

112. Would it not tell against him with the Committee; if the teacher conscientiously declined to read these lessons, would it not tell against him?—I can say, with all my heart, I hope it would not; it might be so in the working; I intensely hope it would not. But that would be for the Education Department to see to.

113. *Mr. Collins.*] Do you think that, so far as the teacher is concerned, the duty imposed on him of reading this book would not become a mild form of religious test in the selection of teachers?—I hope not; it would be unfortunate if it were so.

114. You say it would be unfortunate if it were so?—Distinctly; that is all I can say.

115. I know you are under a disadvantage, having so recently arrived in the colony. Are you fairly acquainted with the working of our public schools?—No; I know next to nothing of the working of the schools. From all the information that comes to us it is stated to be excellent.

116. Do you think it is the duty of the State to interfere?—That is a big question; I think that it should interfere in this case, and that where there is a conscience clause no harm would be done.

117. Do you think it is a good thing to have the children of all denominations attending the public schools on a common ground?—Yes, a very good thing.

118. Do you think that taking advantage of the conscience clause would, to a certain extent, accentuate the differences that at present exist?—I do not think it would.

119. Do you think that those persons who take advantage of the conscience clause would be “marked”?—No; in England every single school—every Board school, and every voluntary school—has a conscience clause. I have heard of no such mischief resulting from it.

120. Do you think this text-book will prove to be a real solution of the difficulty it is intended to meet?—Yes; I think so.

121. And give general satisfaction?—I think so.

122. Do you know what the result has been of using this book in the National schools in Ireland?—I know that it has been used there; but I do not know what is the position now.

123. *Mr. E. M. Smith.*] Have you read this Irish text-book?—A good part of it.

124. Do you think it will have a better influence than the books we have in use now?—I think that the historical account of our Lord’s life and teaching, for example, will be far more useful; although I admit that there are some beautiful passages in the books now used.

125. Are you aware why New Zealand adopted this broad and liberal system of public education—what was the object of it?—I think it was to insure a free and compulsory system of education, under which all children should be brought up side by side.

126. Are you aware that, in a new country like New Zealand, the very fact of forming a State education secular and compulsory was to keep it free from religious interference?—I thought it was rather, because people were divided as to the manner in which Christian doctrine should be taught; but that all were agreed that some religious teaching should, if possible, be given in day-schools.

127. Was it not to prevent the evils in the Old Country creeping in here. As our system is worked now, reverence is taught, and all principles of morality; would it not be a pity to interfere with it?—I think not, if we can improve it.

128. If ministers of denominational Churches represented to this Committee that they were not favourable to this change, do you think any attempt should be made to alter the present system?—It would depend a great deal on the number that are “for” and “against.”

129. Do you think that any good will be done by introducing this Irish Text-book into the State schools, seeing that the children have every opportunity of receiving religious instruction in the Sunday-schools?—I think it would be helpful in many ways.

130. Then, so far as the Roman Catholics are concerned, they do not ask for any change. Do you not think it would be far better to leave it as it is?—I do not.

131. *The Chairman.*] You have not been resident long in the colony?—A very short time.

132. During your residence have you visited any of the State schools to ascertain the nature of the instruction given, and to inquire into the system of public education which exists in this colony?—I have visited several State schools, but have not made any detailed examination.

133. So far as your knowledge goes, would you characterise the present system of education as “godless”?—I have no information that would enable me to answer that question. I have never used the word “godless” myself when referring to it, and I should be sorry to use it.

134. Is there unanimity in your Church as to the final settlement on the question of religious instruction in schools? Do they accept what is now proposed as final; do they say we want no more; or do they regard this as a step to bring about denominational education?—I will try to answer your question. The question, as you ask it, has not been submitted to the clergy of our Church; but, in my travels through the diocese, nobody has said, “If we get this we will get something more.” I think if they had wished anything of the kind it would have come out. But the question has not been submitted to them.

135. *Mr. Collins.*] These lessons are to be read without any explanation, but at the conclusion of each lesson there is a list of words to be explained by the teacher, such as “revelation,” “fore-knowledge,” “redemption,” “miracle,” “nativity,” and others. Do you think it would be possible to give an explanation of those words without introducing more or less dogmatic and doctrinal matters? Do you think they could be explained by the teacher?—I do not think they could very well, but the doctrines would be such as are common to all Christian people.

136. Do you think that an explanation could possibly be given which would be accepted as common to all Christians?—I do. I think if we went into details we might disagree, but the explanation which would be given to children would be acceptable to all Christian parents.

137. *Mr. E. M. Smith.*] Are you aware that our present system of education allows all ministers to give the children religious instruction in the school outside of school-hours?—The Act does not specify that ministers are to have the use of the school; it makes no mention of religion or