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SECRET.

C.P. 307 (28).

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C A B I N E T.

ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.

MEMORANDUM BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF  
EDUCATION.

With reference to my recent Memorandum on Church Schools (C.P. 276 (28) ), my colleagues may be interested to see the attached report of a speech by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Cardiff, which indicates the attitude which one or two of the Roman Catholic Bishops are taking. The Archbishop is, I believe, a strong Conservative and this makes the speech all the more significant.

E. P.

Board of Education,

17th October, 1928.

REPORT of SPEECH made by the ARCHBISHOP of CARDIFF  
on the 7th OCTOBER, 1928.

"Parents have many duties to fulfil towards their children, but one of the most important duties which rests upon them is to see that their children are properly educated.

By being educated we do not mean having them taught merely reading, writing, and arithmetic, but we mean having all their faculties developed, and particularly the religious faculty.

Now, it is incumbent on the State to respect the solemn duties of parents. It is even incumbent on the State when necessary to help the parents to carry out their duties to their children. It is evident that the British Government recognises this fact to a certain extent as regards the education of the children of the working class in England and Wales.

I have said 'to a certain extent' for the reason that while the Government undertake to pay the teachers, and to meet the current expenses of all recognised primary schools, it is not willing to pay anything towards the erection of school buildings, except for those parents who do not wish their children to receive any definite religious instruction.

Those parents who want their children to receive definite religious instruction must build and pay for their own school buildings.

In other words, we Catholics, who insist upon our children being taught the Christian and the Catholic religion during the time that they receive their secular education, must as a result build our own schools and pay the whole cost.

Is this what we should expect from the Government of a Christian country? Is this what we should expect from a country which boasts of justice and freedom of religious thought - a country which claims to have regard for the conscientious feelings of all its subjects?

For many years now, our poor people have willingly gathered together their hard-earned wages; and they have paid thousands and thousands of pounds in building Catholic schools throughout the country. This has always been a heavy burden upon Catholics, who, for the most part, belong to the poorest section of the community. Now, however, that the price of building has increased so enormously, it has become a burden too great for us to bear.

We simply cannot continue to build our schools and pay the whole of the cost of them. It is to our Government that we look either to build our schools, or, at any rate, to share with us the burden of building them.

The least that the Government can do for us is to pay us a substantial rent for the use of our school buildings as part of their school machinery, so that by means of this rent we can pay the interest on the money we have to borrow, and gradually extinguish the capital debt that we have incurred.

It may be of interest to you to know that the erection of this school, together with the site, will cost no less than £19,000, which is equivalent in the City of Cardiff to a threepenny rate. This will give you some idea of how Catholics are being penalised, and show you how much we are saving the rates and taxes of the country, while, in addition, we are paying our share of these rates and taxes.

If the members of our present Government are not willing to help us as regards building our schools; if they will not recognise the injustice under which we are suffering, and if they will not give us any redress, then let us take the first opportunity we have of trying to find others who will act more in conformity with what we know as British justice.

Next spring or summer we shall have an opportunity of doing this when the General Election takes place.

Doubtless, we shall be asked for our vote by representatives of various parties, but let our first question be before any party questions are touched upon: 'What will you do for us as regards our Catholic schools? Will you insist upon the leaders of your party bringing in a Bill to put an end to the present injustice under which we suffer as regards the building and paying for our school buildings, and will you vote for the passing of such a Bill?'

It is true that we are in a minority in this country, but it is wonderful what we can do if we are really united, and if we act as one man.

Our voting power is much greater now than it has ever been, and I feel certain that if we are faithful to our Catholic children, and if we are faithful to our Catholic schools, we can obtain justice and fair play as regards the education of our Catholic children.

We must, however, be united, and even be prepared if necessary to put party feelings on one side. Without this we shall never gain our end, and we shall still have to groan under the injustice of paying for our Catholic schools.

Let us hope that a Bill of relief will soon be ours, but let us also hope that this Bill will be, so to speak, retrospective, that is to say, may it not only affect future schools, but also be so framed that it will help your present good priest at St. Mary's to pay the huge cost of this school which is now being built".