

with at Home. To illustrate my meaning, I might state that there was seldom a day when I would not have to interfere with a fight at Home. Now, referring to Clyde Quay School, I do not see—indeed, I know—there are not half-a-dozen in the year. The higher class children at Home are better undoubtedly.

72. *The Chairman.*] Can you say how we stand in that respect as compared with the other colonies?—Yes, I taught for two years in Queensland. I was struck with the good behaviour of the children there; I have been equally struck with the good behaviour of the children here, both in Masterton, where I had a school of 600, and here in Wellington, where I have a school of 800. There is no religious teaching in Queensland.

73. Your experience of Queensland and this colony, which provide no religious instruction, is very favourable?—Very favourable indeed.

74. If we had had this text-book in the schools do you think there would have been less crime among young people of the colony than there is to-day?—I do not.

75. If denominational education were established do you think that crime would be less?—No.

76. You speak from experience?—Yes, I speak from experience.

77. *Mr. Willis.*] Do you think that if denominational feeling were strong in a district that would militate strongly against Roman Catholics?—Yes; too strongly.

78. *Mr. Collins.*] In your opinion is it possible or feasible for the clergy to give religious instruction outside of school-hours?—I do; I do not see why they should not organize some association for the purpose of giving religious instruction outside of school-hours. It has been done. I remember it was done in Birmingham by the Religious Education Society; their teachers came round and gave religious instruction; I do not know that it continued for more than a year or so, but I do know that it continued for some little time.

79. Then it is quite possible to do it?—Yes, and I think there are teachers who would gladly assist.

80. You say it is possible to do it, but do you go so far as to say it cannot be done without association?—It can be done.

81. *Mr. Willis.*] I wish to ask you whether, in your wide experience, you have found ministers of religion generally make any attempt whatever to give religious instruction in these schools?—No, not generally. I have not, personally, I am sorry to say; but I do know that in my old school at Masterton the Rev. Mr. York makes an effort in that direction.

82. Does it appear to you that there is no difficulty in the way?—None, so far as I know.

83. *Mr. Fraser.*] In your opinion do you think it would be impossible to introduce any system such as this proposed, or anything analogous, without leading to comment and eventually to teaching it?—I think it should be purely voluntary; but that would follow.

84. You say it would follow?—Yes.

85. *Mr. Lang.*] You have been comparing the children of the Old Country with the children of New Zealand—for how long a period?—Seventeen years.

86. Are you teaching the same class of children; I mean children with like surroundings?—Yes; very similar.

87. *Mr. Collins.*] I wish to ask you whether during your experience you have heard expressions of dissent from parents in regard to the present system of education, or any expressions of dissatisfaction either from parents or scholars?—I have no recollection of any.

88. Then you think that both parents and scholars are satisfied?—So far as I know.

89. As to the under-teachers, do you think that they would be favourably disposed to any change?—So far as respects the teachers generally I have spoken to many of them; many teachers have themselves spoken out on the subject, and I know that throughout that body there is a strong objection to it.

90. Do you think that the introduction of a text-book of this kind would lead necessarily to examinations or tests as to particular religious opinions that might be held by any teacher?—I am afraid so; that is the great fear we have.

91. *The Chairman.*] I am not aware that you have stated the number of years that you have been a teacher?—I have been a teacher over thirty years.

92. You are at the present time Secretary to the New Zealand Educational Institute?—Yes.

93. That embraces the whole of the teachers of the colony?—Yes.

94. Have the teachers met together to give any expressions of opinion on this subject?—Not formally.

95. You have stated in your evidence that the Irish National Scripture Lesson-book, so far as you are acquainted with it, would not be suitable as a class-book for classes below the Fourth Standard?—That is so.

96. In your experience as a teacher, do you know that a large number of children leave the schools before they reach the Fourth Standard?—Yes, a certain section of them.

97. Would this book, as a literary production, be suitable as a reading-book?—No, except for the one special purpose.

98. *Mr. Fraser.*] It is asserted, in regard to religious teaching, that it should be left to the church, the Sunday school, and the home: then you come to a class of children whose whole home life tends to evil; how do you propose to deal with these children, who would not come into contact with home-teaching that was good but the reverse?—My experience is—that the whole surroundings of the schools tend to elevate the children; being subjected to disciplinary methods would of themselves have the best effect; the general instruction also has a good moral effect; a good moral tone is developed after a time; when the compulsory clauses of the Act shall have been enforced a very marked effect will be produced. The Bill of last year will accomplish a good deal.

99. You consider that the discipline of the school is a large factor in the result you hope for?—Yes.