

109. How would all the denominations get on under your proposal—the Church of England, Catholics, Presbyterians, Jews, Freethinkers, and all the rest of them?—I do not know whether all denominations would care to avail themselves of it.

110. If the two principal denominations availed themselves of it there would be precious little left for the State schools?—It would depend upon the numbers. I do not believe in the efficiency of very large schools. I believe the children would be better instructed if the schools were smaller. I think children are better taught if there are only about a hundred in each school under an efficient teacher. In all the large towns there would be no difficulty at all.

111. In the country there are many schools of less than twenty children, whose parents belong to different denominations. How would you do there?—The second paragraph of the Synod's petition was intended to meet that. In such a case I should merely ask that religious teaching might be given at a certain hour.

112. You can do that now?—No; we cannot enter the school during school hours.

113. You can go in on Sundays, Saturdays, holidays, and every day after school hours?—Yes; and find no children there.

114. Then, you must have very little control over them? Do you expect the State to have schoolmasters to round the children up?—No. I do not think there would be any more difficulty in getting them to school under the system I propose than now.

115. Is the master to be present when the clergyman visits these small schools?—Yes; that is what I meant.

116. Then, the State is to pay for the teacher to be there to keep the children together while the clergyman examines them?—There are always difficulties in small details, but I do not think mere difficulties as to details should cause the colony to be burdened from one end to the other with a mischievous system when there is no occasion for it.

117. The State here recognizes no particular mode of faith. Would this paying to the different bodies not be a distinct recognition of religious denominations by the State?—Yes; recognition so far as payment was made. There is recognition now under the provisions of the Marriage Act. There would be no further recognition than that of all denominations being recognized under the Marriage Act.

118. But are they distinctly supported by the State? If I understand you, you simply mean that the schoolmasters in these schools would be practically appointed by the clergy of the different denominations, and dismissed by them, but paid by the State?—Not necessarily by the clergy.

119. Well, it comes to that, I think. The master will be the servant of the denomination, and paid by them, and they will receive the money from the State?—My contention is that if a Roman Catholic or Church of England school supplied precisely the same amount of secular education at the same price as any other State school, and chose to give some religious teaching over and above, that is a matter to which the State ought not to object or to be concerned about.

120. This thing has been tried, and this is how it came out: In certain cases it was proved that the State paid the master or mistress, and the money the denomination was to pay was not paid. It was found the State was paying the whole thing?—Then there was bad inspection and supervision on the part of the State.

121. And the various denominations thought they should have a second Inspector, who should report as to the attendance, efficiency, and so on; and I remember he made one inspection, on which he reported favourably, on the Queen's Birthday, when the children were all away. There were various discrepancies like that. Under your system we should be liable to abuses of that sort, whereas now by Government inspection it is all prevented?—I do not think such abuses ought to have existed.

122. But it has been tried?—I do not think the system I suggest has ever been tried.

123. *Mr. Fergus.*—Do you say that the State is bound to respect the conscientious convictions of every citizen?—Quite so.

124. Not the conscientious convictions of a majority of the citizens?—I do not see what the majority have to do with it.

125. There are different religious bodies with different beliefs. You think the State is bound to respect the convictions of every body, or every person, and to make a system of education to suit every one of those bodies?—I think so, if the State meddles with education at all.

126. You are opposed to the present system of education?—I am decidedly.

127. Are you aware whether the bulk of Churchmen are opposed to it?—I think the bulk are, but I am not quite certain.

128. You are not aware whether the bulk of Churchmen are or are not opposed to it?—Some of us are hoping to test that question. We have hitherto hoped for an amendment of the law, but I think we are now establishing an organization for the purpose of testing that before the next election, and then I think those holding the view I do will take care to vote in a block on that subject.

129. If the conscientious convictions of every person were respected in education, have you any idea of the increased cost that would be entailed upon the colony?—I think it would be lessened.

130. How?—By calling out voluntary efforts for schools in which people would take an interest.

131. Are you not of opinion that the State is the people, and that it is a matter of indifference whether the money comes directly from the State or indirectly in the shape of contributions or school fees? Do you not think the State is more entitled to pay the whole cost of education, seeing that the money is then subscribed by every one in proportion to his means? Do you not think there would be an increased burden of taxation by your system?—I do not. I think the present is a demoralizing system, that it has a tendency to destroy self-reliance, and that it really injures the community by destroying the sense of self-reliance in the rising generation. If people's own exertions were called out instead of everything being done by the State, it would be far better for the people, and would not lead them to depend so much on the State.