

after school-hours. That is done in some cases. As to denominationalism, there is, I understand, now at Masterton a clergyman who does not join this movement, but is striving to deach denominational christianity in that place. What we want will bring about a state of things that will make denominational teaching more difficult than it is now. The teachers will not be allowed under the proposed alteration to teach denominationalism.

18. You only know of one clergyman who has availed himself of the provision in the present Act for teaching outside of the school-hours?—In this diocese I personally only know of one, but there may be others in other places. In Nelson, for instance, the clergy of different denominations agreed to give Scripture lessons after school-hours, avoiding debatable points, and have done so for some years; yet the Nelson people have strongly petitioned for the proposed change. At Palmerston North, I think, it has also been tried, and there the people petition most strongly for the change.

19. Do you know anything of the Taranaki District?—No, I do not. But I am sure there are very few clergymen who are able to do more than they are doing. They have not the time to give to it. Moreover, they find it very hopeless work. They can only gather the children before or after school-hours, at both which times few of the children attend; and, with no one to preserve discipline, it has been generally found to be a very hopeless business, I am told.

20. *Mr. Fraser.*] You replied to a question by Mr. Collins, that your objection to the present system was that there was no religion taught in the schools?—What I said was that, according to the present Act, there ought to be no religious instruction in the schools.

21. Do you represent any particular body?—I belong to the Church of England myself. I represent the Wellington association here.

22. Is it the opinion of the association the law should be amended so that religious instruction should be given in the schools?—That is the whole meaning of the movement. That the Act should be amended is what we wish for; and that the amendment should be provided in the particular way we mention.

23. What is that particular way?—By the introduction into the schools of the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book, to be taught by the regular teachers during the first half-hour every day.

24. Do you propose that it should be read without any comment?—Without any comment except what is given in the text-book. There are in the book questions to be asked, and notes to explain difficult passages and unusual words, so that the children may understand the passage; but the teacher is not authorised to give any explanation or any interpretation of his own.

25. Are you quite satisfied that the reading of these books, without any comment, interpretation, or explanation, will provide religious instruction?—I am satisfied that it will provide a certain amount of religious instruction. I do not say it will be perfect; but it is all we can possibly have, under the circumstances.

26. Are you aware that certain sections of the community object very strongly to this movement?—I am aware of this, and that some of the Methodists object to the Scripture Lesson-books, on the ground that there are some notes in them which appear to some of them objectionable; but their objection is only temporary, pending the consideration of the books by their Conference; they heartily join in the general object in view. They, and nearly all the Protestant Christian bodies, have largely signed the petitions, and wish for Scripture lessons to be given in the schools.

27. But you do know they now object to it?—Only some of them object.

28. Do you know that the Jews object?—Yes; naturally they would object to the New Testament.

29. And the Roman Catholics?—I cannot tell what the priests think about it, for I have not spoken to them; but I know that a portion of the Roman Catholic people wish to promote the object of the petition. They are agreed on this: they say, better anything than that our children should be brought up as heathens.

30. You have expressed the opinion that the present teaching in the schools is not religious: how can you say that, if you have not read the books?—If the law is obeyed, there can be no religious instruction in the books at present in use in the schools; if the law is disobeyed, there may be. We want Scripture teaching to be established by law.

31. Do you say that you do not want any comment?—We do not want anything further than is given in the books themselves.

32. There are certain moral lessons in the books now used in the schools, and also lessons based on the Bible. You would have no interpretation?—Nothing further than is provided in the proposed text-book. The Bible is the inspired scripture of God; interpretation is human. We maintain that the one is wholly different from the other.

33. You admit that certain sections of the community object to the introduction of this book. If the book is introduced into the schools, will they be as open to those who object as they are now?—Under the conscience clause we think that they will.

34. That is not an answer to the question?—The conscience clause makes it open to them.

35. Are you aware that the conscience clause is disliked, because it is said to make an invidious distinction in the introduction?—I have had some experience, and have heard a good deal about cases arising under it. According to my knowledge it is very rarely the case that any difficulty would arise; practically no difficulty is involved. It is no new thing; it is an old thing that has been tried in all parts of the world for many years.

36. *Mr. McNab.*] Speaking for yourself, would you be satisfied with the instruction given in this text-book without being allowed to make comment or lesson?—Yes, under the circumstances, I think it is the only way that Scripture lessons can be given without running into dogmatic teaching, or perhaps incorrect teaching.

37. Are there, to your knowledge, any who look upon the introduction of this Scripture Lesson-book as a means towards denominational education?—I think not; so far as I know there is no