergymen took it into their hands to direct, then, and for the first time, it was discovered that

the morals and faith of Roman Catholics would not be safe unless they had the one-half of the Board, and in an evil hour Mr. Cardwell gave way to that step, and the existing Commissioners got leave to retire, while new ones were brought in. Then there is this fresh alteration, which must undoubtedly destroy the whole system. If there be one institution we are proud of more than another, it is the Model School, where 1,200 or 1,400 children assemble together in harmony, and receive a common education, free of all party spirit and all party feeling, all aiming at one purpose, and yet perfect provision made for their education in their religious principles without interfering with the ideas of one another. What are we to have? Those schools were to be destroyed, not that they are a failure, not that they are not required; for Mr. Fortescue's letter states that they are required, not only in Dublin, but throughout the provinces. The whole thing was monstrous on the face of it, and in his view was the result of a careful conspiracy on the part of influential parties to destroy the system of National Education, for the sole purpose of getting the education under their own control. His friend Mr. Porter was doubtful about Lord Russell, but he (Mr. Lindsay) confessed he had no great faith in any of the statesmen of the present day. He had more faith in the exertions of the people. Meetings should be held throughout the country, and let the public mind be aroused. Let deputations wait on the members of both Houses, and, if that were done, he had no doubt that, for the present, at all events, the danger would be averted. (Applause.)

The resolution was put, and agreed to.

Rev. Dr. BRYCE moved the next resolution. He said that, although in ill health, he could not refuse to be present to declare his humble adherence to the principle of united education, and to protest against any change in the system in the sense in which Mr. Fortescue's letter contemplated it. He did not wish to see any change: he would like to see a change in the opposite direction. They should go back again and demand that the system should be restored to its original plan. Mr. Fortescue asked that local Model Schools should be established by private enterprise. He would say, let it be so—on two conditions: first, that Government should not be asked to give one shilling to any Model School, except in the thirty-four districts that have no Model Schools at present; and the other, that in the local Board in each of these schools, all religious denominations should be fairly represented. If that were done, he did not see why Model Schools should not be established by private enterprise. He would not detain the meeting longer. He had seen much of the working of the system in Ireland, and of the system at work before it. He had also watched the operations of the system established in Scotland, and had endeavoured to bring the matter before the public in different forms, and he was thoroughly satisfied that, whatever change was needed in the Irish system of National Education, it should be made, not in the direction to which Mr. Fortescue's letter pointed, but directly in the opposite. Dr. Bryce concluded by proposing that copies of the resolutions should be forwarded to Lord Derby.

Rev. Dr. KNOX seconded the resolution, which was put and passed.

On the motion of the Rev. Wm. Johnston, seconded by Mr. James Hamilton, a cordial vote of thanks was passed to the Mayor for his kindness in presiding. The meeting then separated.