

religious differences being even thought of. People have expressed surprise that such distinctions should have ceased, so that they are rarely heard of in connection with the public schools of the colony. That disrespect that was often manifested by each denomination towards others has largely vanished through the influences that have grown out of the present system of education which has done and is doing such excellent work. Is it not an immense advantage that the children of all denominations are going to the same school, and are all treated alike. There is no bitter feeling now in any of the schools with which I am acquainted. If any such feeling is to be found in any district it will soon disappear. But under the new arrangements all this is likely to be changed. The clergy will want to know whether the book is being read in the schools; if not, they will soon seek some means of controlling that part of the work, and this always leads to friction. I think if we can avoid it we ought not to put the teachers in this position. The result will be, I think, to place many of them in an immoral position. If he is in a district where he is not in agreement with the people around him he sees that his livelihood depends on his acceptance, and he will not like to refuse. He will not avail himself of the conscience clause. You therefore place him in an unfair position—in, as I conceive it, an immoral position. That will affect a great many of the teachers. As to the book itself, it seems to me to be an extremely bad selection. I cannot say anything else. The first part deals with the "Creation," the "Flood," and "Exodus." I do not think there are any parts of the Bible in respect to which people differ so much as they do in respect to the interpretation of these parts. Suppose we are reading this book to our school children, and one of them asks us whether that is so-and-so; we refer to the book itself, but that does not remove the difficulty. What then? We must either refuse or put our own interpretation upon it; if the child persists, as some intelligent children do, then we must fence about the question, or put him off altogether by telling the boy that we are not allowed to answer his question. He will then think that there is something insidious or dangerous about the book. I do not, myself, see that there is any way of teaching except by explanation and examination. A good deal of this book must be unintelligible without explanation to school children. Take page 7, book 2, of the New Testament part. That no class of school children could understand without careful explanation. If you begin to explain you begin to dogmatize, and then you will have trouble. Treating the book in that way you put it into the category of a fable-book and nothing more. The New Testament part the child would possibly regard as containing some dangerous matter which you must be careful to deal with. Jews could not possibly attend this lesson. There is a considerable number of Jewish children in some schools—perhaps as many as forty or fifty; these will not attend. The Jews are setting the example of a people who do not believe in religious instruction in secular schools, and yet are showing how it can be perfectly well obtained. If they can make arrangements to secure that object I cannot see why other sects could not do the same. As to the conscience clause in the present Education Act, it appears to me never to have been properly worked—at least, there has never been an attempt made to take advantage of it in this town. I believe that if people were in earnest about this they could work under that clause; the Jews do so. You will not find a Jew who is not well up in the dogmas of his church. There has still to be pointed out that there are two days and a half in the week left clear of the ordinary school instruction—left for the religious bodies to work in. To make way for the new arrangement something will have to be omitted from the syllabus. With regard to the signing of this petition, I believe it has been largely signed by persons who have never seen the book. It has not been possible, so far as I know, to get a copy of it in Wellington. I have been able to procure only two parts out of the four. They are certainly signing the petition in the dark.

111. *Mr. McNab.*] In your experience have you any reason to fear that among the youth of New Zealand there is a great amount of irreverence, disobedience, and rebellion to authority?—No; I do not think so, certainly not more than the children of any other colony. I do not think that, on the whole, our New Zealand children are as hard to manage as the children of large towns at Home. I do not think that there is the same difficulty owing to the lawlessness of some of the Home children.

112. Then such a disposition as I have referred to is not a noticeable feature of New Zealand children?—I do not think so; certainly not.

113. Have any parents ever spoken to you about religious instruction in the State schools; have they ever asked you to give it?—They have never asked me to give it.

114. Have they ever mentioned to you in the form of complaint that it was not provided?—Frequently that sort of thing transpires in conversation; but I have never had it officially brought before me.

115. Do you think that this Scripture text-book could be read by the younger children of the lower forms?—No; I am certain it could not.

116. Do you think it would be available only for the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Standards?—Yes; and possibly the Third.

117. With regard to the Royal Readers, are there any lessons in these Royal Readers which would intend to inculcate a high tone of morality in the schools?—We do not use Royal Readers; we use Longman's Readers, but every Reader inculcates moral lessons.

118. Every one of your books have in them a fair amount of these moral truths?—Yes.

119. Are they, in your opinion, such as to remove the charge that is levelled at the education given to our children as being "godless"?—That is a difficult question to answer; there is recommended in every Reader reverence for God and religion; there are many lessons which exhort to fortitude, bravery, and other excellencies in conduct.

120. What is your denomination?—Anglican.

121. Do you know what is the feeling in your own denomination? Is the introduction of this book considered as being likely to lead to denominationalism in respect to State education?—I think the clergy look on it as a means to obtain the control of the school. It is not long since that