

principle. It would be a good thing, I think, to break it up. Secondly, I do not think it would do so, for everybody except ourselves is satisfied with the present system.

337. Did you hear these other petitions read?—I did.

338. Were those petitioners generally satisfied?—Apparently not.

339. Do they represent as large a denomination as you do?—The answer is this: they have not erected their own schools. We have, and by doing so show we are in earnest, and express and emphasize our dissatisfaction; and, as long as the other cannot do something similar, I do not think there is much in the expression of their dissatisfaction.

340. You do not think they are very much in earnest?—No.

341. *Mr. Fergus.*] What proportion of children of school-age have you in your diocese?—We have not many able to go to school who do not go to our schools.

342. What is the proportion of Catholics to Protestants and others in your diocese?—One in nine, as far as I can make out.

343. Are you aware of the number of children on the public-school rolls?—The average attendance was 16,000 three or four years ago.

344. The number on the school rolls, not the average attendance?—I think twenty-two or twenty-three thousand children, as well as I remember.

345. There are 26,000. If the proportion is one in nine there must be of necessity a very considerable number of children attending Government schools?—Not necessarily, for the simple reason that many people in my diocese are unmarried, and have no families; there are great numbers of miners and servant-girls who are not married; consequently we have not our due proportion of children in our population.

346. You would not be satisfied, I understand, with the establishment of Catholic schools in the larger centres?—No; I would not. I want Catholic schools everywhere I could have them.

347. You would give the same right to all other denominations you claim for yours?—Certainly.

348. Have you considered the question of additional expense that would be entailed by the colony by the division of the schools?—Even as far as we are concerned I do not think there would be necessarily additional expense.

349. There would be no additional expense in cutting up many of your schools in the larger and even in the smaller centres?—Not necessarily, because Parliament could very easily readjust its expenditure to the circumstances.

350. Do you not hold that education is a protection against crime?—To a small extent. Statistics prove that as secular education extends crime of a certain class and order extends.

351. But you still think to some extent it prevents crime?—It may do so.

352. And especially such education as you would give would prevent it?—I hope so.

353. Even after all is done there must be a considerable number of Catholic children attending the Government schools in very sparsely-peopled districts?—I do not think there is a considerable number.

354. We have petitions before us in favour of Bible-reading in schools. Supposing this power were granted to the School Committees, and was exercised in the schools which are in very sparsely-settled districts, would you have any objection to the Catholic children attending those schools?—Certainly.

355. Then, they would object to the State system in as far as it admitted Bible-reading in schools. Could you not induce them to attend those schools, however few they might be?—That is altogether an exceptional case, and would have to be treated exceptionally.

356. There are a number of petitions from your diocese before both Houses of Parliament. Who signed those petitions? Were they signed by adults, people over the age of twenty-one years?—As a rule, so far as I know, they were. We advised that the petitions should be signed by men, and men only, over twenty-one years of age. There are some exceptions I am aware, but not many.

357. In the centre of Dunedin, have some of the petitions been signed by boys of fourteen or fifteen?—There may have been a few, but there must be very few. The petitions were signed by men, but many men did not get an opportunity of signing; if they had, there would have been a great many more signatures.

358. *Hon. Mr. Barnicoat.*] I understood you to say that the State system of education in New Zealand was always unsatisfactory to the Catholic body?—I did not say that. I say the present system is unsatisfactory.

359. Can you say whether in every instance the late provincial system of education was unsatisfactory?—To us it was.

360. In every instance?—In Otago and Southland it was from the first.

361. Can you say how far the system provided in Nelson was satisfactory to the Catholic body?—It was partially satisfactory, because an effort was made to do them justice, but it was not full, because they did not get equal treatment with other denominations.

362. The separating body appointed its own Committee: that would be satisfactory of course; and the separating body received the same sum per head for the children actually taught as was found to be the cost of educating the rest in the same school district?—We have no objection to that whatever.

363. Then, the separating school was open to all children without fee?—Well, of course, we have no objection to that either; not the slightest.

364. It was subject to the inspection of the Government Inspector as regards secular things, and had to provide secular education to his satisfaction?—I consider that very desirable.

365. And the religious instruction was given to the satisfaction of the promoters of the school, without any interference from the Inspector; but religious instruction had to be given at pre-arranged hours, so that parents of children should be able to withdraw their children?—I have no objection to that. I would accept that.